ETHNO-TERRITORIAL CONFLICT RESOLUSION

A Case Study of Nagorno Karabakh (1991-2004)

Dissertation Submitted to the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Master of Philosophy

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Certificate

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Chapter One Introduction

i.

The Cold war ended when the Soviet Union was dissolved formally after 74 years as the world's most predominant communist state. Owing to the momentous nature of the breakup of the Soviet empire, scholars have no doubt spent more than a decade analyzing, interpreting, and debating the events of 1989-1991 and their effects on international politics.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union brought, *inter alia*, two major challenges to the international peace and stability. The first is the explosion of domestic conflict that was previously subdued by authoritarian state centres or subordinated to bipolar ideological conflict. At the same time these domestic tensions were unshackled, the restrain that inhibited intervention by third parties were also relaxed. In this new international environment, interstate relations represent opportunities for some and challenges for others.

Scattered throughout the area of the former Soviet Union are several major sources of ethno-territorial conflict that are no longer kept under control by communist rule. With the erosion and collapse of central authority in Moscow in the late 1980s many of these potential zones of conflict exploded into violence and warfare that have killed thousands and driven millions of civilians from their homes.

In the 74 years long rule of Soviet Union, the nationality question was superficially resolved through the doctrine of Marxist internationalism.¹ Applying Marxist ideology, the Soviet Union, on November 21, 1917, incorporated in its constitution the "Declaration of the Rights of the People of Russia" (Article1) recognizing four

¹ The famous formula in the "Communist Manifesto", is that, "the working man have no country". 'Let the workers of the world unite, they have nothing to loss but their chain' was the slogan. Marx believed that the fraternity of the working class of all countries would pave the way for unity between the nations, whereas, rhetorical appeals for international fraternity meant in effect only fraternity between the bourgeoisie in all lands. For more on this, see, 'Marxism, Communism, and Western Society', *A Comparative Encyclopedia*, Vol.VI, Herder and Herder, New York, 1973, Pp.35f

principles, the equality and sovereignty of the peoples' of Russian empire, the right of people to self-determination to the point of secession, abolition of all privileges based on nationality or religion, and freedom of cultural development for national minorities, depressed nationality and those people living outside their historic territories. The sovereign equality of various nationalities of the former empire was proclaimed.²

In reality, however, nothing of this sort was put in practice. They had freedom to secede without corresponding mechanism, sovereign without means to exercise it, election without competing candidates, freedom to support socialism but not to oppose it. The rights granted were only on paper. Accordingly, the reality shows that Soviet did not really intend to create nations and their corresponding states as entities capable of independent existence. Rather, policies like migration, demographic (that changes the ethnic composition on the pretext of the shortage of skilled labour required for industrialization purposes), education (Russian language as a compulsory subject), central economic planning and infrastructural policy etc greatly stood in the way for realization of the constitutional provisions. The border demarcation was done without taking into consideration of the Soviet composition of the various constituent republics.³

Therefore, when Gorbachev introduced *perestroika* and *glasnost*, nationality question flared-up. Various nationalities started criticizing the authority openly and started asserting their independence. It is alleged that liberalization under *perestroika* was misuse by the corrupt groups to instigate nationalist passion for the satisfaction of their interest. However, ethnic discontentment did really exist. Even the Russians were not satisfied for sacrificing their identity in the larger interest of Soviet man.⁴

Before examining the actual conflict let us briefly dwell on the geographical location, history of Armenia and Azerbaijan followed by Nagono Karabakh. A brief understanding about Armenia and Azerbaijan is required because with the collapse of Soviet Union and

² 1918 Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, (http://www.Marxists.org/history/USSR/govt/constitution/1918, 10.09.03)

³ Mark R. Beissinger, National Mobilization and the Collapse of Soviet Union, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.62

subsequent declaration of independent by both the republics the conflict has become an interstate, rather than intrastate.

1.1. Geography and History:

1

Armenia: - The Republic of Armenia (formerly the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, part of the USSR) is situated in southwest Transfersion, on the northeastern border of Turkey. Its other borders are with Iran to the source baijan to the east and Georgia to the north. The Republic of Armenia, which covers 22 up q km (11,508 sq miles), is the remnant of a much lager area of Armenian settlement the upped before the First World War and included many areas of eastern Turkey and other response the Caucasus.

At the 1989 census, 93.3% of the total *de facto* population of 3,287,677 were ethnic Armenians, 1.7% Kurds and 1.5% Russians. Other ethnic groups included Ukrainians (8,341), Assyrians (5,963), Greeks (4,650) and Geogians (1,364). As a result of interethnic tension, almost the entire Azeri population (in 1989, 2.6% of the total) was reported to have left Armenia after the census was conducted, and Armenian refugees entered Armenia from Azerbaijan. There are many Armenians in neighboring states, notably in Georgia and in Azerbaijan, although numbers in the latter decreased considerably after the inter-ethnic conflict of the late 1980s and early 1990s. There are also important Armenian communities abroad, particularly in the USA and France.

The official language is Armenian, the sole member of a distinct Indo-European language group. Most of the populations are adherents of Christianity, the largest denomination being the Armenian Apostolic Church. There are also Russian Orthodox, Protestant, Islamic and Yazidi communities.

Armenia and the Armenians first emerged clearly in historical records of the first millennium BC. In *circa* AD 314 Armenia became the first state to adopt Christianity. About one century later it developed a distinct alphabet and literary language, and religion and language have remained central to Armenian national identity ever since.

⁴ Ibid p.387

Apart from brief periods of independence, for most of its history Armenia formed a borderland and battleground between more powerful, neighboring states based on the Iranian plateau, in Mesopotamia, in Anatolia or Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey) and, more recently, in Russia.⁵

The Treaties of Amasya (1555) and Zuhab (1639) led to the partition of Armenia, with the larger, western part being allotted to the Turkish Ottoman Empire and the eastern region becoming part of the Persian (Iranian) Safavid Empire. This division resulted in the development of distinct eastern and western Armenian languages. In 1828 the Russian Empire gained Eastern (Persian) Armenia by the Treaty of Turmanchai, and in 1878 the Congress of Berlin transferred much of Western (Ottoman) Armenia (Kars province) to Russian control.⁶

Over the centuries successive invasions and deportations, as well as the dynamics of international trade, in which Armenian merchants played an active role, resulted in the growth of an Armenian diasporas throughout Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the major commercial centers of Europe, the Middle East, the major commercial centers of Europe and the Indian Ocean, and ultimately, North America.

In the Late 19th century competing claims engendered by emerging Turkish and Armenian nationalism, coupled with the decline and dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, led to increased tension, antagonism and conflict. This culminated in the 'genocide' of 1915, when the Ottoman authorities, fearing possible Armenian support for a Russian invasion, systematically deported or killed almost the entire Armenian population of Anatolia. More than 1 million people are estimated to have been massacred. As a consequence, the diasporas communities of France, Lebanon, Syria and the USA expanded, and the memory of the genocide became a defining element in the Armenian identity.

⁵ Christopher J Walker, Armenia and Karabakh: The Struggle for Unity, Minority Rights Publication, London, 1991, p.17
⁶ Ibid, p.17

Following the collapse of Russian imperial power in 1917, Eastern Armenia became part of the short-lived anti-Bolshevik Transcaucasian federation, which also included Azerbaijan and Georgia. Subsequently, on 28 May 1918, after the dissolution of the federation, Armenia became an independent republic. The Government, dominated by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF – Dashnaktsutiun), had to contend with the problems of famine, a continuing Ottoman war and ethno-territorial disputes with Georgia and, more seriously, with Azerbaijan. Hopes that the future of an independent Armenia would be guaranteed by the Treaty of Sevres, signed by the Allied Powers and the Ottomans on 10 August 1920, were quickly destroyed by the Bolsheviks' Friendship Treaty with the new Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), who rejected the Treaty. This was rapidly followed by a Turkish invasion of Armenia in September. In November Government of ARF resigned, preferring incorporation into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) to annihilation by the Turks. Bolshevik forces having secured the country, the Soviet Republic of Armenia was officially proclaimed on 29 November.⁷

The ARF was excluded from Armenian politics throughout the period of Soviet rule, but remained a major political force in the diasporas, where it continued to espouse the cause of an independent, non-communist Armenia. Following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the ARF returned to Armenia, once more to become an important force in the country.

The borders of Soviet Armenia were defined by a Friendship Treaty agreed in Moscow, Russia, in March 1921 and by the Treaty of Kars of October, under the terms of which the Bolsheviks ceded to Turkey the bulk of the Western Armenian territories that had been conquered by Imperial Russia. In December 1922 Armenia joined Azerbaijan and Georgia in the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. This was dissolved in December 1936 and Armenia became a full Union Republic of the USSR.

Armenia experienced rapid social and economic development during the Soviet period. Considerable advances were made in agriculture, industry, transport, education, health

⁷ Richard G Hovannisian, Armenia on the Road to Independence. 1918, University California Press, Berkeley, 1967, p. 25

care, urban development and standards of living. Soviet rule brought security and stability to the truncated Armenia it had created and, to some extent, allowed the consolidation of Armenian national culture and identity through the promotion of the Armenian language and by the establishment of a number of cultural institutions. However, nationalist expression that crossed the shifting and invisible line between the permissible and the forbidden was suppressed. The purges of 1936-38 and 1947-53 greatly reduced the ranks of the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA) and the republic's intelligentsia. The Armenian Apostolic Church was also persecuted severely.⁸

Armenia's scheduled referendum on secession from the USSR took place on 21 September 1991. According to official figures, 94.4% of the electorate participated, with 99.3% of votes cast in favour of Armenian independence. Two days later the Supreme Soviet declared Armenia to be an independent state. This was followed, on 16 October, by a presidential election. Six candidates participated in the election, which was decisively won by Ter-Petrossian, with 87% of the total votes cast.⁹

Azerbaijan:- The Azerbaijan Republic (formerly the Republic of Azerbaijan and, prior to that, the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, a constituent unit of USSR) is situated in eastern Transcaucasia, on the western coast of the Caspian sea. There are international borders with Iran to the south, with Armenia to the west, with Georgia to the north-west and, to the north across the Caucasus, with the Republic Dagestan (Daghestan) in the Russian Federation. The Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic is part of Azerbaijan, although it is separated from the rest of the country by Armenia to the north and east. There is a short border with Turkey at the north-western tip of Nakhichevan. Azerbaijan also includes the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, which lies in the south-west of the country. It is largely populated by ethnic Armenians. Armed conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh begin in 1989 and by October 1993 Azerbaijan had lost control of about one-fifth of its own territory, including the entire Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, to Armenian militia. The country covers an area of 86,600 sq. km., 10% of which is

⁸Christopher J Walker, Armenia: The Survival of a Nation, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993, p.779 ⁹ David Lavison, East European, Russian and Central Asian 2003, Europa Publication, London, 2002, p.76

forested. Nagorno-Karabakh covers 4,400 sq. km. of the total area and Nakhichevan 5,500 sq. km. Azerbaijan has significant promise as a country rich in mineral resources, particularly petroleum and natural gas, and also as the potential center for major trading routes linking Central Asia and Transcaucasia to the Middle East and Eastern Europe

The total population according to the 1989 census, was 7,021,178 of which Azeris form the largest ethnic group (82.7% of the population), followed by Russians and Armenians (each 5.6%) and Lezghis 2.4%. There were also small numbers of Avars, Ukrainians, Tatars, Jews, Talysh, Turks, Georgians, Kurds, Udins and others. The official language is Azerbaijani, one of the South Turkic group of languages. According to government sources Azerbaijani was spoken by 95% of the population by the end of the 1990s. In 1992 the Parliament of Azerbaijan chose to abandon the Cyrillic alphabet (which was imposed by Moscow in 1939) and restored the Latin script. Religious adherence corresponds largely to ethnic origins: almost all ethnic Azerbaijanis are Muslims, some 70% being Shi'ia and 30% Sunni. There are also Christian communities, mainly representative of the Russian orthodox and Armenian apostolic denominations. Int January 1, 2002 the total estimated population was 8,141,400. Population density was 94.0 inhabitants per sq. km. at the beginning of 2002. The capital is Baku.¹⁰

Following the failure of coup attempt in Moscow on 20th August 1991, the nomenklatura dominated Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan proclaimed the independence of the republic, despite the fact that Mutalibov had initially appeared to express support to those attempting to overthrow the Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev. The declaration of independence was followed by the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, although the majority of its member retains their positions in the government bureaucracy.

Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous *Oblast*: - Nagorno Karabakh lies in South-west Azerbaijan. The enclave was awarded to Azerbaijan in 1921 and acquired autonomous status. Nagorno Karabakh's own south western border, near the town of Lachin in Azerbaijan proper, is separated from the international frontier with Armenia only by a

¹⁰ Ibid, p.105

narrow strip of land along the Akera valley. The terrain consists of lowland steppe and heavily forested mountain sites, with much of the territory rising above the tree line, reaching 3,724 m at Mt. Gyamysh. The old autonomous region covers an area of 4,400 sq. km. but the forces of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh actually cover an area of some 7,059 sq. km. or just over 8% of the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic. Historically, the Armenian population claimed dominant in Shaumyan, on the north western borders of the enclave and in a wider northern Nagorno-Karabakh, which stretches up as far as the town of Gyanja. Following the troubles of the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, most ethnic Armenians had been expelled from areas still under the control of the Azerbaijani government and Azeris had been expelled from the territories occupied by the forces of the Nagorno Karabakh. In 1989, at the time of the last Soviet census, the population of the autonomous oblast was 189,085(77 % being ethnic Armenians and 22% Azeris). Even then, full account had not been taken due to the disruption caused by refugees from ethnic disputes, and this situation exacerbate by the open conflict of the early 1990s. By 2001 the total population was estimated to be 143,000, according to official sources, approximately one-half of whom resided in urban areas. The population consisted almost entirely of ethnic Armenians. There were also small numbers of Russians in the region, as well as Ukrainians, Belarusians, Greeks, Tatars, and Georgians. The capital and chief town is Stepanakert with the other major towns being Mardakert, Shushi, Askeran and Hadrut.

The Armenian principalities of Artsakh acknowledged Persian (Iranian) pre-eminence during the Middle Ages. Nagorno Karabakh came under formal Russian control in the first decades of the 19th century, with the 1813 treaty between Russia and Persia being signed near the Karabakh village of Gulistan. The collapse of the Russian Empire with the revolutions of 1917 provoked Turkish intervention in Transcaucasia, to the detriment of the Armenian population, which suffered considerable loss of life in 1918-20. With the establishment of Bolshevik power, the Soviet Bureau of Transcaucasian Affairs (Kavburo) advised on the status of the autonomous protectorate. It recommended the union of Nagorno Karabakh with the Soviet Republic of Armenia, but Stalin reversed the decision and the enclave formerly came under the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan on July 5,1921, with Shushi as its first capital. Nagorno Karabakh secured a distinct status within Azerbaijan when it was declared an autonomous oblast in 1923.¹¹

The Soviet state did not tolerate open discontent, although there were appeals to the all-Union Authorities to permit the union of Nagorno Karabakh with Armenia in 1945, 1966 and 1977. There were also periods of ethnic tension, notably in 1967-68. From the mid-1980s, with a reformist Soviet leadership in power, the pressure to re-examine the status of Nagorno Karabakh increased. Despite the hopes raised by a changed of leadership in Azerbaijan in October 1987, the authorities persisted in their refusal to address the issue. This resulted in large scale demonstrations by Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh and violence between ethnic Armenian and Azerbaijani villages in the enclave. In February 1988 the Nagorno Karabakh Soviet Council passed a resolution demanding a transfer to Armenian jurisdiction, provoking anti-Armenian riots in Azerbaijan and much violence.¹²

On January 12,1989 the *oblast*'s authorities were suspended and the region was placed under the jurisdiction of a Special Administrative Committee (SAC), responsible to the all Union Council of Ministers. The imposition of 'Direct Rule', however, did little to alleviate tensions – ethnic Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh were on a general strike in May – September, while Azerbaijan considered its sovereignty to having compromised. Widespread public discontent forced the Azerbaijani Authorities to recognize the nationalist opposition movement and to declare the sovereignty of the republic. In September, they imposed an economic blockade of Armenia. In November the SAC was replaced by the Republican Organizing Committee, mainly consisting of Azeris. This provoked the Armenian Supreme Soviet to declare on December 1 that the enclave was part of a unified Armenian Republic – the economic blockade was re-imposed and there was violence in Nagorno Karabakh and on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. In January 1990 the all Union Supreme Soviet deemed the Armenian declaration of December 1989 to be unconstitutional, but the Armenian legislature declared the primacy of its own

¹¹ Patrick Donabedian, "The History of Karabakh from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century", in Chorbajian, Levon, Patrick Donabedian, and Claude Mutafian, (eds.), *The Caucasian Knot: The History and Geopolitics of Nagorno Karabakh*, London, Zed Book, 1994, p.19

¹² Ibid, p.21

legislation. In August 1990 the Azerbaijani legislature resolved to abolish the autonomous status of Nagorno Karabakh.¹³

In early 1991 a state of emergency was imposed in Nagorno Karabakh, but Soviet troops failed to contain the increasing violence. There were allegations of these troops aiding Azerbaijani attempts to expel ethnic Armenians from the border areas. Meanwhile, in July the increasing activity of ethnic Armenian paramilitary units led the Soviet leader, Mikhial Gorbachev, to insist on their disarmament. However, by the end of the year, following the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Gorbachev's resignation, the USSR had ceased to exist. Despite Russian and Kazakhstani efforts to meditate an agreement (the initiative failed after an air craft carrying Azerbaijani and Russian negotiators crashed or was shot down), nationalist activism and violence continued to escalate. Moreover, with Azerbaijan moving towards claiming independence, a joint session of the Supreme Soviet of the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and the district soviet of Shaumyan declared a 'Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh' on 2 September. In December referendum indicated overwhelming support for independence and, following a general election on 28 December, a new 'parliament' formally proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh on 6 January 1992. The polity gained no international recognition, even from Armenia, which also renounced any territorial claims against Azerbaijan in March and denied that it had any control over the Nagorno Karabakh Self-Defense Forces.¹⁴

By 1992 sporadic clashes had developed into full-scale conflict. Stepanakert was, effectively, under siege by Azerbaijani forces and Shusha by Armenian Paramilitaries. In January the President of Azerbaijan, Ayaz Mutalibov, placed the region under direct presidential rule, however, the Nagorno Karabakh Self-Defense Forces attacked the town of Khojali, defeating Azerbaijani troops and killing many civilians. The militia continued to gain territory in May seizing in control of the towns of Shusha and Lachin in Azerbaijan proper. By the end of the month, when a short-lived ceasefire was negotiated,

¹³ Adalian, Rouben P. (ed.), Armenia and Karabakh Factbook, Washington DC; Armenia Assembly of America, 1996, p.34

¹⁴ Ibid, p.55

the Karabakh military was in control of the whole enclave and of a corridor across the Lachin valley to Armenia.¹⁵

There was a massive counter offensive by Azerbaijani forces in June-October 1992, resulting in the exodus of several thousand people. This, in turn, led the Armenians to accuse Azerbaijan of receiving covert assistants from Turkey.¹⁶ Other sources attributed Azerbaijani success to the nationalist upsurge in Azerbaijan after the *de facto* coup of the nationalists and the election of their leader, Abulfaz Elchibey, as President in June. In August the Nagorno Karabakh legislature declared a state of martial law, with a State Defense Committee replacing the enclave's government. However, in mid 1992 government forces did re-occupy almost one-half of the territory of the republic of Nagorno Karabakh, mainly in the north.

In 1993 the Azerbaijani forces again lost ground, weakened by domestic political divisions. In early February Husseinov, the commander and presidential plenipotentiary in Karabakh of Azerbaijan, withdrew his forces from the occupied Northern Karabakh town of Marbakert to Gyanja, for reasons that remain unclear and highly controversial. Clearly the move provided the Self Defense Forces of Nagorno Karabakh with the opportunity to embark on their own counter-offensive. By March they were occupying Azerbaijani territory outside the borders of the enclave to the South and to the West. With political chaos in Azerbaijan, the Nagorno Karabakh militias continued to make advances, seizing Agdam in July and Fizuli in August. Although they made no permanent claim on territory outside the existing borders (justifying occupation of Azerbaijani territory only on military grounds), and withdrew some villages in Kubatly, by October the ethnic Armenian forces had reached the Iranian border. By this time, the forces of Nagorno Karabakh in establishing their buffer zone had occupied about one-fifth of Azerbaijani territory.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid, p.56

¹⁶ Patrick Donabedian, n.11, p.14

¹⁷ Caroline Cox and John Eibner, "Ethnic Cleansing in Progress "War in Karabakh", *Institute for Religious Minorities in the Islamic World*, London, 1993, p.49

These advances caused widespread international concern. The UN passed resolution 822 on April 31, 1993 (demanding an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Armenian units from Azerbaijani territory), resolution 853 on July 29 (condemning all hostilities and reiterating the demand for withdrawal, notably, from Agdam), and resolution 874 on October 14 (endorsing a CSCE schedule for the implementation of resolutions 822 and 854). This last resolution also acknowledged the Karabakh-Armenians as a separate party in the conflict, although the Azerbaijan and the Nagorno Karabakh leaderships had their first direct negotiation in August. The CSCE, led by the 'Minsk Group' of interested countries, arranged numerous ceasefires and framework agreements, and was forced to condemn the continual violation of such accords on November 10. Iran and Turkey warned against any threat to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The weight of international opinion also encouraged Armenia to urge moderation on the Nagorno Karabakh leaderships. Continuing efforts by the CSCE and a parallel initiative by the Russian federation culminated in an agreement known as the Bishkek Declaration, signed at Kyrgystan on May 5, 1994. A ceasefire came into effect one week later and the agreement was formalized by the military authorities on July 27.¹⁸ A political solution remained elusive, but the ceasefire by and large, persisted. Prisoner-of-war exchanges took place in May 1995. By mid 1998 continuing CSCE efforts to mediate a settlement had caused the fall of President Ter Petrossian and the accession of a less compromising government in Armenia.¹⁹ This administration supported the Karabakh preference for package peace settlement, one which would not require Nagorno Karabakh to relinquish its military advantages and security guarantees in advance of resolving the issue of its status. However, by mid 2001 negotiations had stalled again, despite strong international mediation.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

While there is no shortage of actual or potential arm confrontations in the former USSR to analyse, the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan is worthy of particular note. Not

¹⁸ David Lavison, no.9, p.130

¹⁹ In April - June 1995 elections were held to the Republican legislature, which was renamed the National Assembly in March 1996 and consisted of 33 members. This body renewed the state of martial law and instituted an executive Presidency, to which post Kocharian was elected by Parliament on December 22, 1995. On November 26, 1996 Kocharian secure an electoral mandate for remaining in the Presidency. He continue to be the President till date.

only is the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict one of the bloodiest and most intractable clashes to emerge from the breakup of the Soviet empire, but it is also perhaps the only post-Soviet conflict that poses a potential explosive threat to peace and security on a region- as opposed to a local scale. ²⁰With the implementation of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the second half of the 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev open**ed**a Pandora's box of grievances that had been suppressed by 70 years of communist rule. Among the first region to erupt into conflict was the trancaucasus, where in early 1988 a dispute over the right of the ethnic Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh of autonomous *oblast* to secede from Azerbaijan resulted in bloodshed.

Encouraged by a perceived openness on the part of Gorbachev' to redress injustice left over from the early Soviet period, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh began an active campaign in 1988 both to reverse what they regarded a grievous miscarriage of history-Stalin's 1923 attachment of the region to the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic- and to remove themselves from arbitrary and denigrating rule from Baku. In a move unprecedented in Soviet history, the Karabakh Armenian authorities voted to undertake a peaceful unification with brethren in the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, a move supported fully by the latter. Viewing the act as a potential threat to the territorial integrity of their republic, the Azerbaijanis resisted, and violence soon broke out between the two peoples in several cities and villages across both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Over the next three years, dispirt esveral attempts at settlement by the central authorities in Moscow, the conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis grew beyond the realm of inter-communal violence. By the time of the Soviet Union's demise in the late 1991, the dispute has spiraled into a full-scale clash between the two republics- a clash that has since defied resolution by the international communities.

While the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has manifested itself in a bloody struggle over the states of Nagorno Karabakh, the post- Soviet geopolitics of the region

²⁰ Kenneth Weisbrode, "Karabakh and the South Caucasus", Adelphi Papers, Vol.388, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.27

have added complexity to the dispute and influence its course.²¹ Situated in a region whose history is marked by incessant competition and conflict between rival imperial powers, Armenia and Azerbaijan are today surrounded by three major regional actors that have taken considerable interest in the cause and implementation of their dispute. Viewing the Armenia-Azerbaijan clash both as a potential threat to regional peace and security and as a potential opportunity through which to gain geopolitical, Russia, Turkey, Iran and other western countries have all become significant players in the conflict. On a handful of occasions between the middle of 1992 and late1993, this phenomenon threatened to spark open involvement in the fighting by one or more of these players.²²

After two and a half years of brutal combat that left more that 25,000 people dead and nearly a million homeless, a ceasefire took hold in the region in May 1994.²³ Although, the ceasefire has been observed generally to the present day, a formal political settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has remained elusive. While more than 20% of its territory- most of Nagorno Karabakh included- is under the control of ethnic Armenian forces, Azerbaijan has used the cessation of hostilities to attract more than\$35 billion in investment by western oil companies seeking to tab its vast offshore energy reserve beneath the Caspian Sea.²⁴ The entry of western oil majors has been followed by heightened interest in the region by the governments of Europe and the US, who seek to lessen their dependence on oil supplies from the volatile Persian Gulf. With western

²¹ According to Elizabeth Fuller, the fact that the regional powers most keenly interested in neutralizing the dispute (Turkey, Iran, and Russia) have their own, sometimes conflicting strategies and policy aims in the region, continues to obstruct mediation effort. See Elizabeth Fuller, "Mediators in Transcaucasia's Conflict", *World Today*, Vol.49, no.5, May 1993, p.89

²² For more see, Ariel Cohen, "Is Russian New Caucasus Policy Threaten Turkish Interest?", *Eurasia Studies*, Vol. 20, Special Issue, Summer 2001. Also Suha Bolukbasi, "Ankara's Baku-Centered Transcaucasia Policy: Has it Failed?, *Middle East Journal*, Vol.51,no.1, Winter 1997. For Iran's, see, Edmund Herzig, "Iran and the Former Soviet South", *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, London, 1995

 ²³ Iranian-brokered ceasefire facilitated the fact-finding mission on UN special envoy Cyrus Vance, who began his tour on 19 March 1992. R.K. Ramazani, "Iran Foreign Policy: Both North and South", *Middle East Journal*, Summer 1992, Vol.46, no.3, p.410
 ²⁴ In 1994, finally in Azerbaijan. a western consortium, led by BP, signed a US\$ 8,000 million contract with the government of Azerbaijan to develop offshore field in the western sector of Caspian, followed by Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC), comprising Azerbaijan, Japan, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UK, and US in1995. For more see, Shirin Akinen, "Politics of Energy in the Caspian Sea Region", David Lavison, n.9, Pp.11f

interest in the region on the rise, new impetus has been given to the quest for a political settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh dispute.

In June 1992, western countries under the auspices of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) assembled to discuss the worsening conflict. What came to be called 'Minsk Group' oversaw most negotiation between 1992 and 2001. By 1997, France, Russia, and the US had assumed joint chairmanship, while Azerbaijan had agreed to participation in the talks by Armenian representative from Karabakh. The group devised a formula to reconcile the seemingly contradictory application of two central principles (Inviolability of international border and right to self-determination) laid down by the 1975 Helsinki Final Act that established the CSCE;²⁵ the Azerbaijani insistence on the sanctity of international boundaries; and the Armenian commitment the right of self-determination. Mediators proceeded along four main lines of negotiation:-

- i) Karabakh would be considered independent *de facto* but not *de jure;* that is, it would be granted the 'highest level of autonomy' from Baku, but would remain part of Azerbaijan,
- ii) Full withdrawal Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territory of Karabakh,
- iii) Security guarantee from outside powers, and
- iv) The return and resettlement of refugees

Mediation continued without achieving a settlement and, by the end of 2003 the Minsk process appeared to have outlived its usefulness. For the US, domestic politics and strong ties with regional states, namely Armenia and Turkey, hindered efforts to bring about a final settlement to the Nagorno Karabakh dispute. Although it played no direct role in the war, the US did allow support to reach the Armenian side, and did not strongly discourage those who sought to help Azeris. Although intimately involved in many Nagorno Karabakh negotiations since 1994, US officials appeared reluctant to take tough negotiating stance towards either party, for fear of jeopardizing the fragile US

²⁵ See the final documents of The 1975 Helsinki Final Act, (http://www.osce.org/docs/English/1990-1991/summits/helfa75e.htm, 10.09.03)

relationship with Aliyev, the then president of Azerbaijan, or of provoking the powerful domestic Armenian lobby.²⁶

Russia, too, is dissatisfied with the emerging geopolitical order in the transcaucasus. Since late 1992, a consensus has emerged in Moscow on the necessity of maintaining a sphere of influence over the republics of the Former Soviet Union. With its vast natural resources, wealth and strategic location, the transcaucasus has been of particular interest to Russian policy makers; Moscow wishes to see neither the rise of significant Turkish and western political and economic presence in the region nor emergence of truly independent states there. Thus, Russia's disenchantment with the developing situation has mirrored that of Armenia, *albeit*, for different reasons.²⁷

In the same manner, Turkey and Iran too have a stake in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Turkey shares a border with all three south Caucasus states, and those areas considered by Ankara to be among the countries most vulnerable, namely, Kurdish region, are immediately to Southeast. Turkey's politics are complex and fluctuating, but marked generally by three-ways struggle between a pro-western tradition, most powerfully represented by military and the state bureaucracy; a pro-Russian lobby, particularly comprising industrialist; and a Turanist, or pan-Turkic, tendency among intellectuals and politicians keen on extending Turkish influence over the countries eastern and southern neighbors.²⁸ A fourth, more conservative and noe-Ottoman tradition has been linked with the latter group, as have religious activist who seek a greater role for Turkey in the Islamic world. Because of its support in the military among the Turkish elite, the first group is usually seen is to prevail over others. Of all, Turkey's most pressing interest in the Nagorno Karabakh peace has remained opening its border with Armenia, to allow for

²⁶ Liela Alieva, "The Institutions, Orientations, and Conduct of Foreign Policy in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan" in A. Dawisha and K. Dawisha (eds.), *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1995,

p.305f. Also see Encyclopedia of Conflicts, Disputes and Flashpoints in Eastern Europe, Russia and Successor States, Longman Current Affairs, UK, 1993, p.235

²⁷ Ariel Cohen, n.22, p.117. Also see Igor Nolyain's, "Moscow's Initiation of the Azeri-Armenian Conflict", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.13, No.4, 1994, p.541f.

²⁸ Philip Robins, "Between Sentiment and Self-Interest: Turkish's Policy Towards Azerbaijan and the Central As an States", *Middle East Journal*, Vol.47, No.4, Autumn 1993, p.597f

more convenient access to Azerbaijan and Central Asia as well as securing supplies to meet its vast energy demands, notably for natural gas.²⁹

Even without renewed conflict in Nagorno Karabakh, geography suggests an important role for Iran in the south Caucasus. Yet, Iran's role is more modest. Teheran's main interest are; securing a peaceful and open northern border, ending the country's international isolation; and expanding its links to the black sea and Europe. Iran has to content with the sensitivities of the approximately 20 million ethnic Azeris who lived in the north. Despite the Iranian government's support for Armenia during war, it knows that it must maintain cordial, if not warm relations with Azerbaijan if it wishes to keep irredentism from ever taking hold. Aside from its incursion into Azerbaijan and supplying Armenia with oil, Iran played a largely passive role in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. It attempted to mediate in 1992, but failed to achieve anything substantial, excepting a very shot-lived ceasefire. Following the failure of its mediation effort in 1992, Iran offered itself as an alternative to the 'Minsk Group', and occasionally raised Nagorno Karabakh issue in wider fora like the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).³⁰ Yet, its gesture has been muted by Iran's desire for good relation with Russia.

In the following chapters, I have tried to analyze the peace initiative made by the different actors, regional as well as international for the resolution of conflict. The involvements of the regional actors such as Russia, Iran and Turkey, and international actor such as the Organization of Security for Co-operation in Europe have been a boon as well a bane for the conflict. It is a boon because the initiative taken by regional actors have thawed down the once unthinkable conflict. Russia along with Kazakhstan was the first country to set its hand for the resolution of the conflict, followed by Iran in May 1992, which led to a cessation of fire (though a short lived). Turkey had not played a proactive role in the conflict resolution so far, but is also observant and concerned of every steps taken. The OSCE, originally founded as Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, whose objective was to basically to look after the security and

²⁹ William Halle, Turkish Foreign Policy 1977-2000, Fran Cass, London, 2002, p.270f

³⁰ Edmund Herzig, "Iran and the Former South", The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1995, p.30

economic interest of Europe, has of late taken interest and now plays as the major broker in the conflict resolution³¹.

The involvements of the regional actors have, however, its negative fall out as well. The regional balance of power and equation calculus and the inherent rivalries between these countries have sometimes shown its ugly face. By arming the conflicting parties with sophisticated weaponries and technologies, these two, a decade old sovereign states are on the verge of dangerous confrontation ahead.

Energy resource in the Caspian Sea is another major interest of all the participating third parties. Caspian Sea being the largest inland sea in the world with huge energy reserves and Azerbaijan, by virtue of its location endowed with 20% of these reserves has open a battle ground for economic warfare of the major international power players. The 'pipe line politics' also contributed increasing hostility between Russia, Turkey and Iran.³². The United States, though co-chair along with France and Russia in the 'Minsk Group',³³ has failed to take a firm decision due to fear of strong Armenian lobby in the domestic politics. All these complexities of regional interests interplayed are being discussed in the fourth chapter along with the conflict resolution of OSCE kind.³⁴

The meaning of conflict resolution is used here in a simple and ordinary way as resolving of conflict and not much as the way a student of peace and conflict study does. This is done in order to save myself lost from being embroiled in the mathematical equation of conflict resolution theories. Ethnic conflict theories are mostly relied upon and very faintly on conflict resolution theory. This is also because the understanding of the type of

 ³¹ Mychajyszyn, Natelie, "The OSCE and Regional Conflicts in the Former Soviet Union" in James Huges and Gwendolyn Sasse (eds.), *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict*, Frank Cass, London, 2002. p. 208.
 ³² For more see Shirin Akiner, "Politics of Energy in the Caspian Sea Region", David Lavison, n.9, p. 14 f and address delivered by

¹⁷ For more see Shirin Akiner, "Politics of Energy in the Caspian Sea Region", David Lavison, n.9, p. 14 f and address delivered by Vartan Oskanian at Halki International Seminar, on September 8 1997, on the topic Energy Politics in the Caspian and the Role of Armenia. Found in the South European Yearbook 1997-98, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Athens, 1998. ³³ Minsk Group is based on an ad hoc working group of the OSCE; it was named after the city Minsk, the capital of Belarus, in which the OSCE intended to convene a conference on the conflict based on its March 1992 decision to do so. For more see Mychajyszyn, Natalie, n.31, p. 204

Natalie, n.31, p. 204 ³⁴ The OSCE's conflict resolution formula is based on the application of two contradictory principles, territorial integrity and selfdetermination. The application of interstate principles to sub-state conflict is not without a problem. Rather than stabilizing the situation the principles serve to raise greater uncertainty and questions about how to address the conflict. Ibid, p. 209

ethnic conflict provides the necessary tool for the resolution of such conflict.³⁵ This detail of the theoretical part is discussed in chapter three of this book under the topic 'Theoretical Underpinning'.

The whole second chapter is devoted to the study of the background of the conflict. This is important because, the major violent conflict, though, started of late in 1980s has its root in the Tsarist regime of 19th century.³⁶ The fourth chapter discussed the role third parties in the conflict. It analyses their respective national interest vis-à-vis conflict resolution.

Finally, the conclusion part of this book discussed the present situation and the prospect of conflict resolution. Although conjecture in nature, I have come to conclude that *status quo* is the best alternative available and constant engagement in dialogue for negotiation as the only option. The negotiation based on the contradictory principles of OSCE (the inviolability of international border and right to self-determination) has left the two conflicting parties claiming each one of the two principles. However, it does not amount to saying that the conflict can never be resolved. In fact if the conflicting parties soften their stand and approach on the basis of compromise, the conflict can be amicably solved.

³⁵ The Primordialist understanding of ethnic conflict suggest that, ethnic conflicts are inherent and unavoidable. Even if solved today, tomorrow it is bound to emerge again. Therefore the only way is to manage the conflict. The instrumentalist attributed the conflict to the role of individual, groups and elite mobilization. Therefore, is resolvable. The constructivist too believed that ethnic conflicts are resolvable, though on different ground. It is discussed on the theoretical part of this book.

Chapter Two

Background of the Conflict

2.1. Development of Hostility During the Czar Period

The roots of the hostility between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis exist in the complex, multifaceted antagonism that developed largely during Czarist Russian rule. In the Russian Empire, economic and social development in the late 19th century led to a growing division between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis: the latter were generally poor, unskilled, and rural, while the former inhibited the cities and occupied profitable positions as entrepreneurs and merchants. Benefiting disproportionately from economic advances- especially the establishment of a thriving oil industry in Baku at the close of 1800s-³⁷ and from frequent favoritism on the part of their Russian rulers, the Armenians were able to rise to key economic and political positions in the major cities of Transcaucasus. Among the Azerbaijanis, these realities caused feelings of resentment that gradually coalesced into anti- Armenian feelings. With the growth of pan-Turkism among the educated classes of Azerbaijanis in the late 19th century, these sentiments were given intellectual basis.

The sentiments of pan-Turkism took root among many educated Azerbaijanis in the late 1870s, largely in response to a policy of Russification towards the Azeris by the Czarist administration. A form of secular nationalism that had its roots in a declining Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century, pan-Turkism espoused the union of all Turkic peoples from the Balkans to western China and a promotion of a sense of national, linguistic, and historical commonality among them. The growth of this ideology among the Azerbaijanis of the Russian Empire fueled anti-Armenian sentiments not only because of its inherently racist nature, but also because Armenia itself was viewed as a geographic obstacle dividing the Turkic world.³⁸ Thus, according to Ter Minassian, "under the influence of small Azeri intelligentsia connected to the landed nobility and the new industrial

³⁶ Altstadt, Audrey L, "The Azerbaijani Turks' Response to Russian Conquest", *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 19, no. 3-4, Autumn-Winter 1986, p. 198.

³⁷ Ibid, p.199

³⁸ Christopher J. Walker, n.5, p. 84

bourgeoisie, Azeri national consciousness developed not so much against the Russian colonizer as against the Armenian".³⁹

The Armenians of the Russian Empire held feelings of animosity and contempt toward the Azerbaijanis as well. Following the experiences of their brethren under Ottoman Turkish rule, the Armenians of Transcaucasus began to equate the Azerbaijani Turks with the perpetrators of anti-Armenian policies in the Turkish Empire- especially after the pogroms of 1895-1896 and the massacres of 1915-1916. Meanwhile, in promoting the Armenians' ethno-linguistic distinctiveness, the budding Armenian nationalist movement in Russia in the late 19th century tended to foment further anti-Turkish, and therefore anti-Azerbaijani, sentiments. The result was the proliferation of feeling of mistrust, suspicion and enmity vis-à-vis the Azerbaijanis, feelings that were reciprocated in turn.

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While the growth of animosity between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis of Transcaucasia in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries made outright conflict between the two communities inevitable. Czarist nationality policies tended to worsen their already tense relationship. True to its name the Czarist policy**0**f divide and rule sought to promote jealousy and division among neighboring ethnic groups in order to ensure the monarchy's grip on power. When central authority waned during the Russian revolution of 1905, the tensions that had been building between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis exploded into violence throughout the Transcaucasus.

In early 1905, riots broke out in Baku following the death of an Azeri at the hands of an Armenian policeman. For more than a month, mobs of Azeris rampaged through the Armenian quarter of the city while Russian authorities acquiesced. By the time the violence was brought to an end by the pleas of local religious leaders, 600 Azerbaijanis and 900 Armenians had been killed. The lull in the bloodshed turned out to be only temporary, however; in May the violence reemerge in the town of Nakhichevan.⁴⁰

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¹⁹ Anahide Ter Minassian, "The Revolution of 1905 in Transcaucasia", Armenian Review, Vol.42, no.2, Summer 1989, p.14

⁴⁰ Audrey L.Altstadt, The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity Under Russian Rule, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1992, p.40

As the rule of law crumbled throughout Transcaucasus through the fall of 1905, chaos returned to Baku and its environs. Hundreds of Armenians-owned oil wells were set ablaze by Azeris in late September, and the Armenians defended their properties forcefully. Within a week, an estimated 1,500 people had been killed, and 1,026, of the region's 1,609 wells had been destroyed.⁴¹Tentative peace was restored in Transcaucasus only with the collapse of the revolutionary movement in Russia at the end of 1905 and the gradual reestablishment of order throughout the empire by 1907. Yet, the first blood had been shed between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, and the precedent for future conflict was set.

The explosion of 1905 was largely the product of class divisions reinforce along national lines and accentuated by Czarist policies. Aside from being the first case large-scale blood-letting between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, one of the major, though perhaps indirect, result of 1905 was the addition of a territorial dimension to the two peoples enmity.

For the Armenians, the 1905 violence at the hands of Azerbaijani Turks and the corresponding inaction on the part of the Russians were further indications of their need for self-reliance as people. This perception found expression in the growing Armenian nationalist movement in Transcaucasian Armenia, dominated by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or Dashnaktsutsiun. Importantly, a major component of the Dashnaks' revolutionary program after 1905 was the need for Armenian autonomy in areas regarded as historically Armenian. At the time, much of the focus was on the heartland of Turkish Armenia, but two regions in Transcaucasus Armenia also stirred significant irredentist feeling: Nagorno Karabakh and Nakhichevan- both of which were attached Azerbaijan the to under imperial Russian system of administration.⁴²Significantly, Nagorno Karabakh itself becomes a hotbed for the growth of Armenian nationalism following the violence of 1905.

⁴¹ Christopher J. Walker, Armenia: The Survival of a Nation, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993, Pp.776-77

¹² Richard G. Hovannisian, n.7, Pp. 22-23

While there had been little progress- or, for that matter, effort- on the part of the Azerbaijanis in developing a collective national consciousness prior to the late 19th Century, the 1905 bloodshed and the subsequent growth of Armenian irredentism sparked the rise of Azerbaijani nationalism. The Azeris' contemptuous view of the Armenian as a privileged class enjoying the favoritism of the Russians was complemented thereafter by a perceived fear of Armenian claims to Nagorno Karabakh was a major centre for the growth of Azerbaijani nationalism. Thus, Armenian and Azerbaijani nationalist movement developed side by side in the mountainous area claimed by both peoples.⁴³

The willingness of Armenian and Azerbaijani scholars to depict a clear ethnic history of the region where none exists is indicative of the passion attached to the Karabakh issue by both sides. For the Armenians, the nationalist affinity for Nagorno Karabakh developed over centuries of hardship brought about by foreign rule. Importantly, the Azerbaijanis' own attachment to the land is a much more recent historical phenomenon.

In momentous event for the development of the Armenia and Azerbaijan conflict, Russia annexed the Nagorno Karabakh region from Iran in 1805 as a result of the first Russo-Iranian war. Administered by the Iranians as a collective unit known as the Khanate of Karabakh, the region was populated by largely Armenians at the time of Russian takeover. In an attempt to consolidate their rule, the Russian dissolve the numerous Iranian administrative units in the conquered territories and reorganized them into a handful of larger gubeniia, or provinces. The former Khanate of Karabakh was expanded to include parts of the area to the east, forming the Elisavetpol Guberniia.⁴⁴

With creation of the new province of Elisavetpol, the Russian linked the mountainous region of Karabakh with the plains to the east, which were inhabited predominantly by Azeris. This development was beneficial for the Azeris, the majority of whom were seminomadic herders; the highlands of Karabakh provided valuable pasturage for livestock

⁴³ Ronald G. Sunny, Armenia in the Twentieth Century, Scholar's Press, Chico, 1983, p.16

⁴⁴ Victor Porkhovmosky, "Historical Origins of Interethnic Conflicts in Central Asia and Transcaucasia", in Vitaly V. Naumkin, (ed.), Central Asia and Transcaucasia: Ethnicity and Conflict, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1994, p.25

during the summer months.⁴⁵ Overtime this arrangement had two significant consequences for the development of the Azerbaijanis' attachment to Nagorno Karabakh.

By linking the highlands of Karabakh with the plains to the east, the Russians brought the economic and transportation networks of both areas closer together, with Nagorno Karabakh becoming integrated gradually but completely into the economic system of Transcaucasia.⁴⁶ The predominantly pastoral Azeris became dependent heavily upon this link and it would later be used to justify the inclusion of Nagorno Karabakh within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

Adding to the growth of Azerbaijani economic ties to the Karabakh highlands in the late 19th century was a growing emotional and national affinity for the area. Many of the great Azeri poets, composers, and writers hailed from the region,⁴⁷ and, more importantly a semi-feudal landed aristocracy took root there that become a major focal point of the Azerbaijani nationalism that was developing during that time period.⁴⁸ In the aftermath of the communal violence between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in 1905, this aristocracy become a significant rallying force for Azerbaijani nationalism, Thus, for nationalisticand to a lesser extent, economic- reasons, Nagorno Karabakh came to occupy a dear place in the hearts of the Azerbaijanis while under Russian rule.

Although of major significant to the Azeris, Russia's conquest of Nagorno Karabakh also had an important impact on Armenian claims to the area. While the mountainous region was annexed by St. Petersburg in 1805, the rest of Transcaucasian Armenian remained under the Iranian ruled until subdued by Russia in 1826. The Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh were thus separated from their brethren to the west for 21 years, during which

⁴⁵ Donabedian's, n.14, p.79

⁴⁶ Hunter, *The Transcaucasus in Transition: Nation Building and Conflict*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, 1994, Pp.97-98

 ⁴⁷ Audrey L. Altstadt, "Nagorno Karabakh: 'Apple of Discord' in the Azerbaijan SSR", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.7, no.4, 1988, p.71
 ⁴⁸ Nora Dudwick, "Armenian-Azerbaijani Relations and Karabakh: History, Memory and Politics", *Armenian Review*, Vol.46, no.1-4, p.87

time they were incorporated into the Elisavetpol province where the Azerbaijanis had a majority.⁴⁹

Of additional significant, the Russian's reorganization of the former Transcaucasian possessions brought with it the dissolution of the five Armenian principalities in the Karabakh highlands that had managed to maintain semi-autonomy under the Iranian rule since 1603. Thus, the tradition of Armenian semi-autonomy in Nagorno Karabakh dating back to the second century BC was broken by St. Petersburg in 1805. Although a major blow, these events hardened the Armenians connection to Nagorno Karabakh, and the region became a focal point for the development of Armenian nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The tiny region of Nagorno Karabakh occupies a central place in the consciousness of both Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples. For the Armenians, Karabakh is a 'refuge and bastion',⁵⁰ the final stronghold where a tradition of national autonomy was preserved nearly uninterrupted; for the Azerbaijanis, Nagorno Karabakh is both a key part of the ancient state to which they trace their ancestry and a focal point of their nationalism. Had relations remain good between the people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it 'bot certain whether overlapping claims to the territory of Nagorno Karabakh would have resulted necessarily in conflict between them.

However, the growth of ill-will during that time period, culminating in the violence of 1905, made it necessarily inevitable that the region would become a bone of contention between the two neighboring peoples. With the proliferation of mutually reinforcing nationalisms in Nagorno Karabakh among the Armenians and Azerbaijanis after 1905, all that was needed was a spark to set of an explosion of emotions on both sides. That spark came when the First World War brought chaos, destruction, and unexpected independence to Armenia and Azerbaijan.

2.2. The First World War and its impact

⁴⁹ Porkhomovsky's, n.44, p.25

In the spring of 1918, Turkish troop capitalized on Russia's withdrawal from the Transcaucasus to begin an attack on eastern Armenia. Join in the assault by irregular Azerbaijani, the so called 'Army of Islam' set to open a corridor between Turkey and Azerbaijan at Armenia's expense. Although out-gunned and outnumbered, the Armenian put up stiff resistance and succeeded in stopping the Turkish advance at the battle of Sardarabad.⁵¹ In the meantime, Georgia and Azerbaijan declared their independence on 26 and 27 May, respectively, and Armenia was left a little choice but to follow suit three days later.⁵²

Despite the victory at Sardarabad, much of Armenia remained under Turkish occupation, and the authorities knew that they could not hold off another determined Turkish assault. By the treaty of Batum, concluded on 4th June 1918, Armenia accepted crushing defeat at the hands of the Ottomans: all Armenian claims to the historic heartland of eastern Turkey were repudiated, and the districts Kars and Ardahan in Transcaucasian Armenia were ceded to Turkey. Together with the territorial loses imposed by the March 1918 treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Batum treaty forced the Republic of Armenia to begin its existence on 4,500 sq. miles of bleak, rocky land inhabited by 600,000 people- most of them refugee who had fled the Turkish genocide in eastern Anatolia.⁵³

Like Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan began its independence in the face of chaotic situation. The oil rich city of Baku had emerged as a stronghold of Bolshevism shortly after the October Revolution 1917, and friction between the Bolsheviks and the pan-Turkic Musavat party sparked a brief civil war in March 1918. During the so called 'March Days' that ensued, Armenian forces allied with the Bolsheviks to crush a Musavit bid to gain control of the city. ⁵⁴Equating the Musavit with the Turks, the Armenian set out to take revenge for the persecution and genocide suffered at the hands of the Ottomans.

⁵⁰ Donabedian, n.14, p.62

⁵¹ Walker, n.39, pp. 254-255

⁵² Hovannisian, n.7, pp. 188-191

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 261-262

While not an isolated incident in light of the Azerbaijanis participation in the Ottoman Turkish offensive against Armenia in early 1918, the 'March Days' played a major role in bringing pre-existing communal tension to the surface of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. Moreover, with the checkered demographic pattern of the Transcaucasus leaving large numbers of Armenians and Azerbaijanis within the borders of each new state, the potential for ethnic conflict was great.

Although the pullout of Russian forces from the Transcaucasus following the October Revolution of 1917 marked the beginning of major upheaval in the affairs of the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, the final defeat in the Ottoman Turkey in October 1918 made an already frenzied situation worse. Under the terms of the Mudros armistice of 30 October, Turkey agreed to pull its troops back from the Transcaucasus in order to make way for the forthcoming British military presence.⁵⁵ Before that presence was in place fully, however, the three states of Transcaucasia made a desperate scramble to incorporate disputed territories into the fledging republics before the onset of the Paris Peace Conference, which was designated by the allies as the forum through which all territorial disputes left over from the war were to be settled. While there was no shortage of dispute among the Georgians, Armenians, and the Azerbaijanis in 1918, Nagorno Karabakh eclipsed all of the others in terms of the emotional and nationalistic fervor shown by the conflicting parties.

The spark that ignited the powder keg of Nagorno Karabakh came in the spring of 1918, when the pan-Turkic "Army of Islam" invaded eastern Armenia. Prodded by their Azerbaijani allies, the advancing Turkish forces pushed to the environs of Nagorno Karabakh in August and demanded the Armenian citizenry's capitulation to Azerbaijani rule. By October, the Armenian resistance was overwhelmed by the Turks' superior numbers, and Karabakh leadership was forced to submit to the "Army of Islam" in exchange for the promise of merciful treatment.

⁵⁴ Ronald G. Sunny, The Baku Commune, 1917-1918: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1972,p.218 55 Walker ,n.9, p. 259

Within less than a week the Turkish unleashed a terror campaign against the townspeople marked by mass arrest, public hangings, and the forceful disarming of the populace. In response the Karabakh Armenian leadership repudiated its acceptance of the Turks' terms and began an armed insurgence against them. The Armenian brutal guerilla campaigned forestalled successfully the attempted Turkish conquest of Nagorno Karabakh until the Ottoman forces began to pullout from the Transcaucasus in the closing days of the First World War.56

With departure of the Azerbaijani key ally from the area in November 1918, the Armenian saw a golden opportunity to make Nagorno Karabakh apart of their fledging country once and for all. However, before a popular Armenian partisan leader could march on the mountainous area and insure its incorporation into the republic, another new player emerged onto the regional scene i.e. Great Britain.

As the British primary motive was strategic and economic concerns, it immediately embarked upon a generally pro-Azerbaijani policy and attached Nagorno Karabakh to the Republic of Azerbaijan. Initially, Armenians response was one of shock, for they had fought loyally on the side of the allies during the war and felt that the British should have been sympathetic to their post-war claims in return. As it become clear that the Britain was playing in the hands of the Azerbaijanis on the matter of the disputed territories, the Armenians' disbelief was transformed into resistance.⁵⁷

The Fourth Assembly of Karabakh Armenians was convened on 12th February 1918 and reiterated its rejection of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno Karabakh and secured the regions inclusion in the Armenian republic.⁵⁸ Despite assurance from local British commander violent resistance continued. Frustrated in their efforts to secure Armenian acceptance of Baku rule, British commander became gradually acquiesce in the use of strong arms/measure on the part of the Azeris to accept such resistance. By the early

 ⁵⁶ Cox and Eibner, n.17, p. 20
 ⁵⁷ Artin H. Arslanian, "Britain and the Question of Mountainous Karabakh", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.16, no.1, January 1980, p.93

summer, open conflict between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh seemed imminent.

On 5th June 1919, clashes erupted finally between the two sides following the pullout of British forces from the Karabakh highlands. During this time the situation in the region had began to tilt gradually in favor of Azerbaijan. Outgunned and outnumbered, the Karabakh Armenian was unable increasingly to defend themselves, and the government of Armenia was facing problems of its own and could offer little assistance. Moreover, the British had announced their decision to pull out completely from the Transcaucasus despite the fact that the Paris Peace Conference had not yet begun to take up the question of the region and its territorial disputes; thus, the Armenian believed that whatever restrain the British may have on the Azerbaijanis would evaporate entirely following their withdrawal.⁵⁹ Seeing the balance of power in the dispute shifting increasingly in favor of Azerbaijan, Karabakh Armenian decided to negotiate. As a result of talk held through the summer of 1919, a 26-point document was signed providing for the provisional authority of Baku over a quasi-autonomous Nagorno Karabakh pending the final determination of its status at the Paris Peace Conference.⁶⁰

Following the conclusion of the agreement with the provisional Azerbaijani administration of Nagorno Karabakh in August 1919, tension relaxed somewhat among the region inhabitants. However, despite the apparent normalization of life in Nagorno Karabakh, underlying enmity remained. Among Armenian nationalist dominated by the Dashnak party, resentment toward the Karabakh leadership lingered for its ostensible submission to Baku rule. Among the Azerbaijanis, the desire to turn provisional administration into permanent rule continued to be strong. By early 1920, both sides had begun preparations for making a change in the *status quo*.

⁵⁸ Gerard J. Libaridian, (ed.) The Karabakh File: Documents and Facts on the Question of Mountainous Karabakh, 1918-1988, The Zoryan Institute, Cambridge, March 1988, pp. 17-19

³⁰ Arslanian, "Britain and the Question of Mountainous Karabakh", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.16, no.1, January 1980p.94 ⁶⁰ Walker, n.39, p. 96

2.3. The Impact of Russian Revolution

Despite the pullout from Transcaucasia in late 1917, Russia never gave up its claim to the region, and Bolshevik leader made it clear that they regarded its independence as only temporary. Moscow's reconquest of the Transcaucasus was made possible, first, by a modus vivedi with Kemal Ataturk, the nationalist leader of the post-Ottoman Turkey. Needing Russian arms and money in his battle against the occupying allied powers. Ataturk knew the necessity of having a land corridor with Soviet Russia. For its part, Moscow saw Turkey as its cohort in the struggle against the western powers as well as potential bridgehead for communist expansion into the Near East. With a mutual pledge of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, the Turco-Soviet rappro**och**ment was completed, selling doom for the independence of Transcaucasian republics.

In an attempt to combat the Armenian uprising in the Nagorno Karabakh, Azerbaijan shifted the bulk of its military forces to the mountainous region in late March 1920, where it fought numerous engagements and laid waste eventually to the Armenian stronghold of Shusha.⁶¹ Seeing a virtually undefended border before them, the Bolsheviks seized the opportunity to gain a foothold in Azerbaijan. The Eleventh Red Army entered Baku unopposed on 27th April 1920, and Azerbaijan became the first Soviet Socialist Republic of Transcaucasia the next day.⁶²

One of the first acts of newly established Soviet government was to convey an ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Karabakh and surrounding region, "otherwise the Revolutionary Committee of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan will consider itself in the state of war with the republic of Armenia³⁶³. Given three days to decide, Armenia had little choice but to comply with the demand; the Eleventh Red Army entered Nagorno Karabakh at the end of May 1920, in effect Sovietizing the mountainous region.

⁶¹ Ibid, pp.98-99

⁶² Christopher J. Walker, "Between Turkey and Russia: Armenians Predicament", World Today, Vol. 44, August-September 1988, p.143 ⁶³ Walker, n.39, p. 284

Notwithstanding the occupation of Nagorno Karabakh by Soviet forces, the area's incorporation into the Azerbaijan SSR did not take place at once. An Armenian delegation in Moscow at the time found Bolshevik leaders to be somewhat open minded on the matter. On 10th August 1920 an agreement was signed between Armenia and Moscow providing for the Soviet occupation of Karabakh and surrounding territories until an equitable and final solution could be reached on their status. However, events made the accord obsolete the following month as Armenia found itself at war with Turkey.

At odds since the summer of 1919 over the contested provinces of eastern Anatolia, Armenia and Turkey became embroiled in open conflict in September 1920. In light of their numerical advantage and support from the Soviets, the tide of battle turned quickly in favor of the Turks, and the Armenians were forced to sue for peace on 18th November. Under the term of the treaty of Alexandropol, Armenia was force to renounce its claims to eastern Anatolia and cede to Turkey the territories lost in the war. Further reduced in size in the hands of the Turks. Armenia was thrown into a political crisis marked by the fall of its government. Seeing a right opportunity to gain control of yet another Transcaucasian republic, the Bolshevik ordered the Eleventh Red Army to march on the Armenian capital of Yerevan, and Armenia became a Soviet Socialist Republic on 1st December 1920.⁶⁴ Thus, the question of Nagorno Karabakh was transformed overnight from inter-state dispute to an internal matter of the Soviet Union.

Throughout late 1920 and the first half of 1921, a curious series of events transpired that resulted in the incorporation of Nagorno Karabakh into Azerbaijan. The first came on the day of Armenian's Sovietization, when the following telegram was sent to the government of Armenia from that of Soviet Azerbaijan: "As of today the border dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan are declared resolved. Mountainous Karabakh, Zangezur, and Nakhichevan are considered part of the Soviet Republic of Armenian".⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Richard Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1964, p.232-233 ⁶⁵ Libaridian, n.58, p.34

Following the Sovietization of Armenia, Nariman Narimanov, the Bolshevik leaders of Azerbaijan, repudiated the concession and reasserted his republic's claim to Nagorno Karabakh. In this he had the apparent support of Stalin, who wrote "it is essential to take sides firmly with one of the two parties, in the present case, of course, Azerbaijan".⁶⁶

In another peculiar event, The Caucasian Bureau of the Communist Party took up the question Nagorno Karabakh on 12th June 1921 and proclaimed: "Based on the declaration of the Revolutionary Committee of the Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan and the agreement between and the agreement between the Socialist Soviet Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is hereby declared that Mountainous Karabakh is henceforth an integral part of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia".⁶⁷ Narimanov, who had been present at the meeting, was outraged and warned that the loss of Karabakh could foment anti-Soviet activity in Azerbaijan.

The Caucasian Bureau met again to consider the Commission's recommendations and to settle once and for all the territorial conflicts in Transcaucasia. The fate of Nagorno Karabakh was determined at two meetings. On 4thJuly the Bureau decided by majority vote to transfer the region to Armenia SSR. Also present was Stalin, then, the Soviet Commissar for Nationalities, who did not participate in the debate. The next day, without deliberation or a formal vote, the bureau released the following decision: "Proceeding from the necessity for national peace among Muslims and Armenians and of the economic ties between upper [mountainous] and lower Karabakh, of its permanent ties with Azerbaijan, mountainous Karabakh is to remain within the borders of Azerbaijan SSR, receiving wide regional autonomy with the administrative centre at Shusha, becoming an autonomous region". This reason of economic links between mountainous Karabakh and eastern Transcaucasia was unacceptable to the Armenians because they argued that the economic ties between Armenia and Nakhichevan did not result in the latter's inclusion within Armenia.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Quoted in Walker, n.39, p.107

⁶⁷ Libaridian, n.58, p.35

⁶⁸ Quoted in Altstadt, n.36, p. 118

A true motive behind Stalin's intervention in the decision on Nagorno Karabakh's status was his principle of divide-and-rule. By placing the region within the Azerbaijan, the Armenian inhabitants could be used as potential hostage to ensure the Armenian SSR's cooperation with the wishes of the Soviet leadership. By the same token, an autonomous Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan could serve as a potential pro-Soviet fifth column in the event of disloyalty by the Azerbaijanis.⁶⁹ In order to convert these potentialities into realities, Stalin created the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno Karabakh (AONK) on 7th July 1923 and drew its border so as to leave a narrow strip of land separating it physically from Armenia.⁷⁰ As an autonomous area under Azerbaijani suzerainty, the AONK was granted the authority to administer its own affairs in the realm of their culture and education, and parallel party and state organs were created and staffed by Armenians. In 1937, the region's name was changed permanently to the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO).

The Sovietization of Armenia and Azerbaijan had a momentous impact on the development of the two republics' conflict over Nagorno Karabakh. For the Armenians, Stalin's 1923 decision was a tremendous national loss; for the Azerbaijanis, it was a great victory, ratifying what was viewed as their historic right to rule the region. Although Armenian'complains about the situation were squelched during the Stalin years, the cause of unification between Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh was again taken up during the thaw of the Khrushchev period. A petition signed by 2,500 Karabakh Armenians was sent to Khrushchev on 19th May 1964. A second petition, signed by 13 prominent Karabakh Armenians was sent to the Soviet leadership but both failed.⁷¹

Over the ensuing decades, the question of Nagorno Karabakh was suppressed by strong central rule from Moscow. However, in a case where an underlying animosity between two peoples was fueled by a consuming attachment to the same piece of land, it was only a matter of time before the question would resurface violently.

⁶⁹ Cox and Eibner, n.17, p. 31

⁷⁰ Walker, n.39,, p.109

⁷¹ Libaridian , n.58, pp. 42-46

Chapter Three **Theoretical Underpinning**

3.1. Ethnicity and Group Conflict

A link with a common territory provides the basis for the perception of historical continuity for the ethnic group. It is in reference to the historic territory that ethnic group roots their collective memories, their heritage and their traditions. Much use is made of a mythologized history of a classical civilization associated with a homeland. This relationship is so powerful that groups detached from such homelands maintain their symbolic links to it often through the transmission of a nationalist history, folktales, legends, and cultural myths. Where ethnic groups are minorities outside of their traditional homeland, they often face discrimination, which reinforces their group identity around their collective persecution, which in turn intensifies their sense of ethnic identity.⁷²

Shared culture within ethnic communities provides for ethnic identification. Foremost among cultural communities are language and religion.⁷³ Language is often viewed as the most essential criterion for ethnicity, but, linguistic commonality does not, in itself, suggest ethnic commonality-nor does religious commonality. Humans have many identities simultaneously and one's ethnic identity may crosscut rather than overlap one's language or religious group. For example, ethnically dissimilar Turks and Kurds share the religion of Islam while one is linguistically Turkish and the other predominantly Kurmanji. Spinners speak Spanish but do so Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, as well as many South Americans and some Africans. The same can be said of religious similarity. Ethnically dissimilar Azeris, Kurds, Turks, Persians, Arabs, Malay share common religion (Islam). Buddhism subsumed many Asian ethnic groups and Christianity in Western Europe and Americas is practice by many ethnic groups.

 ⁷² David Lavison, n.9, p.64
 ⁷³ Ibid p.65

Interestingly, the distribution of these widely variable characteristics does not appear to be associated with conflict in any consistent manner.⁷⁴ For example, ethnicity links the Irish inhabitants of Ireland but religious differences between Protestant and Catholic coethnic appear greater salience and have come to define the conflict in Ulster. Linguistically and religiously Hutu and Tutsi have fashioned separate ethnic identity from their colonial past and have precipitated genocidal violence against each other in Rwanda and Burundi. While religious difference is a conflict-laden fault line between social groups in India, the superimposition of ethnicity is associated with interethnic conflict in Sudan, Tibet and Israel.

The persistence of multiple identities would seem to preclude the salience of a single identity among individuals and population. It is often argued that where each of these factors is present it tends to reinforce and solidify ethnic identity; however, where these factors do not overlap, ethnic identity may be more malleable.⁷⁵ To be sure, persons choose to emphasize one over the other for reason of status, expediency, or in response to peer pressures. Whereas individuals may choose to identify with one or another aspects of their identity for personal, social, economic, or political reasons, one should not assume that factors operative at the individual level are identical to those at the group level.⁷⁶ To determine the extent to which a conflict is in fact "ethnic conflict" is hardly a straightforward exercise. The population of potential cases is quiet diverse and often ambiguous owing largely to the absence of general criteria for categorization of such conflicts. For example, interethnic conflict ranges from the interaction of competing groups that-at its most bellicose-can take the form of civil wars, to wars between ethnically dissimilar states. Interethnic civil wars include cases such as dispute among Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in the former Yugoslavia, or the conflict in Liberia and Sudan; while interethnic state wars are epitomized by the Palestinian (1948), Suez (1956), six day (1967), October (1973), and Lebanese (1982), wars between Israel and various Arab states, or wars between India and Pakistan.

⁷⁴ Tarja Vayrynen, "Ethnic Communality and Conflict Resolution", Cooperation and Conflict, Vol.33, no.1, 1998, p.65

⁷⁵ Carment David and Patrick James, "Internal Constrains and Interstate Ethnic Conflict: Towards a Crisis-Based Assessment of Irredentism", Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol.39, no.1, March 1995, p.85

Ethnicity as a concept is difficult to define, involving, as it does, group's perceptions of identity and affinity. Ethnic conflict is also problematic, as a category in as much as it appears to assume that ethnicity is the most salient issue in the conflicts so designated. The presence of ethnicity as a variable does not suggest its centrality as cause or correlate of intergroup conflict. Since virtually all intergroup conflict involves peoples possessing distinguishable if not different cultural traits, most intergroup conflicts-including most interstate wars-are ethnic conflicts; therefore, to label instances of such conflict as ethnic conflict is superfluous.⁷⁷ The basic difficulty is that, too often scholars seem to implicitly accept the argument that ethnic differences provide the casus belli for these conflicts. For example, sudden convulsion of ethnic conflict, such as in the case of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, are often viewed as resulting from historic cultural gulfs. Hutu and Tutsi have no history of ethnic conflict prior to colonization; in fact they share common language and customs. While the story of Israel and Ishmael interesting mythology, Jews and Arabs have not been fighting since antiquity but intermittently since the 1920s. Serbs and Croats hardly fought each other prior to this century. In fact intermarriages rate were quite high even up to 1980.

Among the most persistent interethnic disputants in the 19th century were the Russian and Turks who fought three wars in that century, including the Crimean war from 1853 -1856, which presumably resulted from Russia's attempt to protect its fellow Slavs (who were predominantly Christian) and the holy places in Palestine. The Turks resisted the Russian incursion with the support of France and latter Great Britain. However, instead of ethnic label often given to this conflict, a compelling case can be made that Czar Nicholas used the pretext for the protection of Christians and the holy places in the Palestine in order to rationalize his territorial demands for the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia located within the declining Ottoman Empire. Although cultural dissimilarity among the original belligerents is apparent, this does not demonstrate that an ethnic difference was a precipitant to the conflict.

⁷⁶ Ibid p.87

⁷⁷ David Lavison, n.9, p.69

Much of the confusion regarding the categorization of disputes as ethnically based or not be avoided by use of more appropriate phrase, interethnic conflict, rather than ethnic conflict, since the latter appears to suggest that the conflict itself derives from ethnicity instead of the actual issues of the dispute. Often the image of ethnic group in conflict is an ideological construct of nationalist historians and politicians pursuing their own political ends. Additionally with multiethnic states becoming the norm one would expect an increase incidence of interethnic conflict within and among states were dissimilar ethnic groups inherently combative. Clearly interethnic cooperation more than conflict, has been the norm.

It is important to understand how the pertinent issues to these conflicts arise and how societies are mobilized around ethnic identity. Heightened emphasize on ethnic exclusivism may generate conflict but how and why that occurs is unclear.⁷⁸ Not only must elite assert the salience of ethnic criteria in order to mobilize their societies but the ethnicity argument must strike a cord within the ethnic population in such a way as to compel co-ethnics to follow. While the motivation to follow is an often neglected and rarely examined aspect of ethnic mobilization, one is reminded that elites can mobilize very disparate communities, and even invent communities, and moves these societies to conflict. One example is provided by the Italian nationalist D'Azeglio's famous statement following the wars of unification; "We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians".⁷⁹

Ethnic mobilization presupposes the salience of ethnic identity. An ethnic group has to perceive the political significance of its ethnicity before it can be mobilsed for political action. To analyze interethnic conflict one must examine the conditions associated with the increase salience of ethnic identity.

3.2. Ethnic Conflict

A conflict can be anything ranging from an individual to international. There can be a conflict between individuals, groups, states etc. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defined a

 ⁷⁸ Dominique Jacquin-Berdal, "Ethnic Wars and International Intervention", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol.27, no.1, 1998, p.130
 ⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 135

conflict as 'a serious disagreement or argument, a prolonged struggle, an incompatibility between opinions, principles etc'. Accordingly, a conflict can occur at any level, from a slightest difference between individual's opinions, principles etc to a violent and prolong struggle between individual's groups or nations. However, what distinguish ethnic conflict from others **is** the collectivity and the attribute to cultural factors as precipitants to the conflict. ⁸⁰

Ethnic conflicts are conflict between individuals and/ or group that are stimulated primarily by group membership and differential treatment based on the group membership. This, in addition to sharing certain physical and cultural traits, racial and ethnic groups are seen as politically, socially, psychologically different and thus worthy of different treatment.

Although such conflict has been going on throughout human history, racial and ethnic conflict has become particularly prominent in the 1990s, following the end of cold-war. The reason for this rise are numerous, McDonald attributed to "Peoples' loss of identity, loss of language, religion and customs, poverty, starvation, overpopulation, lack of water, other environmental issues etc"⁸¹. But he emphasizes that the loss of other forms of political organization tended to suppress many of these conflicts.

In the early 1900s, most of the world was dominated by great empires: the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires (which collapsed after World War I), the Japanese empire (gone after World War II), and the British, French, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese empires, all of which disappeared between 1945 and 1975. Finally in 1992 the Soviet empire collapsed. Most current ethnic conflicts were generated by policies established during the days of empire. Today there is no power available to keep the lid on the pot, so it boils over and people get burned.

⁸⁰ Lawson S, "The Politics of Culture: Critical Issues for Comparative and International Studies", paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Studies Association, Chicago, April, 1995

⁸¹ McDonald, John W, "Why Ethnic Conflict", Peace Builder, Vol. 3(i), 1995, p.2

In the study of ethnic conflict resolution the terms 'ethnic group' and 'ethnicity' needed to be defined, because the understanding of these terms influences in the understanding of such conflict. For instance, if ethnicity is thought to be something given and determining factor for personal and group identities, conflict resolution efforts may not be of much help. However, if ethnicity is assumed to be something subjectively defined and instrumentally mobilized, ethnic conflict resolution can engage, for example in ethnic identity management.

Different scholars have defined ethnic conflict in different ways. According to David Lavison, "ethnic conflict means violenœ among groups who differs from one another in terms of culture, religion, physical features or language"⁸². Stavenhagan suggest that "ethnic conflict is a confrontation (at any level: political, social, military) in which the contending actors or party identify themselves or each other (or are so identified by outsiders) in ethnic terms, that is using ethnic criteria"⁸³. These ethnic criteria include any self-defined combination of shared culture, nationality, language, religion and race. Brown defined "ethnic as a dispute about important political, economic, social culture or political issues between two or more ethnic communities"⁸⁴. Carment suggest that ethnic conflict comprise 'threat to values' based on ethnic boundaries between in-groups and out-group which has the potential to give rise to group mobilization and politicization qua separate community, society or state.⁸⁵

Since the end of cold-war, scholars have increasingly focused on cultural factor as precipitance to conflict. It is argued that ethnic conflict is the greatest killers. Gurr estimates that more than 26 million refugees were fleeing the 50 major ethnonational

⁸² He made distinction between 'violent and non-violent ethnic conflict'. Non-violent ethnic conflict takes the form of political, economic, or cultural repression of ethnic minorities, and includes restriction on voting, burdensome taxes, exclusion from certain professions, residential isolation, educational **q**uotas, prohibition on the use ethnic language, and restriction on ethnic worship. For more see David Lavison, n.9, p. 62

⁸³ Harrol A Henderson, "Culture or Continuity: Ethnic Conflict, the Similarity of States, and the Onset of War, 1820-1989", Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol.41, no.5, October 1997, p.651

⁸⁴ Brown M, "Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflict" in Brown M Ethnic Conflict and International Security, (ed.), Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1994, p.4

⁸⁵ Carment D, "The International **b**imensions of Ethnic Conflict: Concept, Indicator and Theory", Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 30, no.3, 1993, p.147

conflict that were occurring in 1993 and 1994, with each conflict responsible for an average of 80,000 deaths.⁸⁶ One scholar even suggests that animosity among ethnic groups is beginning to rival the spread of nuclear weapons as the most serious threat to peace that the world faces.⁸⁷ However, ethnic conflicts are difficult to resolve due to variety of reasons, at the most it can be managed: These conflicts affect individual and group identities as well as interest and world views. Thus they are extremely complex and deep rooted. Threats to a group are direct threats to each members of the group. Further, threats to an individual's identity are as fundamental and serious as any treats that can be made. Such threats can not be ignored but will be resisted and countered in all the ways possible, because identity is a fundamental human need.

Ethnic conflicts are characterized by ethnocentrism- the process of group identification through which group defined themselves as 'good' and others as 'bad'. Although such process lead to group cohesion and internal effectiveness, they escalate conflicts with outside groups, who are almost always considered to be inferior if not less to human. This bias leads people to perceive any actions of outsider as malevolent. Even conciliatory actions are likely to be interpreted as 'trick' not real effort at peace building. Further, groups tend to assume that the outsiders hostile actions are caused by the outsiders bad character, not the situation they are faced with or a divined individual who does not represent the group as a whole. Ethnic conflicts tend to perpetuate themselves. Individual and group identity become so intertwined with the conflict that maintaining the conflict is often considered safer than pursuing peace. People who pursue peace are seen as 'traitors' to the cause. Further, conciliatory gestures are often thought to be too risky as they might signal weakness or the intention to give-in.

⁸⁶ Gurr T, "People Against State: Ethnopolitical and the Changing World System", International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 38, 1994, p.350 ⁸⁷ Harrol A Henderson, n 83, p. 650

3.3. Approaches to Ethnic Conflict

There are primarily three strands of understanding of ethnicity. The three schools of thought represented by the primordialist, instrumentalist and the constructivist.88 Primordialist approach takes ethnicity as a fix characteristic of individuals and communities. Whether rooted in inherent biological traits or centuries of past practice now beyond the ability individuals or groups to alter, one is perceived as Serbs, a zulu, or a Chechen. In this view ethnic divisions and tensions are natural. Although recognizing that ethnic warfare is not a constant state of affairs, primordialists see conflict as flowing from ethnic differences and, therefore, not necessarily in need of explanation. Although analysts might probe the catalysts in any given outbreak of violence, conflict is understood to be ultimately rooted in ethnicity itself. As Anthony D. Smith writes, "ethnic conflict flow inevitably from ethnicity: wherever ethnic nationalism has taken hold of population, there one may expect to find powerful assertion of national selfdetermination that, if long opposed, will embroil whole regions in bitter and protracted ethnic conflict"⁸⁹. Whether peace and stability of such regions will be better served in the short term by measures of containment, federation, mediation or even partition, in the long run there can be little escape from the many conflagrations that the unsatisfied yearnings of ethnic nationalism are likely to kindle. Analyses of conflict from within the primordialist approach stress the uniqueness and overriding importance of ethnic identity. When viewed through this lens, ethnic conflict is sue generic; what one learns about ethnic conflict is typically not relevant to other social, political or economic conflict.

The most frequent criticism of the primordialist approach is its assumption of fixed identities and its failure to account for variations in the level of conflict over time and place. In short, the approach founders on its inability to explain the emergence of new and transformed identities or account for the long periods in which either ethnicity is not a salient political characteristic or relations between different ethnic groups are comparatively peaceful.

⁸⁸ According to Rotchild D & David A Lake, there are three schools of thought, represented by the primordialists, the instrumentalists and the Constructivist, and ethnic conflict is primarily caused by the 'fear of the future, lived through present', David A Lake and Rotchild (eds.), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1998, p.5f
⁸⁹ Ibid, p.7

The *instrumentalist* approach, on the other hand, understands ethnicity as a tool used by individuals, groups, or elites to obtain some larger, typically material end. In this view, ethnicity has little independent standing with outside the political process in which collective ends are sought. Whether used defensively to thwart the ambitiours of others or offensively to achieve an end of one's own, ethnicity is primarily a label or set of symbolic tie that is used for political advantage- much like interest group membership or political party affiliation. Given the existence structure of states, and the geographical concentration of individuals with common social or economic backgrounds within these entities, ethnicity may be a powerful and frequently used political tool, but according to instrumentalist this does not distinguish ethnicity fundamentally from other political affiliation.

It follows from the instrumentalist approach that the lessons drawn from ethnic conflicts can often be applied to other sorts of conflicts. If politicized, ethnicity is not inherently different from other forms of political association, ethnic conflict should not necessarily be different from other conflict based on interest or ideology. In this view, ethnic conflict, however prevalent, is part of the larger conflict process.

Critics of instrumentalism counter that ethnicity is not something that can be decided upon by individuals at will like other political affiliations, but is embedded within the controlled **of** the larger society. They point to the inherent social nature of all ethnic identities and argue, in contrast, that ethnicity can only be understood within a relational framework.

Finally bridging the other perspective and representing an emerging scholarly consensus, *constructivists* emphasize the social origins and nature of ethnicity. Arguing that ethnicity is neither immutable nor completely open, this approach posits that ethnicity is constructed from dense webs of social interactions. In the constructivist view ethnicity is not an individual attribute but a social phenomenon. A person's identity remains beyond the choice or control of that individual. As social interaction change, conceptions of

ethnicity evolve as well. As but one example, until the late 1980s, the cosmopolitanism of the urban areas and rewards offered by the federal state prompted many individuals in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and the other constituent republic to evolve slowly towards a Yugoslav identity. As the state disintegrated, these same individuals, whether they wanted or not, were quickly pressed by event to return to their more pluralistic ethnic roots.

As with the primordialist and the instrumentalists, constructivists do not see ethnicity as inherently conflictual. Although ethnicity is robust, the turn towards violence still needs to be explained. For instrumentalist, as noted, conflict is largely stimulated by elites who mobilize ethnicity in pursuit of their own narrow interests. For constructivist on the other hand conflict is caused by certain types of what might be called pathological social systems, which individuals do not control. In this view it is the social system that breeds violent conflict, not individuals, and it is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity that can cause conflict, once begun, to spin rapidly out of control. "One of the great cruelty of ethnic conflict is that everyone is labeled as combatants- by the identity they possesseven if they are not", said John Chipman.⁹⁰ Thus ethnic conflict in their extreme can become total conflict.

Constructivist accounts of ethnic conflict are generalizable, but only to other conflict that are also based largely on socially constructed groups and cleavages. This include clan, religions, regionalist, or nationalist grouping but excludes class and other material interest-based conflict more likely founded on individual attributes.

Thus we cannot fix a particular ethnic conflict strictly only to one approach, because if we classify Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict as the primordialist do, it undermines the complex social web in which these two identities are formed. It not only overlooked the role of other factors such as individual, groups, elites etc. but also amounts to

⁹⁰ Ho- won, Jeong, Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction, Ashgate, Aldershot, Burlington, 2000, p.45

intractibility of the conflict and the futility of the conflict resolution effort through negotiation, mediation and third parties intervention.

At the same time we cannot oversimplify the conflict as the way the instrumentalist explained i.e a conflict used as a tool by individuals, groups, or elites to obtain their larger, typically material end. Though individual, groups, and elites have played their part in the conflict for their selfish gain, there are other social beliefs and values which have played their role in the incessant conflict for a long time. At the same time the instrumentalist understanding of ethnic conflict as nothing different from any other conflict based on interest and ideology is 1 flawed to the extent that it does not realistically distinguish the different types of conflict. Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict cannot be equated simply with all other sorts of conflict based on interest and ideology. If interest and ideology are the sole driving force behind Armenia, it has no rational justification in waging a war for the sake of mountainous Karabakh which has no natural resources worth a prolong conflict and does not give much of geopolitical strategicness in terms security. If the conflict has persisted for such a long period it is because both Armenia and Azerbaijan have identified their roots of nationalism from the same region, Nagorno Karabakh. It is the emotional attachment that both the countries have on the same region has led to the protraction of the conflict.

Therefore, despite the limitation the constructivist approach to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is more objective and realistic. In order to analyse the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, it is important to understand the respective perception of self-identity of both the countries, or, the identity formation of the two countries, because to argue that the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is nothing more than a territorial conflict would undermine the other ethnic attributes, such as cultural, religion, history, language etc. which in fact, has played more important role than the others.

3.4. Identity Formation:

Armenian Perception of self-identity: - Modern Armenians trace their origins to a group of Indo-Europeans that migrated into what is now eastern Turkey and

Transcaucasia in the sixth century B.C. Isolated in the mountains and valleys of the area, the early Armenians distinguished themselves on the basis of their common language (Armenian). More than a thousand years later, Ronald G.Suny notes, the Armenians emerged as a "unique, identifiable ethno-religious community" when they adopted their own exclusive form of Monophysite Christianity in the fourth century A.D.⁹¹ In the centuries that ensued, the Armenians' commonality, as well as uniqueness, in religion and language formed the fundamental basis of their collective self-identity. This basic national consciousness was supplemented over time by historical experiences that arose largely out of geographically imposed conditions.

Like the other inhabitants of the Transcaucasus, the Armenians were subject to the effects of large-scale human migrations and frequent foreign conquests David Marshall Lang notes,

Armenia's strategic position has exposed her to repeated invasion. Situated immediately to the south of the Caucasian corridor, the Armenian highlands must be traversed or skirted by northern peoples driving south from the Eurasian steppes, or by any Near Eastern power moving north to control the Black Sea and Caspian littorals. Equally, Armenia must necessarily feature in rivalry between any dominant power in Asia Minor and the Bosphorus, and forces controlling Iran and Central Asia. From the time of Darius and Xerxes, this political tug-of-war has been an ever-present factor in Near Eastern affairs. In all such clashes of empires, the Armenians have found themselves between two warring camps.⁹²

Unavoidably, this situation played a significant role in the development of the Armenians' national character over the past 2,600 years. Despite brief periods of unification and relative prosperity in medieval times, Armenia has for most of its history been under the dominion of foreign powers. While the list of rulers includes the Romans, Sassanids, Byzantines, Arabs, and Mongols, the most significant periods of foreign

⁹¹ Ronald G Sunny,n.44, p.10

⁹² Ibid, p.79

control from the standpoint of affecting the development of the Armenian national character were those under the Ottoman Turks and the Russians.

Falling under the rule of the Ottoman Empire in 1520, the majority of the Armenian people found their fate in the hands of the Turks for the next four centuries. While the empire was strong and expanding, the Armenians lived in relative peace despite being subject to special taxes and generally second-class standing under the law. As Christians, they enjoyed a special protected status from the Sultan and were granted a fair degree of freedom to regulate their own affairs. Moreover, the Armenians' religious identification with the Christian West, together with their standing as skilled artisans, merchants, and interpreters, allowed them to serve as intermediaries with Europe in economic matters – a role that gave them significant importance to the Sultan.

While relations between the Armenians and their Turkish masters were mostly tranquil throughout the first hundred years of their association, the long decline of the Ottoman Empire from the seventeenth century sparked the growth of intolerance toward the Armenians. Faced with large-scale corruption in the bureaucracy and a growing threat to the European dominions of the empire by the continental powers, the Turks began to see the Armenians as a potential pro-Western fifth column within their ranks. Although the Armenians did little to warrant such a characterization, the Ottomans eventually responded to the so-called "Armenian Question" with heightening levels of persecution and, from 1895 to 1896, with massacres of their Armenian subjects.⁹³ Finally, in what has been called the first holocaust of the modern era, the Turks sought a "final solution" to the "Armenian Question"--- the destruction of Turkish Armenia---through a forced deportation of Armenians from eastern Anatolia in 1915 – 1916 that killed as many as 1.5 million people.⁹⁴

The massacres at the hands of the Ottoman Turks left an indelible mark on the Armenian national character. Although it was not uncommon for them to be persecuted by their rulers, the Armenians had never previously faced an attempt at their destruction on a

⁹³ Richard G Hovannisian, n.7, p.44

large scale. This reality, in addition to the fact that the European powers failed to come to the aid of their fellow Christians, heightened the Armenians' sense of both vulnerability and self-reliance that had evolved over centuries of foreign rule. Abandoned by Europe and pushed from their historic homeland in eastern Anatolia, the Armenians that survived the events of 1915-1916 were forced to cling to their existence in the mountains and valleys of Transcaucasian Armenia.

Another important episode in Armenian history occurred in the two centuries of Russian governance of Transcaucasian Armenia. Viewing imperial Russia as 'an advanced civilization and society, and champion of Christendom against Islam, and the hope for emancipation', most Armenians welcomed the Russian annexation of the area between 1828 and 1878. However, Russian policies toward the Armenians tended to fluctuate over time, giving them cause for feelings of insecurity.

Despite professions of protection for the Armenians as fellow Christians and potential allies against the neighboring Muslims, Russian leaders tended to let the extent of that protection be dictated by the necessities of the domestic and international situation. Thus, while still remaining loyal to the Russian Empire, the Armenians formed a nationalist movement in the late nineteenth century that focused on promoting their individuality based on a unique language and religion; cultural and spiritual ties with Russia were therefore de-emphasized. Although this new movement posed no direct threat to Russia in light of the Armenians' rejection of separatism, the Czarist authorities nonetheless began to regard the Armenians as revolutionaries. By the closing years of the nineteenth century, the heightening Russian suspicion of the Armenians brought about a policy of Russification toward them that included the seizure of Armenian Church properties and the closure of Armenian schools. The result was a growing cycle of mistrust and hostility between rulers and subjects that dissipated only with the coming of the First World War.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.49

⁹⁵ R. Sunny, n.44, p.11

Similar to the experience of their brethren across the frontier in the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians under Russian rule found that, despite professions of protection from their masters, they were nonetheless subject to persecution on the basis of their identity as Armenians. While their treatment by the Russians was not brutal and violent as it was under the Turks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Armenians viewed the inconsistency of Czarist policies toward them as a sign that they could not always count on their larger Christian ally to the north. When the Czar's policies turned toward attempted Russification, the Armenians' resolve to maintain their distinctiveness was only hardened.

Over the centuries, the net impact of the Armenians' experiences with Ottoman Turkish and imperial Russian rule, as well as those with all of their previous foreign masters, was to reinforce the Armenians' sense of solidarity. Lodged between rival empires and faced often with persecution or outright massacre, the Armenians sustained themselves for millennia on the feeling that they were a single, unique people with a common language, religion, and historical experience. Despite being subject to the disruptive effects of their geographical surroundings, the Armenians managed not only to survive, but to do so with their identity and character intact.⁹⁶

Azeris Perceptions of Self-Identity: - Tracing Azeris Perceptions of Self-Identity is a much more difficult task than doing so for the Armenians. Unlike the Armenians, the Azeris had, until quite recently in historical terms, neither a common language and religion upon which to trace their national identity nor a sufficient stimulus to realize such identity. Indeed, the effects of historical migrations and imperial rivalries, which had a large impact on the rise of a distinct Armenian identity, led the Azeris to develop a close sense of identification with, rather than distinction from, the two powers that ruled them historically- Turkey and Iran. The affinity with the Turkic and Persian vorlds retarded the development of a distinct Azeri national identity.⁹⁷

Modern Azeri scholars trace their people's ancestry to the inhabitants of Caucasian Albania (not to be confused with the modern republic of Albania), an ancient state whose

[%] Hovannisian, n.7, p.186

territories corresponded roughly to those of present-day Azerbaijan. At the time of Arab conquest in 642 A.D., the people of these areas were under the strong cultural and political influence of Iran but were largely adherents of the Christian faith. With the arrival of the Arabs, a large proportion of the Albanians converted to Islam while maintaining a firm cultural identification with their large neighbour to the South. Importantly, however, for the development of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh many centuries later, the Islamisation of Caucasian Albania was not total; the people inhabiting the mountainous western half of the Albanian region known as Karabakh remained Christian and integrated with the Armenians while those inhabiting the plains of eastern Karabakh converted to Islam.⁹⁸

Although the ancient country of Caucasian Albania passed at from the historical scene sometime in the 9th Century, the inhabitants of the area (excluding those who were Armenianised) continued to identify with Iran. However, the coming of the Turks to the Transcaucasus in large number in the 11th Century brought about a gradual change in the ethnic and linguistic characteristics of the indigenous population. Many of the Turkic tribes that invaded the area settled there and inter-mingled substantially with the local people. Over many years, this interaction resulted in the replacement of the pre-existing language with the Turkic dialect and the growing self-identification of the indigenous people as Turks. Thus, by the end of the 11th Century, the early Azeris looked culturally toward Iran, religiously toward the larger Muslim World, and linguistically and ethnically toward the Turkic World.⁹⁹

In the opening years of the 16th Century, imperial rivalry added a further degree of complexity to the self-identity of the early Azeris. After 1502, when eastern Transcaucasus was made a part of the Shi'ite Safavid Empire in Iran, the majority of its Muslim inhabitants became adherents to the Shi'a faith. Thus, the Azeris' split with the mainstream Sunni Islamic sect clouded their sense of identification with the Sunni Turks and accentuated a dual sense of Loyalty between the Persian and Turkic Worlds; pulled

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⁹⁷ Ronald G Sunny, n.55,, p.198

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.204

⁹⁹ Hovannisian, n.7, p.149

towards Iran by religious and cultural affinity and toward Turkey by ethno-linguistic closeness, the development of a distinctly Azeri national consciousness was made difficult.¹⁰⁰

Nonetheless, the Azeris themselves did little in the way of promoting a sense of ethnic or cultural distinctiveness. Unlike the Armenians, they were content to view themselves in terms of their commonalities with-rather than differences from-the Turks and Iranians. Indeed, the terms "Azeri" and "Azerbaijani" were born only in the 20th century upon formation of the short-lived Republic of Azerbajan in 1918, prior to which the Azeris were referred to as "Caucasian Tatars" or simply as "Tatars". It was not until the late 19th Century that a national consciousness began to develop among the "Azerbaijanis"; importantly, this development arose largely as a result of growing communal tensions with the Armenians during that time period.¹⁰¹

3.5. Conflict Analyses

Conceptual clarification is inevitable because to argue that the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is nothing more than a territorial conflict would undermine the other ethnic attributes, such as cultural, religion, history, language etc. The primordialist approach to ethnic conflict may not be very suitable in this case, because the Azeris contest the historical interpretation of the ethnic origin of the Armenians.

According to the Armenia scholars, Nakgorno Karabakh belonged to the Armenians as far back as the formation of the Armenian people in the 7th century BC. Although conquered by Medes in the 6th century BC, the area was restored to the Armenian control in the 2nd century BC, and therefore become the province of Artsakh under the Arteshes dynasty. In 387 AD, the kingdom of Armenia was partitioned between the Byzantium and the Sassanid Empire in Iran, with Artsakh becoming part of the Iranian province of Albania. Although separated from Armenia heartland, the inhabitants of mountainous region maintain a degree of autonomy over their affairs. When the Sassanid was usurped by the Arabs in the 7th century AD, the Armenians of Karabakh continue to preserve their

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.150 ¹⁰¹ Patrick Donabedian, n.14, p.83

traditions and semi-autonomous existence.¹⁰² Over the next 1000 years this precedent of Armenian autonomy upheld making it the only part of Armenia where a tradition of national sovereignty was preserved until the late medieval period.

During the rule of Shah Abbas of Persia in 1603 AD, the princes of Karabakh (then ruled by five Armenian princes) was given recognition to maintain a degree of freedom to preserve Armenian national identity. However, disunity amongst the five princes allowed the establishment of a foothold in Karabakh by a Turkic tribe around 1750.¹⁰³ Because members of these tribes came eventually to view themselves as Azerbaijanis, Armenian scholars cite this establishment of Turkic presence in Nagorno Karabkh as the initial arrival of Azerbaijanis in the region.

But modern Azerbaijan historians dispute this assertion and claim that Karabakh has long been an integral part of Azerbaijan. In their view, Modern Azeris are the descendants of Caucasian Albanians.¹⁰⁴It is alleged that in antiquity the Albanians were one of the three major peoples of Caucasia (along with the Armenians and Georgians) with the state extending from Lake Sevan eastward to the Caspian sea, and from the Caucasus mountain southwards to the Aras river. Initially adherents of Christianity, the majority of the Albanian population converted to Islam in the 7th century and were linguistically Turkified four hundred years later.¹⁰⁵

Azerbaijanis scholars of this view refuse to accept the Armenian claim that the inhabitants of mountainous Karabakh have been ethnically Armenian since earliest time, as compare to the people living on the plains to the east who are descendants of Islamized

¹⁰² According to Rafik Kurbanov & Erjan Kurbanov after the Arab Khalifat took control over Azerbaijan in the seventh century, he supported the Armenian church and increase its influence in the region. Rafik Kurbanov & Erjan Kurbanov, "Religion and Politics in the Caucasus", in Michael Bourdeaux (ed.), *The Politicis of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Sharpe ME, Armonk, New York, London, 1995, p. 230

¹⁰³ In the absence of statehood (during foreign invasion) the Armenian church played the role of 'hidden state' and actively defended the Armenian nation against forcible assimilation. The history of Armenian reflects the history of the nation. For more see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 2, 1958, p. 382

¹⁰⁴ Ziia M.Buniatov, Azerbaijan VII-IX asrlarda, Dovlat Nashriiiaty, Baku, Azerbaijan, reprint, 1989, p. 7

¹⁰⁵ Rafik Kurbanov & Erjan Kurbanov, n.64, p. 230

and Turkified Albanians. In contrast, it is argued that, beginning in the eight century, immigrating Armenians forced the cultural, linguistic, and religious assimilation of the indigenous Albanian population of Karabakh. Thus, the modern Armenian inhabitants of Nagorno Karabakh are not Armenians *per se*, but are Armenianized Albanians, and thus Azerbaijanis.¹⁰⁶ According to Patrick Donabedian, the purpose of such approach is "to show that Armenianness of Karabakh is only a myth and that the Albanians who lived there have no reason to challenge their membership the Republic of Azerbaijan"¹⁰⁷

The second approach to ethnic conflict, that is, the instrumentalist approach also faces certain limitations in our conflict analysis. Truly, there are certain elements, individuals, groups, or elites who have a selfish motive and try to mobilize the people to achieve their material gains, however without any substantial success. Therefore, this does not let us to conclude that the conflict is primarily because of these groups of people. On the other hand, there are many instances where individuals or groups trying to sell hard for their selfish gain failed. Political leaders whoever succumb to any international pressure are immediately voted out of power. To dismiss Armenia and Azerbaijan conflict simply as a political affiliation- like the interest group membership or political party affiliation- as advocated by the instrumentalist, is therefore, uncalled for. Power politics can be true in other conflict, identity politics is more relevant than the former, although power politics is not completely ruled-out.

As argued by the constructivist, the ethnicity of Armenia and Azerbaijan is constructed from dense webs of social interactions. As Robert H. Hewsen points out, both sides are guilty of oversimplifying the ethnic history of the region: "The population of Southeast Caucasia, whether under Armenian or Albanian rule, was highly mixed, and to label it as being essentially one or the other or even to divide it into simply two groups is well in

¹⁰⁶ ibid. p. 129f

¹⁰⁷ Patrick Donabedian, n.14, p. 64

¹⁰⁸ Singer argued that ethnicity by itself has had little to do with intergroup violence over the long history span, and is more likely, the bases upon which political elites and counter elites can mobilize people whose differences are of a more substantive sort. See Harold A Henderson, n.48,, p.652

advance of evidence".¹⁰⁹ The Transcaucasus is in fact a rich mosaic of ethnic groups produce over the millennia; the Russian Empire's 1897 census listed 22 separate nationalities residing in the region.¹¹⁰

Taking into consideration all the different arguments by different theorists and scholars, we can safely conclude that Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is different from other conflicts, whether ethnic or non-ethnic, in that, the history, its identity formation and respective perception of self-identity is very different. However this is not to argue that the conflict cannot be in way resolved as argued by the primordialist. Rather a good understanding and honest brokering by any third parties can make a great difference and a final comprehensive peace can be achieved, if the negotiation is based on compromise. Here the role of mediator becomes important. This is, therefore discussed in detail in the next chapter under the heading, 'Peace Initiative'.

¹⁰⁹ Robert H. Hewsen, "Ethno-History and the Armenian Influence Upon the Caucasian Albanians", in Thomas J. Samuelian, (ed.), Classical Armenian Culture: Influence and Creativity, Scholars Press, Pennsylvania, 1982, p.33

¹¹⁰ Anahide Ter Minassian, n.40, p.2

Chapter Four

Peace Initiative

The demise of Soviet Union had a major impact on the geopolitical landscape of the region. Antagonism between Armenia and Azerbaijan was no longer an internal matter of the USSR. The clash became an affair of two sovereign members of international community. Moreover, rivalries among the leading regional powers – Russia Turkey and Iran – that had colored the history of the region were awakened once again bringing new complexities and new dangers to the dispute.

The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh has been the most protracted to emerge on the territory of the former Soviet Union, affecting an area contiguous to Iran and Turkey. Incessant competition and conflict between rival imperial powers for political and ideological influence had marked the history of this region. The region has gained added international importance from the fact that the end of the Soviet Union has opened up the large oil and gas reserves of the Caspian Basin to international exploitation¹¹¹. The three states of Iran, Turkey and Russia along with USA with their respective strategic interests have been involved in the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan as mediators and protagonists thereby influencing the process of resolution and protraction of the conflict. The following section examines the effect of the perspectives and interests of external factors vis-à-vis the peace process.

4.1. The Role of Russia

Until the dissolution of the USSR the Soviet authorities sided in general with Azerbaijan. This was consistent with Moscow's policy of supporting the authorities in the capitals of the republics, which had to deal with 'unruly' regions. Moscow's role seemed to be maintenance of the existing institutional set-ups. Soviet troops sent to the conflict area to maintain order did not prevent an all-out war but often they took the side of the

¹¹¹ William Hale, n.29, p.270

Azerbaijani forces to 'punish' the Armenians for raising the Nagorno Karabakh issue.¹¹² For example, Soviet and Azerbaijani forces attacked Armenian in August 1990 in the Novemberiam district in Getashen and in various other areas within the Nagorno Karabakh. It was after the collapse of the Soviet and the coming of the power of Yeltsin in Russia that the balance began to shift in favor of Armenians. Russian forces began to indirectly support the Armenian side of the conflict supplying arms, fuel and logistical support. Russia now views Armenia as its main strategic partner in south Caucasus.

The position of Russia is generally viewed by the west that Russia is reluctant to accept the end of its hegemony and continued to divide and rule the weaker nations to its south. The lack of firmness and uncertain position of Russia is also seen by others that it has been more ambivalent about its interest in Nagorno Karabakh. There does, nonetheless, appear to be consensus that Russia should have some form of influence in Former Soviet territories.¹¹³

In the late 1992 and 1993, Russia began to see the Former Soviet republics as an exclusive sphere of its influence with Moscow having special rights and responsibility to act to maintain peace and security. Therefore, Russia's approach to relations with Former Soviet Union is the perceived need to maintain predominance across the territory of Former Soviet Union. In order to achieve this goal Russia must seek place of prominence both in the foreign policies of the Transcaucasian states and in attempts to resolve regional conflicts. Russia must also constrain the growth of foreign influence in the region while preventing the threats to Russian security. Finally Moscow must build favorable economic links with regional states and assert proprietary rights over Azerbaijan energy reserves. These policies are being pursued from the beginning.

Despite the signing of the Turco-Soviet Friendship Treaty in March 1991 and Turco-Russian Friendship Treaty in 1992, Russia's relation with Turkey had gone downhill throughout the first half of the 1990s because of Russia's insistence, that it should be the

¹¹² Hovannisian, Richard G, "Historical Memories and Foreign Relation: The Armenian Perspective" in Starr, Frederick S, The History of Legacy in Russia and the New State of Eurasia, Shape M.E., Armonk, New York, London, 1995, p.261 ¹¹³ Kenneth Wiesbrode, "Central-Eurasia: Price and Quicksand? 'Contenting Views of instability in Karabakh, Fer shana, and

Afghanistan", Adelphi Papers, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.34

sole or at the very least a major arbiter in the Nagorno Karabakh dispute.¹¹⁴The prospect of Caspian Basin states to acquire extra resources and export pipelines outside their control faced Russian leaders with the expectation that these states could slip out of Moscow's sphere of influence to the benefits of Western powers, as well as Turkey.¹¹⁵ As a result of this, Russia tried to maintain leverage over both the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments in order to prevent or limit alliances with the west.

The presence of United States or NATO in the Former Soviet Union's has irked many Russians. Russia also fears Turkeys, particularly because after the late 1991 Turkey's military is by most measure becoming stronger than Russia. But this does not mean that Russian leaders would start a war with Turkey on behalf of Karabakh Armenians, or seek to make the entire Caucasus completely off-limits to the west. In fact Russia continued establishing economic ties with apparently 'competing' states. Lukoil is a member of nearly all the Caspian Consortia and Russia is a key export route for both Azeri and Kazak oil. Russia has important economic links with Turkey. With regard to Armenia, Russia does not oppose the economic involvement of outsiders.¹¹⁶

In September 1991, the reformed minded Russian President Boris Yeltsin along with Kazakhstan president Nursultan Nazarbayev tried to mediate the dispute but the intransigence of the parties and the busy schedule of the emerging leader of Russia prevented any progress. With the CSCE mediation a virtually non-starter in the beginning, Russia step-in to try its hand at resolving the dispute, limiting its goals to the achievement of cease-fire in the conflict zone. In 19 September it succeeded in signing a detailed agreement between the defense chiefs of Armenia and Azerbaijan calling for a five months cease-fire and withdrawal of armed formations from Nagorno Karabakh. But as has been the case with most other negotiated cease-fires the warring parties continued their military operations without pause.

 ¹¹⁴ Bolukbasi, Suha, "Ankara's Baku Centered Transcucasian Policy: Has it Failed?", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, no.1, Winter
 ¹¹⁵ Willaim Hale, n.29, p.270

¹¹⁶ Kenneth Wiesbrode, n.114, p.35

Russia resumed its mediation activities after Elchibey was overthrown in July 1993. The Russian envoy Vladimir Kazimirov, engage in shuttle diplomacy between Baku, Yerevan and Stepanekert. This effort failed after an Armenian offensive in south Azerbaijan. Baku also refused the cease-fire offer because it did not provide for the withdrawal of Armenian troops.¹¹⁷

On 12 May 1994, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachav succeeded in convincing the Azerbaijani and Armenian ministers of Defense and the commander of Nagorno Karabakh army to sign a two months cease-fire. On 27 July 1994, all the three parties signed a formal armistice agreement. The armistice required the CIS peacekeepers and token OSCE observers to be stationed in Nagorno Karabakh. The Azerbaijanis refused to implement this part of the agreement for fear that the CIS troops would overstay their mandate and the Russian presence would result in making the Armenian gains permanence. Although the agreement was not wholly implemented, the cease-fire has held down to the present¹¹⁸.

Russia attempt to emerge as the dominant peacemaker in Nagorno Karabakh conflict made little headway in the summer of 1994. Conflicting parties continue to adopt stances that precluded compromise and the OSCE took on a more active role in the negotiation, which was unwelcome by Russian officials who wanted to ensure its monopoly over the Karabakh mediation process.

By the closing months of 1994 it appeared that Moscow's attempt to be the sole mediator and enforcer of a settlement in Nagorno Karabakh conflict have been thwarted. While the Armenian side was inclined to accept a dominant role for Russian neither Azerbaijan nor the Minsk Group is willing to yield to Moscow's exclusionary demands. At the landmark Summit of OSCE in Budapest in December 1994 Moscow appeared to give in finally to demand that it relinquish its self-perceived role as the dominant peacemaker and peacekeeper in the Transcaucasus. However, it does not let us to conclude that Moscow has given up its role as a mediator in the Transcaucasian conflict, in fact, Russia is one of

¹¹⁷ Bolukbasi, Suha, n.115,, p.86 ¹¹⁸ Ibid, p.86

the three co-chairs of the 'Minsk Group' which oversees the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict till date. Russia is able to assert its importance by letting the OSCE to accept as a major player in the resolution of conflict.

4.2. The Role of Iran

The break up Soviet Union in the late 1991 confronted Iran with a set of challenges and opportunities. On the one hand the long-standing threat presented by the USSR receded and the door opened for much closer contact with Central Asia, many of them with Muslim majority population. On the other hand, United States, Iran's foremost ideological foe, is no longer balanced by a Soviet Superpower and there are danger for Iran's security from the volatility and instability of the new states. Iran has handled this sudden and unforeseen situation by a cautious and pragmatic policy.

There is a cluster of interest that underlies Iran's policy in the south Caucasus. First is its domestic instability. There are about 20 million Azeris living in north Iran. Although they are well integrated into the Iranian society and has shown little desire to secede, Teheran has nonetheless, shown extreme concern with prospect for the rise of sentiments calling for union between the two Azerbaijanis.¹¹⁹ Were separatists stirring to rise among Iranian Azeris, Iran could see its territorial integrity violated, perhaps encouraging more its numerous ethnic minorities also to break away. Thus it has remained in the interest of Iranian government to ensure that the rise of such sentiments among Iranian Azeris is avoided. Therefore despite the Iranian government's support for Armenian during the war, it knows that it must maintain cordial if not warm relation with Azerbaijan if it wishes to keep Irredentism from ever taking hold.¹²⁰

Secondly regional stability is another interest that determines Iran's policy in the south Caucasus.¹²¹ When the Nagorno Karabakh conflict erupted into full scale war Iran's fear of ethnic Azeri uprising at home in solidarity with their brethren prompted Teheran to

¹¹⁹ Edmund Herzig, however argued that anti-government riots in Tabriz, an Azeri dominated city in Iran in 1994 was caused due to socio-economic and cultural reason (frustration with Islamic social restriction), rather than separate Azerbaijani nationalism. Herzig, Edmund, "Iran and Former Sovie. South", *Adelphi Papers*, Oxford University Press, 1995, p.26¹²⁰ Kenneth Wiesbrode's, Central-Eurasia: Price and Quicksand? ... Afghanistan, p.40

¹²¹ Ibid, p.14

extend support to Armenians. However, when Armenian military advances threatening to spread the fighting into Iranian territory, Teheran criticized Yerevan. These two reactions reflected general stance: Iran in favor of neither a strong Azerbaijan nor a strong Armenia. Rather it is interested in keeping both countries in equilibrium by exerting occasional pressure on the stronger side.

Iran has become the only regional actor with both the motivation and opportunity to play a reasonable impartial mediating role in the conflict. It has maintained stable relation with both Armenia and Azerbaijan. This has had a financial payback for Teheran.¹²² While Turkey has economic ties with Azerbaijan, Iran has found new markets in both Armenia and Azerbaijan. This advancement of economic interest- another key foreign policy in the southern Caucasus- is important for a country with economic problem and overly dependent on hydrocarbon exports. The newly independent countries in the southern Caucasus are detached from world trade and economy and Iran see itself as a feasible transit route to the ports of the Persian Gulf and from there onto world markets. Potentially access to Irans pipeline and transportation network is particularly important to oil rich Azerbaijan and other Caspian states. Iran has pursued its economic interest in the region by providing technical assistance, promoting economic projects (especially in oil and gas exploration) and supporting regional economic integration. It has also pursued those interests as a route out of geopolitical isolation, an important foreign policy aim for Iran.¹²³ In this respect its key partners have been Armenia and Russia. Blockaded by both Azerbaijan and Turkey, Armenia has welcomed the opportunity to bypass their embargo via Iran.

With Russia, Iran has found common ground in a shared interest in maximizing their share of the oil rich Caspian. If the Caspian mineral oil is divided based on littoral states share of the coastline, both Iran and Russia would find themselves with relatively small and uninterested stakes, and most of the Caspian oil and gas fields will belong to

¹²² Ibid, p.34

¹²³ Iran is championing membership for Newly Independent States of Central Asia and Caucasus in the Economic Cooperation Organization, created in 1964 as Regional Cooperation Development, a group originally included turkey, Iran, Pakistan and in 1992 invited the Muslim Republic- Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to join. Others include

Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Consequently both Iran and Russia supported the formation of an international regime, based on which Caspian states would have equal share of the sea's energy resources. In effect the argument over the Caspian's energy resources has provided way for Iran to boast its geopolitical, influence of countries from outside the Caspian region.¹²⁴

The United States emphasize on expanding influence in the region through partnership with Turkey and Azerbaijan has created a polarization primarily in pipeline politics. There were three possible destinations for pipelines for Baku a offshore oilfields: the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf. There were fierce competition between Iran, Russia and Turkey (supported by west, particularly the United States) to secure pipelines that would cross their respective territories and thus yield lucrative transit fees. From economic point of view the route to Persian Gulf would have been a more rational choice. However, that is not a feasible option while the United States sanction against Iran remained in force.¹²⁵ Attempted normalization was limited even under Clinton's administration and the new Bush administration has expressed similar caution with tough statements attacking Iran for supporting international terrorism. In consequence, the chances of Iranian route for Caspian oil have considerably reduced.

Iran's attempt to contain the influence that the west exerts in the region lead into one area where ideology could potentially play a key role: relations with its old adversary, the United States. Certainly fearful of the domination by the United States (either directly or through it's major regional ally, Turkey), Iran made every attempt to dissuade regional states from establishing close ties with Washington.

In trying to advance its interest vis-à-vis the transcaucasus region, Iran has evolved as a mediator in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Viewed by both sides as an honest broker on the Karabakh question, Iran began its mediation effort in February and in May 1992. These efforts lead to two ceasefires (both a very short-lived), and a

Caspian Sea Grouping. For more see, Ramazani, R.K, "Irans Foreign Policy: Both North and South", Middle East Journal, Vol.46, no.3, Summer 1992, 124 http://www.Eurasianet.org/department/insight, 13.09.03

tripartite presidential summit in Teheran, but the initiative broke down with the Armenian capture of Susha and Lachin in May 1992.

In early 1994 Iranian mediation with the coordinated efforts of Russia took place but the Iranian participation faded out before the ceasefire in May 1994.¹²⁶ Although Iran has been keen on seeing a settlement of the conflict, its interest clashes with the interest of other regional powers. Russia, Turkey, Iran and United States sought to expand its influence in the transcaucasus at the expanse of the others, and each is deeply suspicious of others motives. This element of competition proved to be a major factor influencing the course of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, because local rivalries have outgrowth to one degree or another of competition between the regional powers.

4.3. The Role of Turkey

With the disappearance of the Soviet monolith and the subsequent emergence of independent states, Turkish policy-makers looked to the southern region of the Former Soviet Union as a source of potential opportunity as well risk. Turkey looks to Central Asia and the Transcaucasus as areas into which it could spread its influence. It stressed not only its closer historical and linguistic ties to the Turkic people of the southern Former Soviet Union, but also its standing as a model of westernized secular and market oriented democracy upon which the newly independent Muslim states could pattern their transition from Soviet rule. Turkish advocacy of a secular version of government for the new republics has been perceived negatively by Iran as intending to marginalize its influence. Rhetoric from the United States describing Turkey as a moderate Muslim state capable of acting as a bulwark against Iranian 'fundamentalism' has deepened Iran sense of mistrust.127

With the decline of Soviet Union, Ankara came to feel increasingly, that its geostrategic value as an ally of the west was dissipating. Primary among the concerns of Turkish policy-makers was that, with the end of cold war, Turkey would become increasingly

 ¹²⁵ East European, Russian and Central Asia 20003, Europa Publication, 2002, p.13
 ¹²⁶ Edmund Herzig's, p.30

irrelevant. Thus finding a new role for Turkey within the overall western strategy would guarantee Turkish continued importance became a central occupation of Ankara.¹²⁸ With the redrawing of the geopolitical map of Eurasia spawned by the Soviet demise, the most logical option to Turkey for doing so would be to offer itself as a "bridge" between the west and Turkic former Soviet republic. Thus, Ankara's move to expand its influence in the region was partly attributed at least to the perceived need to heighten its own importance in the eye of the west.

Another element driving Turkey to look to the east was an economic one. On the one hand the six Muslim Former Soviet republics represented new potential market for Turkish goods, and on the other hand the three republics; Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan were known to possess large reserves of oil and natural gas waiting to be tapped. Turkey eyed Caspian oil and gas with a desire not only to attend lucrative transit revenue for their shipment to the Mediterranean Sea via Turkish pipeline, but also to meet expanding domestic demand for energy.¹²⁹ Turkey initiated various step to bring these newly independent states to regional economic organization. In short Turkey sought to make itself the hub of a regional economic network to compliment the strong political ties it desired of the newly independent republics.

Although Ankara's geopolitical interest in the post-Soviet republics was framed primarily in terms of its desire to expand Turkish influence, a strong security element also pervade its thinking. Turkey is concerned that a clash between Armenia and Azerbaijan taking place in Turkish geostrategic backyard could spread over and engulf the Caucasus region. This would complicate relation (among other states) with Iran, Iraq and Syria who are most obviously regarding their support for their Kurdish insurgency in Turkey led by Kurdistan Workers Party.¹³⁰

In the long run, Turkey needed peace and stability in the Transcaucasus and a chance to develop economic opportunities in all the countries of the region. In an ideal world, it

¹²⁷ Robins, Philip, "Between Sentiments and Self-Interest: Turkey's Policy Towards Azerbaijan and Central Asian States", Middle *East Journal*, Vol.47, no.4, Autumn 1993, p.600 ¹²⁸ Mackenzie, Kenneth "Turkey's Circumspect Activism", *The World Today*, Vol.49, no.2, February 1993, Pp.25-26

¹²⁹ Ibid, p.25

¹³⁰ Robins, Philip's, Between Sentiments and Self-Interest... p.596

would also like to act a regional power broker and arbiter. This ambition proved impossible to achieve since it went beyond its political, economic and military resources and the regional dispute proved far too intractable.¹³¹ Initially attempts were made to persuade the Azeris to restore the autonomy of Nagorno Karabakh, but by February 1992 full scale fighting in and around the enclave has erupted. On 26th February Armenian forces in Stepanekert captured Azeri inhabited suburb of Khojali massacring 500 civilians causing widespread public protest in Turkey. At Turkey's prompting, the OSCE condemned the alterations of frontiers by force and confirmed that Nagorno Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan. This did not deter the Armenians and by 11th May it captured the whole of Nagorno Karabakh and opened up a corridor between the enclave and Armenia proper through Lachin, besides shelling the western end of Nakhichevan which abuts on to Turkish territory, bringing the fighting closer to Turkish border.¹³²

Turkish politics is complex and fluctuating, but marked generally by three-way struggle between a pro western tradition most powerfully represented in the military and the state bureaucracies, a pro Russian lobby comprising industrialists and a pan-Turkic tendency among intellectuals and politician keen on extending Turkish influence over the countries eastern and southern neighbors. Because of its support in the military and among the Turkish elite the first group is usually seen to prevail over the others.¹³³

When Armenia attacked Nakhichevan, the Prime Minister of Turkey was forced (by major opposition parties and President Turgut Ozal) to take tougher stand vis-a vis Armenia. Turkey provided substantial assistance to the Azerbaijani side and came close to intervening directly.

1993 witness a major escalation in the hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Having succeeded in retaking most of northern Nagorno Karabakh, Armenian forces turned to the west and attacked kelbajar, a district of Azerbaijan. Under increasing pressure to take action in support of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister Demirel announced

¹³¹ Willaim Hale, n.29, p.271

¹³² Ibid, p.272

¹³³ Kenneth Wiesbrode's, Central-Eurasia: Price and Quicksand? ... and Afghanistan, p.34

blockade of humanitarian and other aid to transit Turkey's territory on the way to Armenia. Turkish Third Army in eastern Anatolia was also put in alert and moved into position along Armenian border. Russia on its part warned Turkey that any intervention by a third country could lead to a major war.¹³⁴ Although the Prime Minister Demirel decided to attempt a diplomatic solution, element of competition among the regional powers heightened the tensions in the Transcaucasus with possibility of wider regional conflict. Since then Turkey has continued to insist that if a political settlement in Nagorno Karabakh conflict could be reach, then it should be policed by a peacekeeping force under the auspices of the OSCE in which Turkish forces would participate rather than purely CIS force, which would be dominated by Russia.

The end of Demirel's tenure in 2000 did not put a stop to Turkish attempt to win over the newly independent south Caucasian republic. His successor Ahmet Necdet Sezar, selected Baku for his first foreign trip in August 2000. Turkish most pressing interest in Nagorno Karabakh peace has remained opening its border with Armenian to allow for more convenient access to Azerbaijan and Central Asia as well as securing supply to meet its vast energy demand.

4.4. America and the West

For the United States domestic politics and strong ties with regional states namely Armenia and Turkey, hindered efforts to bring about a final settlement to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.¹³⁵ Although it played no direct role in the conflict, the United States did allow support to reach the Armenian side and did not strongly discourage those who sought to help the Azeris. Although intimately involved in the many Nagorno Karabakh negotiations since 1994 the United States officials appeared reluctant to take a tough negotiating stance towards either party for fear of jeopardizing the fragile United States relationship with Aliyev or of provoking the powerful domestic Armenian lobby. For many years this lobby has succeeded in forcing the Congress to reject efforts to repeal a Section 907 restriction on United States assistance to Azerbaijan written into the 1992

 ¹³⁴ Willaim Hale's, Turkish Foreign Policy 1977-2000, p.272
 ¹³⁵ . Richard G Hovannisian's, Historical Memories and Foreign Relation: The Armenian Perspective, p.268

Freedom Support Act.¹³⁶ In mid-2000, it also forced onto the agenda legislation condemning Turkey for its massacre of Armenians in 1915-a resolution that was dropped under the most intense pressure from the White House, the State Department and the Pentagon. Although unrelated to Nagorno Karabakh the resolution cause outrage in Turkey and badly strained relations with Ankara.¹³⁷

Domestic pressure form the Armenian lobby also coincided with increase in investment in Azerbaijan during the mid 1990s. The linkage between politics and economics is well understood by the Armenians who see western massive investment in the Azerbaijan's petroleum industry as a definitive factor that will militate against Armenia politically. The Armenian lobby in United States has also been successful in gaining critical humanitarian assistance for Armenia and to lesser degree for Nagorno Karabakh.

The other western countries including France, Great Britain, Norway etc, were not so inclined to interfere in historically traditional sphere of Russian strategic interests, especially since Russian's control of the Caucasian region was preferable to the prospect of dealing with several unstable republics. There was also a misperception in the west that Azerbaijan is heading towards Islamic fundamentalist revival.¹³⁸

On the other hand, the Armenians have long been the most western oriented people in the Caucasus and perhaps of the entire West Asia. Although no substantial help came from the west, sympathy has been generated and humanitarian support extended which thrust Armenia into the consciousness of much of the world. Armenia was repeatedly singled out in Europe and in the United States as a model of democratic reforms.¹³⁹

The western countries relation with Azerbaijan was determined mainly by the economic interest with the republic. The leading oil companies of the United States, Great Britain,

¹³⁶ Ibid, p.270

¹³⁷ K Weishrode, n.114tan, p.44

K weishroue, n. 140an, p.44
 ¹³⁸ Aliev, Saleh M, "The Crisis in Azerbaijan: Origins and Outcomes", *Journals of the Institute for Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol.12, no.1, (January 1991) Pp.69-76, p.305
 ¹³⁹ Richard G Hovannisian, n.7, p.269

and Italy etc. opened offices in Baku and started wide cultural and humanitarian activities.

In summary one might say that the countries of the west apparently have rather contradictory interest in the region. In the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict, their interests are conditioned by Christian solidarity and by powerful Armenian lobby in the European States and the United States. Moreover, regarding Russia as partner they allowed the strengthening of Russian influence in the region through Russian-Armenian allies. That, however, leads to weakening of Turkish position in the region and therefore indirectly to the weakening of the western and American strategic position.

Further more, the war and the ambiguous position of the west in the region can cost the radicalization of countries with Muslim population (e.g. Turkey) in the region, as well as the possible loss Azerbaijan as a state that has been building a democratic society in the Islamic world. As part of the international mediation, the United States has been involved in the 'Minsk Group' since its inception. In the wake of the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 822, passed on 30th April 1993, and effort was made to jumpstart the stalled OSCE mediation effort. The United States along with Russia and Turkey prepared a tripartite peace plan and presented to the warring parties in late April. The document call for a ceasefire, withdrawal of Armenian forces from occupied territories outside the Nagorno Karabakh and preparation of a plan for a comprehensive peace settlement. While this tripartite peace plan held out promise for a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, political instability in the middle of 1993 outpaced the efforts of mediation.

4.5. The Role of OSCE

OSCE, (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), known as Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) before December 1994, is a regional security organization of 55 states from Europe, the former Soviet Union, as well as Canada and United States concerned with a comprehensive and co-operative approach to security. In addition to setting principles and norms for politico-military, economic and human rights issues and promoting their implementation by the participating states, an integral component of its activities have been the prevention, management and settlement of potential or actual conflicts in the OSCE area. Accordingly since 1992 the OSCE has played an active role in trying to resolve regional and ethnic conflicts in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

The CSCE was formed in 1973 to promote dialogue between East and West on the issues of military security, economic and human rights.¹⁴⁰ With the break up of the USSR and the subsequent ascension of former Soviet republics as members the CSCE took on the additional role: conflict prevention and resolution.¹⁴¹ In this new role the conference continued to be guided by its founding principles as spelled out in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act: the inviolability of International borders, the right to self-determination and universal respect for human rights.

In June 1992 the CSCE convened multilateral talk for the purpose of preparing for a formal peace conference to be held in Minsk on the Nagorno Karabakh question. A ninemember Minsk Group – Russia, Sweden, Turkey, Italy, Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, Belarus, and the United States – was organized to negotiate political settlement of the conflict. However, the group's mediation broke down almost immediately. Yerevan insisted that Karabakh Armenians be recognized as separate negotiating entity, which was rejected by Baku claiming that any such recognition would strike a blow at the Republic's sovereignty. Another reason was the timetable for discussions of the final status of Nagorno Karabakh. According to Armenia's position, the future legal status of Nagorno Karabakh should have been discussed only after the deployment of international peacekeeping force to the conflict zone. Baku sees that the dispatch of peacekeepers to Nagorno Karabakh would diminish Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the region and thus the status of Nagorno Karabakh must be defined as a pre-requisite to formal peace talks in Minsk.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ 'Final Act', 1975 Summit, Helsinki, CSCE, (http://www.osce.org/docs/English/1990-1991/summits/helfa75e.htm, 10.09.03)

¹⁴¹ This is made clear in the Istanbul Declaration, 1999. For more see 'Istanbul Summit Declaration', 1999 Summit, Istanbul, OSCE (http://www.osce.org/docs/English/1990-1991/summit/istadecl99e.htm, 10.09.03)

The next milestone in the involvement of OSCE was the Budapest Summit of the OSCE, which transformed the détente-era organization into the OSCE. The Budapest Summit reaffirmed the Minsk Group process, and on December 6, 1994, adopted a decision to establish a co-chair mechanism for the Minsk group. The OSCE members also pledged to deploy multinational forces to enforce the political settlement of the conflict. This raised expectations that with the strong support of the international community the parties to the Karabakh conflict would reach agreement on settlement. If anything, the summit strengthened the commitment of the parties to maintain the cease-fire. In compliance with the discussions of the Budapest Summit, the OSCE Chairman-in-office (CiO) issued the mandate for the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to monitor the cease-fire regime periodically. To this day the CiO Personal Representative and his field assistants comprise the only international presence in the area of the conflict; the personal Representative conducts periodic monitoring of the line of contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan forces. Negotiations between the parties to the conflict continued throughout 1995 and 1996, in many different formats, with the memory of the conflict still fresh on their mind, however, the parties to the conflict continued to differ on practically all aspect of resolution.

The Lisbon Summit of the OSCE (1996) was a set back for the 'Minsk Group' process. The OSCE issued a statement on December 3, 1996, which attempted to codify the legal status of the republic of Nagorno Karabakh 'through the high degree of autonomy within Azerbaijan' without consultation.¹⁴³ It adopted a formula advanced by negotiators for Azerbaijan without obtaining the consent of either Armenia or Nagarno Karabakh. As such, it attempted to predetermine the status of Karabakh, the very object and core of the dispute. Thus, the Lisbon statement failed to reflect the current realities on the ground, and it was destined to remain an unworkable formula.

This and other development significantly slowed the settlement process by early 1997. Another development in this regard was the introduction of the oil factor in the region. Since 1994, Baku began to utilize the prospect of the new Caspian oil fields as a lever to

¹⁴² Bolukbasi, Suha, n.115, p.86

impose an atmosphere of perceived antagonism between Russian and United States. The notion that Azerbaijan will prosper while Armenia and Karabakh will stagnate has not held true; the foreign investment in Azerbaijan financed the aging oil sector exclusively without addressing the massive poverty in the country.¹⁴⁴ The lack of conflict resolution hinders the economic development of all south Caucasus countries equally.

In March 1997, the Minsk Process was revived after the OSCE Chairman-in-office established a new Co-Chairs mechanism, with France, Russia, and the United States assuming the major responsibility. The new Co-Chairs represent three major powers that have interests in the region and are also the permanent members of the UN Security Council. The Minsk Group Co-Chair mechanism proved to be the most conduc ve to mediating the conflict, as it eliminated the unnecessary rivalries and misunderstanding that had so often plagued the Minsk Process since its inception. Another feature introduced by the Co-Chairs in 1997 (still in effect till today) was the agreement between the parties to the conflict to maintain complete confidentiality of the talks to facilitate good faith between the parties and prevent an undue manipulation of the public opinion in home countries. This is remarkable in the sense that given the sensitivity of the issue and the sentiment and prestige attached to both the countries, the confidentiality will bolster stability and forge ahead without any fear by the negotiators of their respective constituency.

By 1997, the Minsk Process has produced a two-stage conflict settlement of the Karabakh conflict i.e. as 'package' and 'phase' solution. The first stage spells out liberating the Azeri regions under control of Karabakh, and myriad of other issues like returns of civilians and restorations of communication links. The second stage aimed at reaching solution on Lachin and Shusha district and adoption of main principles on the status of the mountainous Karabakh region. In November 1998, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs presented a new plan to the parties, commonly referred to as the 'common state' proposal.¹⁴⁵ It was in its essence a package plan providing for the establishment of a

¹⁴³ http://www.armeniaemb.org/armenialUS/nkpeacekeeping/index.htm, 01.07.04

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ http://www.Reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/64700f7489022f/6edc/gefc0401/26000864c8?open document. 13.09.03

common state between Karabakh and Azerbaijan. This was a carefully crafted and very complex compromise between the principles of territorial integrity and selfdetermination. Azerbaijan rejected the proposal, however.

The next stage in the conflict settlement process, which proves to be somewhat effective, was a series of bilateral meetings between President Kocharian of Armenia and President Aliyev of Azerbaijan. A number of such meetings have been held since the first meeting on the margins of the NATO Summit in Washington in April 1990. The high point of the presidential summits was the meetings in Paris hosted by French President Jacque Chirac, and the US hosted negotiation in the Key West, Florida in March and April 2001 respectively. During these meetings, the two Presidents achieved an understanding on a set of ideas to be used as the basis for the resolution of this conflict, which are called the Paris principles.¹⁴⁶

In an attempt to keep the Minsk Process flowing, a new format was introduced in 2002 to complement the presidential summit, in the form of Personal Representatives of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to the Minsk Process. The two presidents delegated their respective Deputy Foreign Ministers to fill this role.

International efforts have essentially failed to cope with the dispute over Nagorno Karabakh. However, this failure is usually explained by Western observers solely in terms of the conflicting parties' intransigence. Thus westerners, diplomats and scholars alike are most likely to ascribe the origins of the conflict to nationalism, a nationalism that has become more uncompromising over the passing years. In fact the protraction of the conflict is because of the much more predominant role of geostrategy and geopolitics; specifically a clash of crucial interests between the immediate parties to the conflict and among the regional and world powers. The opposing interests of these countries have put Armenia and Azerbaijan in an intensive, ongoing tug-of-war.

¹⁴⁶ http://www.armeniaemb.org/armenialUS/nkpeacekeeping/index.htm, 01.07.04

The effort of OSCE to deal with conflict in the region has exposed substantial limits to its capacity. The OSCE's Minsk process has until now dealt with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict only on a superstructural level, addressing only the immediate time and territory of the hostilities. Thus, the negotiations have confined themselves to the narrowest framework possible, reaching only the proverbial 'tip of the iceberg', and leaving off the agenda the deeper conflicting patterns of behavior and strategic thinking of the various parties to the conflict.

Besides, the case of Nagorno-Karabakh demonstrates the inherent contradiction of the OSCE's two key operational principles: respect for state sovereignty and respect for self-determination of minorities. Self-determination encompasses a range of options from cultural autonomy through political autonomy to secession leading to outright independence. But the OSCE rejects the latter as being too radical a solution to the regional conflict – particularly when executed through use of force and without mutual consent.¹⁴⁷

For the OSCE secession violates a core international principle, thus giving precedence to respect for territorial integrity over self-determination. The OSCE has created a formula for continued instability. Its solution is appropriate for situations where territorial integrity is not challenged and in appropriate where it is. Though OSCE has been successful in conflict regulation, it has not been successful in conflict resolution. Any resolution of the dispute will require concomitant regional cooperation among the larger powers and other regional powers such as Russia, Iran and Turkey.

¹⁴⁷Natalie Mychajlyszyn, n.31, p.94

Chapter Five **Conclusion**

5.1. The Prospect of Conflict Resolution and Conclusion

The prospect of resolution of ethnic conflict such as that of Armenia and Azerbaijan is difficult to discern. This is because of the large number of factors involved in determining the conflict. It is not only due to the distinguishing role of 'in-group' and 'out-group' demarcation done by the two ethnic groups, which had been discussed in the preceding chapter (see chapter 2), but is also because of the unique geographical location of Nagorno Karabakh. The region, Nagorno Karabakh, represent a classic example of the Stalinist policy of divide and rule, where Armenia dominated Nagorno Karabakh enclave has been incorporated within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic to serve as a fifth-column for the USSR and to obstruct any move to secede by Azerbaijan. Likewise, the region of Nakhichevan, Azeris dominated region was curved out of Armenia Soviet Socialist Republic for the same reason. However it is not the sole reason for the protracted conflict. In fact there are similar cases, which had inherited the legacy of the Stalinist's divide and rule policy, but the conflict is not severe as in this case.

Another peculiar factor of this conflict lies in the different experiences of history. It does not mean to say that other ethnic conflict had the same historical encounter, but the historical experience of the Armenians suggests their insecurity in the midst of Islamic states. Candidly, we shall admit that history is not very kind towards the Armenians. The history of Armenia is all along been a history of subjugation, suppression and genocide in the hands of different rulers. Since its origin as an ethnic group in 6th century BC, despite brief period of unification and relative prosperity in medieval times, Armenia has, for most of its history been under the domination of foreign powers which include Romans, Sassanides, Byzantines, Arabs and Mongols. The most significant period of foreign control from the standpoint of affecting the development of the Armenian national character was those under the Ottoman Turks and the Russians. This is discussed in the third chapter in detail and repetition is uncalled for. Suffice to say that the perception of

Armenians towards their neighboring countries have immensely contributed to the protraction of the conflict.

The memory of high-handedness of the Turks in the year 1918-1920 still remains afresh in the minds of the Armenians, and the Turks are seen through the image of 'the terrible Turk'¹⁴⁸. It has deeply implanted insecurity in the minds of the Armenians from the Turks (by its extension, the Azerbaijanis, who has a close relationship with Turkey in terms of language, religion etc., and are look upon similarly by the Armenians. Also, the consistent support given by Turkey towards its brethrens in the level of diplomatic, political etc. after the establishment of independent Azerbaijan Republic points to that). For the Armenians, the separation of Nagorno Karabakh region from the mainland is seen as unaccomplished tasks for liberation of its people. The disintegration of Soviet Empire has brought a relief in the form of independent Armenian Republic but not necessarily the unification of its contiguous areas. It is also a matter of emotional attachment where the Armenians throughout the history has identified themselves the region as the birthplace of their nationalism. Thus, a loss of this region is considered as the loss of its ancestral ethnic binding.

Interestingly, Azerbaijan also identifies Nagorno Karabakh as the place of the birth of modern Azerbaijani nationalism. Thus, the competing claims have its respective sentiments attached. Moreover, the harping-on of Azerbaijan on the principle of inviolability of international border has a reason to justify not only on legal ground but also on the ground of regional geographical dispensation. Nagorno Karabakh region engraved deep in to the middle of Azerbaijan territory, though not so rich in mineral resources, Azerbaijan has a concern on her security. Of late, it has become a prestige issue for both the countries. For Azerbaijanis the defeat in the previous conflict was a humiliating experience because despite its rich mineral resources it could not garner into a military advantage. Thus sooner or later they wanted to regain their lost glory. As for Armenia maintaining its already acquired territory has become a test of her region's security from the threat of its neighbors. For this reason the prospect of resolution is not

¹⁴⁸ Oke, Min Kemal, The Armenian Question 1914-1923, K. Rusten & Brothers, University Printing House, Oxford 1988, p. 1

in the offing. If there is peace in the present juncture, it could be the time of armament for both the republics.

The regional complexities merited a mention here, though at the cost of repeition. Situated at the crossroad between Europe and Asia between the Christian and the Islamic world, Transcaucasus has always been a buffer zone: between Russia, Turkey and Iran in the 19th century, between east and west century in the 20th century. Since the late 19th century the region has been on the faultline of the breakup of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 meant the sudden removal of the dominant regional power and the emergence of three new nation-states—Georgia, Armenia Transcaucasus and Azerbaijan. Hopes on the part of Turkey, and to a lesser extent Iran that, Soviet collapse would allow other regional powers to expand their roles were dashed by the internal weakness of the aspiring powers and by the Russia's clear determination to reassert its hegemony.

All the three regional powers have a stake in the Transcaucasus. Turkey, mainly because of the Turkic-speaking states in Transcaucasus and central Asia. Iran, because of the presence of 20 millions Azeris, which compose Iran's second largest ethnic group after the Persians themselves, and Russian because of the desire to maintain its presence on the Black Sea and its insistence on the right to share in the Caspian sea oil revenue. Also Russians traditional fear of pan-Turkism and its alarmed, lest Turkish influence over the Turkic speaking Islamic republics in the northern Caucasus should curved out the 'arc of crisis', in the words of Sergie Stankevich, a Russian politician.

The struggles for the sphere of influence in the Transcaucasus have created a conflict zone for the major regional powers, especially between Russian and Turkey. This rivalry of major regional powers is an obstacle in the resolution of the conflict. The involvements of these regional powers have created a kind of patron-client relationship between Russian and Armenia on the one hand, and Turkey and Azerbaijan on the other. Russian weapons have been located in Armenia for a long time and the creation of Mutual Russian/Armenian Group on Anti-aircraft Defensive Arms has bolstered the Armenian side. Turkey, is also consistently supporting Azerbaijan through infrastructural ties, credit and finance etc. This patronage system has encouraged the two conflicting parties to take more stringent position and left no room for compromise. A negotiation pursued under such environment is bound to fail.

The last, nonetheless, the least important is the negotiation based on the two inherent contradictory principles of OSCE; territorial integrity and self-determination. Under the principles of self-determination, all self-identified groups with a coherent identity and connection to a defined territory are entitled to collectively determine their political destiny in a democratic fashion and to be free from systemic persecution. For such groups, the principles of self-determination may be implemented by a variety of means, including autonomy within a federal entity, a confederation of states, through association or in certain circumstances, outright independence. In accordance with the Charter of European Security accepted by the OSCE in Istanbul in November 1999, it is now widely held that the conflict concerning ethnic minorities can only be positively resolved within democratic entities, and that in instances where states are undemocratic the principle of self determination takes greater priority over the principle of territorial integrity.¹⁴⁹

Traditionally, the right to pursue independence as an exercise of the principle of self determination was applied to people "colonial" or "alien" domination, and under the principle known as uti possidetis states were permitted to become independent only within their former colonial boundaries.¹⁵⁰

However, the modern trend supported by the writings of numerous scholars. UN General Assembly resolutions, declarations of international conferences, judicial pronouncements, decisions of international arbitral tribunals, and state practice since the fall of communism in eastern Europe, has supported the right of a non-colonial people to secede from an existing state when the group is collectively denied civil and political rights.

 ¹⁴⁹ http.www.osce.org/docs/English/1990-1991/summit/istadecl99e.htm,(10.09.03)
 ¹⁵⁰ http://www.Armeniaforeignministry/am/htms/blueprint.html#_edn37, (30.06.04)

The denial of the exercise of the right of democratic self-government as a pre-condition to the right of a non-colonial people to dissociate from an existing state is supported most strongly by United Nations in 1970 Declaration on Principle of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations, which frames the proper balance between selfdetermination and territorial integrity as follows:

Nothing in the foregoing paragraphs shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and selfdetermination of people as described above and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or color.

By this declaration, the General Assembly indicate that the right of territorial integrity takes precedence over the right to self determination only so long as the state posses 'a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or color'. Where such a representative government is not present, people within existing states will be entitled to exercise their right to self-determination through secession.¹⁵¹

Thus the debate over the nature of whether democratic representative or undemocratic authoritarian government, Azerbaijan has, become an endless contention for both the conflicting parties. Armenian cites the example of economic blockade and other measures by Azerbaijan as a blatant violation of their right to self-determination while Azerbaijan insists on the inviolability of international border.

Since its violent resurgence in 1998, the dispute between Armenian and Azerbaijan has brought untold destruction and hardship to the region. More than 25,000 lives have been lost, and scores towns and villages have been utterly destroyed. The affect of conflict on the Azerbaijan's economy had been worsened with the addition of 500,000 to 800,000

151 Ibid

Azeris displaced from their homes during the fighting and are forced to **live** a squalid existence in Baku and other cities and towns. Armenia too faces a large refugee burden as well as devastating blockade that has aggravated the affects of the Soviet economy collapse and produce a severe energy shortage. Indeed, the Karabakh conflict has amplified substantially the negative affect of the Soviet break-up in both republics. More importantly, it has struck at the heart of both peoples sense of identity and statehood.

Although the dispute over Nagorno Karabakh is steeped in the language of selfdetermination and the inviolability of borders, the conflict is the struggle for the sole of Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples. The Armenian invokes images of Nagorno Karabakh as a bastion in which Armenian culture and autonomy were shielded over countless centuries of foreign rule. Their view of the mountainous region as an indelible part of Armenia is symbolized in the flag of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, in which a jagged white line divides the tri-colors standard of Armenia to denote the division of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh by Stalin in 1923. The separation of Nagorno Karabakh from Armenia has been and will continue to be a gaping one in the Armenian national consciousness.

The Azeris view the Nagorno Karabakh as a heartland of the Turkic presence in the mountain and birth place of Azerbaijani nationalism. Because unlike the Armenians, the Azerbaijanis lack a strong sense of historical continuity as a distinct people, territory has become a central criterion of national identification. To challenge Baku's sovereignty over the territory of Azerbaijan is, in the view of Azeris, to challenge the very foundation of Azerbaijani identity.

National historiographies have been created to legitimate both sides' claims, and they have been influenced greatly by collective memories of history as interpreted through the eyes of Armenians and Azerbaijanis. These collective memories, which draw on personal, family, and community experiences and recollections shaped the national consciousness of both people and provide a lens through which they view current events. New situations are absorbed into familiar paradigms, and new developments are often

interpreted as the continuations of historical injustices. All too often, on each side, attention focuses on the destruction and injustice they have suffered as a people, while the suffering they inflicted is ignored. Indeed mutual hostility has become a major facet of the Armenians and Azerbaijanis identities in the 20th century.

International efforts of the past ten years to mediate an end to the Nagorno Karabakh clash have been predicted on the notion that a political document providing for such tangible things as the withdrawal of military forces, the return of refugees, and the deployment of multinational peacekeepers will produce peace between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. This notion is deeply flawed; true peace must not be confused with peaceful co-existence, which is what a political settlement aims essentially to achieve. Genuine peace will come when there is mutual respect for each other's aims and aspiration and mutual willingness to live and work together in pursued of constructive ends. If such a peace is to come to the region, it must spring from the collective realization that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict need not have a zero-sum outcome in which a gain of one party is perceived as a loss by other. This is something that no political agreement can hasten.

Sadly, there is little indication of a change of attitude in either republic. Indeed, if there is anything on which the government and opposition in both countries agree, it is on where to draw the line vis-à-vis Nagorno Karabakh: the Armenians are united in the belief that Karabakh must never again be subjected to Baku rule, while the Azeris will settle for nothing less that the re-subordination of Nagorno Karabakh to Azerbaijani sovereignty. Thus the OSCE is of the opinion that maintaining *status quo* serves the interest of both the parties and constant engagement based on compromise the only solution.¹⁵² It goes without saying that a wide gulf must be bridged for there to be even a chance for true peace. In the mean time, a new generation of Armenians and Azerbaijanis is growing up

¹⁵² This view is confirmed by the former Chairman of the 'Minsk Process', Dr. Hans-Georg Wieck, during a Seminar conducted in Jawaharlal Nehru University on February 6, 2004, on the topic 'European Experiences of Conflict Resolution and Confidence Building and their Relevance for South Asia', when asked on the prospect of resolution of conflict in Nagorno Karabakh.

under conditions in which hostility towards each other is accepted—if not promoted and conciliation is rejected.¹⁵³

Even if left to themselves, Armenians and Azerbaijanis would not have an easy time resolving their differences and overcoming their ill-will that has colored their relations for a century. Unfortunately the strategic locations and resources of Transcaucasus will virtually guarantee a continued interest of outside powers seeking influence in the area at the expense of their rivals. Although there is no doubt a genuine desire among external powers to see an end to the human suffering lost by Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the continuation of hostility between the two fledging countries provide a means of manipulating the situation in the region for those seeking to re-assert their influence. The Armenians and Azerbaijanis have become pawns in a large geopolitical contest that will have wide implication through the next century. Consequently until such a time that cooperation rather than competition and confrontation between those involved becomes a norm in this region situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is likely to remain a dark and unfinished chapter in human history.

¹⁵³ There is no major shift in the policy and stand on the part of Azerbaijan after Elham Aliyev succeeded his father Heydar Aliyev, who expired in 2003.

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