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The Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies

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Notes from the Executive Director

Edward W. Walker

I am pleased to report that the Berkeley Caucasus/Caspian littoral initiative has been institutionalized through the establishment of a "Caucasus and Central Asia Studies Program" (CCASP), a permanent program that will become part of the new Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ISEEES). CCASP will balance our past commitment to the Caucasus with a renewed focus on Central and Inner Asia, including the five Soviet successor states in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) but also Xinjiang Province in eastern China, Mongolia, and the minority republics in southern Siberia of Buryatia, Tuva, Gorno-Altai, and Khakassiya.

I will be passing the administrative baton for the new program on to Dr. Sanjyot Mehendale, who brings scholarly expertise as well as administrative and grant writing experience to the position. Dr. Mehendale received her Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies at UC Berkeley in 1999, and received her appointment with the Near Eastern Studies Department in 1997. An archaeologist who has conducted extensive field research and traveled widely in Central Asia, Dr. Mehendale is teaching two courses this year through the Near Eastern Studies Department: a lower-division course entitled, "Introduction to Central Asia" (co-sponsored by the Geography Department) and an upper-division course, "Silk Road Art and Archaeology." Dr. Mehendale is also the director of the Uzbek Berkeley Archaeological Mission (UBAM), which has contributed to her research in the Shahr-i-Sabz region of Uzbekistan; she is involved with the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative at Berkeley; and she is one of two editors for the "Cultural Atlas of the Silk Roads." As administrator of CCASP, Dr. Mehendale will report to the ISEEES Director, Professor Victoria Bonnell, and work closely with me as Executive Director of the Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies and Barbara Voytek as Executive Director of ISEEES.

PSCAC's activities in the coming year, which will include the publication of a follow-up newsletter to this one, as well as a continuation of our visiting speaker series and a conference in April on new directions in Central Asian studies, will be funded in part by endowment funds and in part by grants Dr. Mehendale has received from the Ford Foundation and Berkeley's Townsend Center for the Humanities. We also expect to apply for additional grants to support the new program over the coming calendar year.

PSCAC's establishment comes several months after the expiration of our first grant for Caucasus studies, which the Ford Foundation generously awarded in late 1995. We are also approaching the termination date of

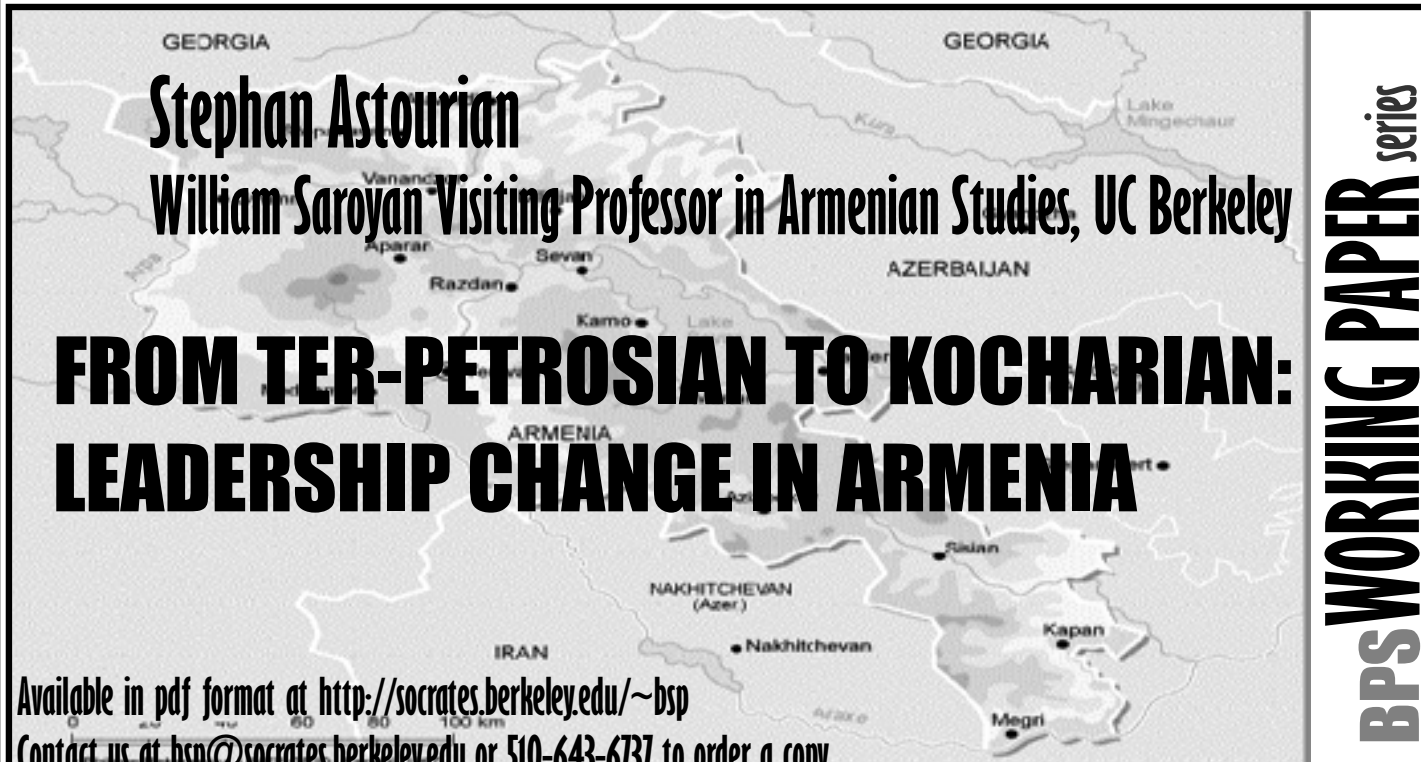
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another generous grant, this one awarded in 1998 by the National Security Education Program (NSEP). Both grants were instrumental in allowing us to build the scholarly and institutional capacity on campus that made CCASP possible. We are extremely grateful to the Ford Foundation and the NSEP for their invaluable help.

CCASP's establishment is part of a broader, and I believe very auspicious, reorganization of Berkeley's programs of study on the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, which I mentioned earlier, was established in this past fall as the campus "Organized Research Unit" (the official UC term for interdisciplinary research centers) for coordinating interdisciplinary research, graduate training, and community outreach activities on our region. ISEES will oversee the activities not only of CCASP but also the Center for Slavic and East European Studies (UC Berkeley's long-standing Title 6 National Resource Center); the Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies; the Program for Armenian Studies; the Peter N. Kujacich Endowment in Serbian and Montenegrin Studies; and the Hertelendy Fellowship for Hungarian Studies. I am also pleased to report that Berkeley's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures has established a new interdisciplinary major beginning in Fall 2000 on Eurasian cultures.

At this milestone in the development of Central Asian, Caucasus, and Eurasian studies at Berkeley, it is worth taking stock of our efforts to date. Since 1995, we have provided fellowships to nine Ph.D. candidates studying the region (Ivan Ascher, political science; Peter Blitstein, history; Heather Carlisle, geography; Nina Bubnova, public policy; Catherine Dale, political science; David Hoffman, political science; Serge Glushkoff, geography; Jarrod Tanny, history; and Jennifer Utrata, sociology). We have also brought six visiting scholars from the region to campus to teach and conduct research (Levon Abrahamian, Leila Alieva, Sergei Arutiunov, Ghia Nodia, Alma Kunanbayeva, and Izaly Zemstovsky); helped pay for special courses on the region taught by Stephan Astourian and Sanjyot Mehendale; published eight working papers and ten issues of this newsletter; sponsored over 70 special lectures on the region; organized six conferences; provided fellowships to undergraduates for summer language study in the region; and helped pay for language courses on campus in Armenian, Kazakh, and Georgian. The establishment of CCASP, under Dr. Mehendale's able leadership, will allow us to build on this legacy.

To learn more about CCASP or about our past activities, recent organizational changes, and upcoming events, I invite you to visit our entirely revamped and greatly expanded website. The address is <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~bsp/caucasus/caucprog.html>. A special thanks to Stella Bourgoïn for her diligence and creativity in redesigning the site.



Stephan Astourian
William Saroyan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies, UC Berkeley

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BPS WORKING PAPER series

Russia's Media Policy In Chechnya

Lawrence Sheets

Russia's second misadventure in Chechnya is now well into its second year. Though the Kremlin has failed to defeat the Chechen separatists, it has achieved one undeniable and important victory. Using a brew of overt controls and intimidation, it has effectively destroyed the ability of the Russian and international press to report firsthand from Chechnya. Judging from the widespread and consistent reports of gratuitous atrocities committed by its troops, this is no small feat. By preventing journalists from doing their jobs, it has returned the old Soviet gag-in-the-mouth tactic, helping it mitigate possible reproach both at home and abroad. Reprehensible as it may be, Moscow's actions differ little from a general worldwide trend of governments refusing to allow reasonable access to areas of military conflict or to examine claims of human rights abuses.

Reporting On The First Chechen War, 1994-1996

I covered the first Chechen conflict from 1994-96 extensively. It was a ridiculously dangerous business. Nineteen of my fellow correspondents, both Russian and foreign, paid for that final story with their lives. Some were hit by errant bullets or flying shrapnel; some were caught in Russian aerial bombings; still others were done in by firing-squad executions carried out by overzealous, paranoid Chechen rebels who mistook them for CIA or KGB spies. Many of those who perished were true heroes, motivated by a belief that telling the story of the war in Chechnya was a moral imperative.

Despite the obvious physical risks to life and limb, there was no systematic effort by either side in the first war to impede media coverage in the conflict zone. One could simply hop on a southbound plane from Moscow and, upon arrival, find a local taxi driver with even fewer marbles than yourself who, for a measly \$300 a day, was willing to risk his life as well as whatever piece of 1960s Soviet automobile technology he happened to have at his disposal on a roll of the dice. Of course, both the Russians and the Chechens could be obstructionist at times. Aside from the obvious danger of exploding mines, flying bombs, and whizzing bullets, there were myriad roadblocks where liquored-up Russian soldiers offered reporters occasional ceremonious detention, bribe shakedowns, and other pleasures. On the Chechen side, there was a sometimes pervasive paranoia that journalists were somehow giving away Chechen "positions" (a laughable claim considering the rebels engaged mostly in hit-and-run type operations) or leaving behind electronic homing devices designed to attract Russian bombs like iron filings as soon as the rogue reporter had time to make off.

Still, these impediments were episodic and haphazard. In fact, I often got the impression that Russian officers and officials actually encouraged Western reporters to find unflattering evidence of the pointlessness of the war, an illustration of the unpopularity of the conflict both among many in the military as well as the Russian public at large. And in the end, Moscow lost the first war in the arena of public opinion as much as on the battlefield. Nonstop reports of its military setbacks and the fate of innocent civilians in Chechnya led to growing public impatience. Outlets like the independent NTV television network blasted home the gruesome reality of the defeats the army was suffering and unmasked the often-careless lies of government propaganda.

The large force of foreign correspondents on the ground also ensured that the conflict stayed atop world news bulletins. Despite occasional and generally sloppy Russian military efforts to impede newsgathering, journalists, including myself, were able to investigate and document reports of atrocities by Russian troops. The 1996 execution-style murder of dozens of civilians in the western town of Samashki was a prime example. Human rights groups, as well as foreign correspondents, extensively documented the case, which led to sharp international criticism.

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The Second Chechen War And The Media

Media coverage of the second Chechen war, which began in 1999, has been very different. The bombing of three Moscow apartment complexes (in which the Russian government has never proven its contention of a Chechen link) helped stir the near pathological dislike many Russians have for Chechens in general into a whirling frenzy that gave the Kremlin a badly needed device for uniting public opinion in support of the war. Nor did the Chechen “government” in place under Maskhadov from 1997-99 do anything to encourage journalists to report from the republic either. A wave of kidnappings of both foreigners and Chechens and the general terror by armed groups prevalent under his inept rule scared off all but the most intrepid from visiting. In several cases, journalists were themselves the victims of such attacks. Still, the main reason for the shroud of darkness that has descended over attempts to report the situation in Chechnya are the restrictions and outright intimidation the Russian government has now put into place. Moscow has muzzled its own press and has made it next to impossible for the foreign accredited media in Russia to work in Chechnya. Domestic outlets have been bullied into a much less critical stance than in the first war, and in general, they have gone to extensive lengths to engage in self-censorship. This includes NTV, which, while slightly more objective than the state-run media, has been far less critical of the prosecution of the war the second time around.

Perhaps the best example of the new attitude towards the press in Moscow under the new Russian president, Vladimir Putin, was the stunning treatment of Andrei Babitsky, a Radio Liberty reporter who disappeared late in 1999 while attempting to report from Chechnya. After weeks of denials that it had any knowledge or role in his disappearance, Moscow was finally forced to admit jailing him on the absurd and baseless claim that Babitsky, a hard-nosed Chechnya veteran, had participated in the war on the side of the rebels. Moscow later arranged a sham hand-over of the journalist to what it said were a group of Chechen “fighters” (widely believed to a gang associated with the Russian military). Probably only a massive outpouring of concern over Babitsky helped win his eventual release, though prosecutors still had the nerve to charge him with the use of a forged document (given to him by his captors). Putin himself even charged that Babitsky had damaged the Russian state simply through refusing to parrot the official line.

In contrast to the large contingent of journalists from around the world present through much of the first war, the foreign media’s efforts to cover the Chechen conflict have been almost entirely shut down by the Russian government. Access is restricted to tightly controlled short-term “tours”

organized by the Russian military. “These trips are totally stage-managed. It is impossible to do any really independent reporting or anything more than scratch the surface,” said Robert Parsons, a Moscow correspondent for the BBC. “And as a result no one really knows what exactly is going on in Chechnya.” In theory, reporters can obtain a pass from the military that entitles them to travel in the republic. “But in practice the pass is very difficult to get, and even if you do have it, you must at all times be escorted by military officials,” said Parsons. Those who have attempted to travel around Chechnya independently have been detained, harassed, and threatened on several occasions with deportation.

As a result, major news organizations are largely limited either to repackaging official accounts of the war based on information churned out by the Russian government or to dubious “official” Chechen sources, both of which have been proven to be highly exaggerated or entirely fabricated. The main wire services, which kept reporters on the ground almost nonstop during the first war, are not allowed to send staff correspondents into Chechnya on their own. They have probably been correct in not even bothering to join in most of the choreographed official military press trips. As a result, they, like most other foreign media, are left in the position of mostly regurgitating these aforementioned “official” sources under Moscow datelines.

Thus, it is no surprise that credible, consistent, and disturbing accounts of grave human rights abuses, including summary executions of civilians in Chechnya by the Russian military, go underreported, and international reaction to them is surprisingly muted. New York-based Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org) has assembled extensive evidence of killing sprees by Russian troops in late 1999 and early 2000 that it says left at least 115 people dead. HRW cites three large-scale incidents, among other instances of executions, torture in detention, and other grave human rights abuses. In one episode in early February 2000, Russian troops reportedly murdered at least 62 civilians in the Grozny suburb of Aldi over a period of several days. Detailing accounts from survivors, HRW extensively documented the dates and circumstances of the killings, as well as the names, ages, and personal details of the victims, who ranged in age from a one-year old baby boy to an 82-year old woman. Calling them “summary executions” that cannot be characterized as isolated incidents, HRW called for a thorough investigation by the Russian government.

Despite vows from Putin to punish perpetrators of war crimes, access to journalists and human rights workers has been repeatedly denied and international reaction was almost nonexistent. Though some news outlets did report

the HRW conclusions on their merits, it was a relatively small number. Editors of all sorts are loath to give prominence to stories where it is difficult to do any firsthand newsgathering, and governments react predictably. Reaction, both at home and abroad, was muted in part because neither HRW nor foreign reporters were allowed to visit the scene of the alleged massacres. Foreign governments have registered “concern,” but there has been little of the outright condemnation that was directed at Moscow during the first war. This is true despite the fact that, by all indications, these are only the most glaring examples of Russian misconduct. “The Russians are meeting tremendous resistance from Chechen fighters. From what can be deduced, the Russians then take out their frustrations on local civilians, so you have small-scale atrocities all the time,” said Parsons.

Sadly, the Russian government can probably take comfort from the fact that its behavior in deliberately hindering the press from fulfilling its most important role is consistent with trends elsewhere in the world. Obviously non-democratic societies, such as China, or Yugoslavia under Milosevic, do not even bother to pretend that they respect freedom of information. But even “civilized” states have been shockingly willing to muzzle the press in the interests of “national security.” One need only look at U.S. vice-president elect Dick Cheney’s efforts to hamper media coverage of the Gulf War, or at Turkey’s harassment of journalists critical of its policies in the predominantly Kurdish southeast, which it has made essentially off-limits to reporters.

Whether you are an Islamophobe who wants to see Russia pummel the Chechens into submission or someone who sees Moscow’s actions as imperialistic and abhorrent, is irrelevant here. Systematically denying journalists the ability to do their jobs and chronicle abuses—whether by armies or repressive governments—is incompatible with the principles of an open society.

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Armenian Migration Crises in the South Caucasus and Their Consequences, 1988-2000

Stephan H. Astourian

For Armenians, the twentieth century started and ended with a massive refugee crisis. As a result of the Armenian Genocide carried out from 1915 to 1917 by the Ottoman state led by the Committee of Union and Progress, thousands of Armenian survivors ended up as refugees. Along with an estimated 800,000 Russians, they benefited from the activities of Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, who had been appointed High Commissioner for Russian Refugees by the Council of the League of Nations in June 1921. Armenians had thus the dubious privilege of being at the origins of the modern refugee regime, receiving the so-called Nansen certificates of identity that substituted for passports and enabled them to move on from the countries where they had first found refuge.

While the first wave of refugees originated in a genocide and in the course of the transition from the Ottoman empire to modern Turkey, the second major wave stemmed from ethno-territorial conflicts and pogroms occurring in the course of the Soviet Union's disintegration and the resulting formation of nation states. As one anthropologist put it:

...the movement of people, the international refugee regime, and the study of displacement... occur, then, in the national order of things, within what Löfgren [a scholar] has called "an international grammar of nationhood." Just as power secretes knowledge, the national order of things secretes displacement, as well as prescribed correctives for displacement. [Liisa H. Malkki, "Refugees and Exile: From 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things," *American Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 516.]

Origins of the Refugee Crises

A number of ethnoterritorial conflicts have led to the Armenian refugee crisis, the main one being the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno Karabakh, a mostly Armenian inhabited enclave within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. A pogrom against the Armenian population of Sumgayit was the first significant reaction to Armenian demands for the union of that enclave with Armenia and to the demonstrations that started in the third week of February 1988. Approximately 18,000 Armenians resided in this industrial city of about 200,000, located 20 miles north of Baku. As a result of the pogrom which began on 27 February, thirty-two Armenians were killed according to official Soviet sources and several hundred according to unofficial Armenian sources and Andrei Shilkov, a member of the *Glasnost* independent publishing house. Thus started the first wave of Armenian refugees fleeing Azerbaijan.

On 18 November 1988, one of three Azerbaijanis charged with "organizing and taking a direct part in mass disorders accompanied by pogroms, acts of arson and murder" in Sumgayit was found guilty and condemned to death in Moscow. Three days later, a new outbreak of violence directed against Armenians occurred in the second largest city of Azerbaijan, Kirovabad (formerly Elisavetpol and currently Ganja), home to more than 40,000 Armenians. The following day, 22 November, anti-Armenian violence and demonstrations spread to other towns, cities and regions, including Baku, Nagorno Karabakh, and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. Thus started the second wave of refugees fleeing Azerbaijan.

It is around that time (November-December 1988) that Armenians started driving out of Armenia, with various degrees of pressure and violence, the Azerbaijani population living in that country. Approximately 180,000 Azerbaijanis from Armenia became refugees in Azerbaijan. During the next year, almost all Azerbaijanis were forced to leave Armenia, with the exception of those living in the village of

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Nuvedy, in the region of Meghri, who left in the spring of 1991.

The situation in and around Nagorno Karabakh became explosive by the fall of 1989. Clashes with the Azerbaijanis multiplied and the effects of the Azerbaijani economic blockade of that region and of Armenia itself began being felt in the winter. Concomitant with these developments, many Armenians left the region and took refuge in Armenia.

The most important pogroms, however, started in Baku on 13 January 1990 and lasted several days. Soviet troops moved into the city on 19 January, leaving death and destruction in their wake. By the end of that month, the 200,000-strong Armenian community of Baku had all but vanished. Radio Moscow reported that the Azerbaijan Popular Front was blocking the Baku airport and train stations to prevent Armenians from fleeing the city. As a result, thousands of Armenians were evacuated by ferries and transported east to Turkmenistan and then flown west to Armenia.

By 1991, the only Armenians left in Azerbaijan outside Nagorno Karabakh were those living in the *raions* (administrative districts) of Khanlar and Shaumyanovsk. Numbering 16,000 in the Shaumyanovsk raion and several thousand in Khanlar, these Armenians were driven out of their villages and deported to Armenia in May 1991. The Soviet 23rd Division of the 4th Army and Azerbaijani Interior Ministry troops collaborated in this task at a time when the leaders of the Armenian Pan-National Movement were still displaying their anti-Soviet and anti-Russian inclinations.

On 20 September 1991, *Pravda* reported that 350,000 Armenians had left Azerbaijan, of whom 260,000 were still in Armenia. Only one-third of these had residence permits. The government had provided them with a one-time modest allowance and allocated 10 million rubles from its budget to the refugee problem, which was in effect a drop in the bucket given the extent of the crisis.

In addition to these refugees, Armenia had to deal with a significant number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The Forced Migration Projects of the Open Society Institute has estimated the number of IDPs in Armenia at about 72,000 in June 1977. Most of these came from the heavily shelled regions of Armenia along the Azerbaijan border. In 1999, their number was estimated at 60,000 by the US Committee for Refugees (USCR).

Conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis are not the only cause for the refugee crises. The Georgian-Abkhaz military conflict, which started in August 1992, also led to the displacement of the Armenian population of the Abkhaz Autonomous Repub-

lic. Constituting a total of 76,524 individuals (14.6 percent of the total population of 524,161) in 1989, the Armenians fled mostly to Russia, especially to Krasnodar *krai* (territory). However, USCR estimated in early 2000 that approximately 10,000 of them lived in Armenia in the previous year. The smallest wave of Armenian refugees stemmed from the first Chechen-Russian conflict, which erupted in December 1994 and lasted in one form or another until June 1996. The small Armenian community of Chechnya, which numbered 14,824 persons in 1989, fled from the conflict, about 1,000 of whom sought refuge in Armenia.

Finally, the USCR estimates that some 43,000 refugees have returned from Armenia to the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh since the May 1994 ceasefire between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. Of those, about 18,000 chose to remain in Armenia and were afforded refugee status. Indeed, the Armenian government grants that status automatically to ethnic Armenians from that region.

The Current Situation in Armenia

The Legal Framework

Not until December 1997 did the Armenian government submit a draft law to the National Assembly. The law aimed at providing a legal framework for the implementation of the 1951 UN "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees" and its 1967 Protocol. Adopted on 3 March 1999 as the "Law on Refugees in the Republic of Armenia," it gave those seeking asylum ten days to file an application with a "competent state body for refugee affairs." In turn, that body had to process applications within one month, during which provisional residence rights were granted to asylum seekers. If an application was rejected, applicants could appeal to an unidentified "higher authority." Those recognized as refugees would enjoy the same rights as citizens, but they would not be able to vote in local and national elections, hold elected offices, or join a political party. Recognized refugees were eligible for documents that would allow them to travel abroad. In addition, the law granted refugee status automatically to all those who had fled to Armenia between 1988 and 1992 and had not acquired such a status until then. Refugees were also said to be eligible for naturalization as Armenian citizens, but procedures to that effect were not specified.

On the whole, few have applied for citizenship and even fewer have received it. There are many reasons for this. First, a law on citizenship was passed in October 1995, the goal of which was to allow all refugees who had been permanent residents in Armenia for three years to acquire citizenship. However, few refugees had acquired Armenian

citizenship by the end of 1997, for the government had failed to adopt the regulations needed to implement the law. It is only in 1998 that these regulations were completed. Second, from then on all refugees who had resided in Armenia permanently for three years could apply to the Ministry of Interior to get national passports and other citizenship papers. Quite a few refugees, however, were unable to prove “permanent residence” because they lacked *propiski* (residence permits). This situation was quite common for those who had been living in temporary accommodations for years. As a result, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that at the very least 50,000 refugees will be unable to obtain naturalization. Third, economic stagnation, high unemployment, miserable salaries, and housing shortage deterred refugees from applying for citizenship. Further, many were afraid that by adopting Armenian citizenship they might lose subsidized housing, relinquish forever the properties left behind in their homelands, or get conscripted into the Armenian army (refugees are exempted from serving in the army). Thus, according to the USCR, about 6,000 refugees had been naturalized by the end of 1998 (the U.S. State Department has given a slightly higher estimate of 7,200).

The government set up a new system at the local level in the second half of 1999 that made acquiring citizenship easier for refugees. It would seem that this system led to an increase of the rate of naturalization, for 6,473 refugees are said to have received citizenship from August through November of that year. On the whole, however, the overwhelming majority of the refugees have not applied for, or obtained, citizenship.

Numbers, Geographic Distribution, and Characteristics of the Refugee Population

Sources vary with regard to the number of refugees registered since 1988. The Forced Migration Projects of the Open Society Institute states that the Armenian government has registered 340,000 mostly ethnic Armenian refugees since 1990. Hakop Hayrapetian, Chief of the Department for Refugees and Population Migration in the Armenian Ministry of Social Welfare, reported in April 1998 that 31,400 refugees out of the 311,000 registered were living abroad, mainly in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). He added that there were then 246,000 refugees in the country, with the majority of them settled in rural areas. These figures are likely to be at best approximate. In its 1999 mid-year report, the UNHCR put the number of refugees in Armenia at 310,000.

It is striking that whereas the overwhelming majority of these refugees came from cities such as Baku or

Kirovabad, most of them have been relocated in rural districts. According again to Hakop Hayrapetian, a very large number of refugees are residing in the predominantly rural Ararat (51,700), Kotayk (32,000), Gegharkounik (30,500), and Siunik (12,000) regions. Only some 50,000 lived in or around Yerevan, including the Charentsavan, Abovian, and Masis districts. As of February 1988, 14,000 refugee families had no permanent residence. Hayrapetian reported that 60,000 refugees resettled in rural areas were employed, while 146,000 of all refugees received allowances. Those living in the countryside were the primary victims of the corrupt process of privatization of land and livestock.

Characteristics of the Refugee Population.

One estimate suggests that at least three-quarters of the Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan were trained as engineers, doctors, and other professionals. Most of them have not found homes or employment in any city. Many have left Armenia.

In general, the Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan came close to the ideal “*homo sovieticus*.” They did not speak Armenian and many had few ties with Soviet Armenia. Armenians from Abkhazia were also “Soviet cultural constructs,” as one student of that region put it. They spoke Russian and even Turkish. While they tended to live in Armenian villages, they also were part of a multinational society, and they had few or no ties with Soviet Armenia. When the war began in that region, the majority fled to Russia, especially the Krasnodar and Stavropol regions where they often had friends or distant relatives. It would seem that many young people have settled in Russia to make a living and are sending remittances to their relatives still in Abkhazia. In the same vein, a number of reports indicate that over 100,000 Armenians from Azerbaijan proceeded to Russia from Armenia. Actually, many of those who are still in Armenia express a desire to leave. They feel uncomfortable in a country where the dominant language is Armenian and the economy is in shambles. Many Armenians from Baku have settled in Rhode Island and California in particular.

More than 30 percent of the refugee population in Armenia is over sixty years old. They depend to a significant extent on outside care. Those living in collective centers have no access to primary and emergency health care or to social support.

As a large number of younger and middle-aged male refugees have left the country in search of employment (usually in Russia), many of them have abandoned their wives or children. Indigenous and refugee women now represent 70 percent of the unemployed work force in Armenia. Because many of them must take care of their children, some

have been forced to turn to begging or prostitution to provide for themselves and their families. Thus, sexually transmitted diseases have spread and abortions multiplied. Refugee children have access to education, but its quality has declined drastically in rural regions and significantly in urban areas because government expenditures have decreased. The UNHCR, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the ministries of Health and Social Security, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has been developing projects that address the needs of women, children, the elderly, and the disabled.

The Situation in Southern Russia

Since 1988, several hundred thousand Armenians have settled in Russia, principally in the Krasnodar and Stavropol provinces, but also in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Siberia. Today, the Armenian diaspora in Russia is certainly the largest one in the world, with a population numbering 1.5 million Armenians, if not more. Between 150,000 to 200,000 Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, Abkhazia, Chechnya, and other regions outside Armenia have settled in southern Russia (Krasnodar and Stavropol). To these must be added several hundred thousand Armenians from Armenia itself, who have left the country permanently or temporarily since 1991.

In late Soviet times, these two provinces were home to predominantly Slavic communities. They are characterized by better agricultural conditions and a more temperate climate than most of Russia. The growth of the Armenian community in the 1990s, along with the growth of other refugee communities, has drastically changed the ethnic and demographic balance in the two regions. Stereotypes have spread. So has "*Chernofobiya*" ("Blackophobia"), referring to the fear and dislike of darker skinned non-Slavic minorities. Indeed, large segments of the Slavic population view ethnic solidarity and networks among the newcomers, in particular the Armenians, as "conspiratorial" and "clanish." A massive socioeconomic dislocation, in this case in Russia, combined with an enormous influx of foreign population, in this case Armenians, would likely lead to interethnic polarization accompanied by racism and xenophobia in most countries and regions in the world. This is all the more so in the Krasnodar case in particular, for most of its Slavic population has no talent in private entrepreneurship, whereas the incoming Armenians have a long tradition of social mobility and great skill in business. In this context, Russians perceive them as "speculators" involved in "illegal" activities. Clearly, such activities do exist, but as happens so often with interethnic relations elsewhere, the activities of some end up being generalized to their whole group.

Both in the Krasnodar and Stavropol regions, the Cossack movement is leading the charge against these darker skinned foreigners. The All-Kuban Cossack Force, which claims a membership of 341,000 individuals, is active in the Krasnodar Territory, where anti-Armenian activities are the most virulent. In Stavropol, on the other hand, the Cossacks have two organizations, the Terek and the Stavropol Cossack Forces.

An emergency measure (resolution T 222) adopted by Nikolai Yegorov, the previous governor of the Krasnodar Territory, on 19 April 1994 allowed the use of Cossacks to establish "law and order" in that region. Since then, Cossacks have been "raiding" the immigrant or refugee population to check their passports. They also search their houses and on occasions threaten or beat them.

After the election of Nikolai Kondratenko as governor of the Krasnodar Territory in December 1996, conditions for Armenians have worsened. Kondratenko is the leader of the most important political party in the region, *Otechestvo* (Fatherland), which the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews defines as "a coalition of racists, Communists, and extreme nationalists." To fill the position of deputy governor, Kondratenko chose Vladimir Gromov, the *hetman* (leader) of the All-Kuban Cossack Host. Under his leadership, resolution T 222, which was supposed to be an emergency measure under Yegorov, is becoming permanent.

In this context, the views expressed by Antuan Arakelian, vice-president of the Russian Federation Congress of Ethnic Associations and an expert to the council attached to Russia's Human Rights plenipotentiary, are not surprising. During a meeting with journalists in Yerevan on 19 July 2000, Arakelian put the blame for the tensions between the Armenian community and the local population of Krasnodar *krai* on the actions and speeches of the local authorities. Arakelian added that the Armenians living in that region do not know who could possibly protect their rights. These tensions are amplified by the growing negative sentiments of the Russian population toward "persons of Caucasian nationality," which the conflict in Chechnya has done little to improve.

An interview with Nikolai Kondratenko published in *Mashtots*, the Armenian newspaper of Krasnodar (July-August 2000, No 98-99), sheds some light on the governor's feelings:

They kicked us out of the Baltics, Moldavia, the Transcaucasus, and Central Asia where Russians had lived for centuries protecting the indigenous peoples there from destruction and enslavement, helping them to pre-

serve their national character. And no one has asked the question: What have we done to the Russians? And for what? [...]

The demographic imbalance on the Black Sea coast rapidly being settled by the “new” Armenians makes us very anxious. This Diaspora, according to world standards, is not poor, and not squeezed for cash, which allows it to violate the established order in the form of bribes to our Russian Judases and graft. I can’t explain such a mass of illegal activity in any other way. As a result, the Armenian population in the region, including those residing here without registration, has reached half a million people and has emerged second to the Russians, bypassing Ukrainians for the first time. But on the coastline, for example, in the Adler region, Armenians already make up almost 40 percent of the population. The situation is obviously abnormal.

Governor Kondratenko may be conservative in his estimate of the Armenian population living in that region. Some unofficial figures run as high as 800,000, the majority of them living without *propiski*. Indeed, a study carried out by the Russian Office for Internal Affairs in October 1994 indicated that 49.9 percent of Armenian migrants lived in the region without registration. In mid-July 2000, Krasnodar Armenians appealed to Russian President Putin to put an end to the local authorities’ racial intolerance toward ethnic Armenians.

A Few Words on Emigration from Armenia

In 1989, when the last Soviet census was taken, the Armenian population residing in Armenia amounted to about 3.1 million individuals. Today, that figure has almost certainly fallen dramatically. A 1995 study assessing the external migration of Armenia’s population between 1991 and 1995 estimated that Armenia had lost 677,000 people. The high educational level of the migrants is particularly striking, since about 50 percent of them held university or professional degrees. Emigration has continued, if not intensified, since 1996. One can therefore reasonably assume that about one million Armenians have left the country since 1990. Thus, its current population is very likely 2.5 million or less. This evolution marks the reversal of the slow concentration of the Armenian population in Armenia itself since the 1920s, when the proportion of the Armenians living in Armenia began to increase in relation to those living in the diaspora.

A study of limited scope carried out in April-May 2000 suggests that 54 percent of Armenian emigrants choose Russia as their destination, 16 percent European countries, and 14 percent the United States. Besides permanent emigrants, there are those who leave for long periods but end up returning to Armenia. As their number is difficult to assess, the above-mentioned figures about the total population of Armenia of at present should be taken as approximations. Some Armenians are also “shuttling” for business or work to and from Turkey, Iran, Georgia, Greece, or even Poland. They stay in those countries for about a month or two and then come back to Armenia.

Conclusion

Contrary to some statements in academic or political circles, it seems unlikely that many of the Armenian, or for that matter Azerbaijani, refugees who have fled their homes since early 1988 will ever be able to return. Whether they get any compensation if the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is settled and Armeno-Azerbaijani relations return to normalcy remains to be seen. Those compensations are unlikely to come close to the losses they incurred. As a result of the conflict, about 12 to 13 percent of the population of both Armenia and Azerbaijan was made up of destitute refugees or IDPS by 1994.

In the case of the Armenian population in general, including the refugees, their great mobility is explained by a vast network of pre-existing diasporic communities, both in the former Soviet Union and in the West. Another important contributing factor was a long tradition of population displacement and emigration that started with the Seljuk Turks’ invasions and their permanent settlement on the Armenian plateau in the 11th century. Clearly, the Armenian diaspora, like many others, has always been in a state of imperceptible to moderate flux. The end of the 20th century has intensified that state of flux and transformed it into a “whirlwind.” The outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 and the onset of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 produced massive waves of Armenian emigration to the West, waves that weakened these two most influential communities of the postwar Armenian diaspora. As a result, the American Armenian community was culturally revitalized, and it accordingly became the most influential Armenian community in the West in the 1990s. In turn, the developments in the southern Caucasus have created, by Armenian standards, a very large diaspora in Russia, the impact of which on Armeno-Russian relations in the future remains to be seen. Ironically, despite the massive emigration from Armenia itself, the country is even more ethnically homogeneous today than it was in the last years of the Soviet Union, when more than 93 percent of its population were ethnically Armenians.

highland karabagh

Resolving the Karabagh Issue

Robert Hewsen

My first trip to Highland Karabagh took place during the first week of October 2000 and lasted only six days. While far from returning an expert on the area, I had studied the area for thirty years and at least went with considerable prior knowledge of its history and present circumstances. The purpose of my visit was first, to discover what I could about the long-range intentions of the Armenians in this area; and, second, to determine from personal contact the attitudes of the people of Karabagh themselves concerning the future of their land. I was surprised at what I was able to learn in so short a visit.

A few facts are needed in order to put the Karabagh issue into perspective. First, at 4,388 square kilometers/ 1,694 square miles, Karabagh is smaller than Delaware and Connecticut though larger than Rhode Island. It is also larger than Luxembourg and Andorra, and ten times larger than Liechtenstein. Its viability should not be in question, therefore, either as an independent state (albeit one not recognized by any state) or one that is (like the three European nations just cited) totally landlocked. Nevertheless, recognition as an independent member of the family of nations does not appear to be a likely future for Highland Karabagh.

At the time of Russia's acquisition of this region from Persia in 1805, Karabagh—upper and lower—formed a khanate or province of the Persian Empire. After several administrative reorganizations, the tsarist government ended by separating Highland Karabagh from the rest of Russian Armenia in 1868, making it a part of the Elizavetpol *guberniia* (province). At that point, "Karabakh," as the Russians spelled the name, became a regional term, similar to the way that Americans refer to regions such as "Appalachia" or "New England."

During the Russian Revolution of 1905, a series of violent confrontations took place between the Armenians and the Turks of eastern Transcaucasia (now called Azeri Turks or simply Azeri). These so-called Armeno-Tartar clashes lasted about a year. Thousands of people were killed on both sides, and resentments going back to pre-tsarist times were seriously deepened. Today, after almost a century, it doesn't really matter who initiated the troubles or who fired the first shot—the Russians were certainly the ultimate guilty party because they could have prevented the outbreak of violence had they chosen to do so, and because they actually encouraged it as a means of keeping the Armenians and Azeri Turks distracted during the revolution.

After the collapse of Tsarist Russia in 1917, Highland Karabagh was disputed between the Armenians and the Azeris. In the period 1918-1920, Azerbaijan claimed all the Elizavetpol' *guberniia*, while the Armenians sought control of the *uezdi* (districts) that together comprised Highland Karabagh. The Armenians made no claim at the time (and still make no claim) to Lowland Karabagh, which outside the town of Elizavetpol' (later Kirovabad and now Gyanja) had no Armenian inhabitants. After the sovietization of the Azerbaijani Republic in April 1920, the Soviet Azerbaijani leader Nariman Narimanov declared all Azeri claims to Highland Karabagh null and void, and, as a "gesture of friendship," he ceded the territory to Armenia—a transfer of territory that never actually took place. After Armenia was itself sovietized (December 1920, followed by Georgia in February 1921), the three Soviet republics, while maintaining their separate identities, were merged into a larger unit—the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (TSFSR).

When the TSFSR was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1922, it became necessary to deal with certain territorial issues that had arisen before the sovietization of the region. In regard to Armenia and Azerbaijan, three territories were in dispute: (1) Highland Karabagh, which was predominantly Armenian; (2) Nakhichevan, which had an Azeri majority; and (3) Zangezur, with a mixed population lying between the two. Under the supervision of Stalin, these territorial issues were resolved by Zangezur

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becoming part of the Armenian Republic; Nakhichevan going to Azerbaijan as an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (February 9, 1924), though separated from the latter precisely by Zangezur; and Highland Karabagh going to Azerbaijan as a distinct ethno-administrative entity within the Azerbaijani Republic (July 7, 1923), namely, the Autonomous Oblast (province) of Nagorno-Karabakh (Arm. *Lernayin Gharbagh*). An Azeri census taken in 1921 listed the total population of the region as 138,446, of whom 94.4% were Armenian. The Soviet census of 1926 listed the population at some 125,000, with the Armenians composing 89.1% of the total. Finally, the 1979 census, the last one taken prior to the outbreak of violence in Karabagh in early 1988, gave a total of 161,181 in overall population, with the Armenian portion at 75.9%. The steady decline in the percentage of Armenians was noted by Armenians everywhere and was directly connected to Azeri policies in the enclave.

From the beginning, there were three curiosities about the new oblast. First, it was one of the few ethnic entities in the USSR for which the nationality involved was not specified in its name. Second, it was the only case in the Soviet ethno-administrative structure in which a people with a union republic of their own was organized into a second and non-contiguous ethnic enclave (although the Western border of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was only ten miles from the Armenian border). Third, the Armenians were the only people who were expected to live under the jurisdiction of another people with whom they had only recently shared so much bad blood.

The reasons for Stalin's decision about the disposition of the Karabagh issue were never published. They may be buried in the archives of the Communist Party or may never have been recorded. Speculations have ranged from his Solomonic wisdom to a sinister plot to sow permanent discord between Armenia and Azerbaijan as a guarantee that neither would ever join the other in a conspiracy to secede from the USSR. In the latter case, the goal would have been to guarantee trouble and thereby secure Soviet power. Regardless, in 1936 the TSFSR was dissolved. Under the new Soviet constitution, promulgated that year, the internal borders of the former federation remained intact, and Karabagh remained an autonomous oblast within Azerbaijan.

Around 1960, reports began to leak out that the Armenians of Karabagh were increasingly unhappy with Azeri rule and that they had begun to petition Moscow for redress. As the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia drew near, rumors spread that Karabagh was to be transferred to Armenian control. This, however, did not occur: instead, the Karabagh issue contin-

ued to simmer until the summer of 1988. At that time, under the impetus of Gorbachev's twin policies of perestroika and glasnost, a great movement arose in Armenia to have Karabagh transferred to the jurisdiction of the Armenian Republic. The result of all this was a series of events that entailed a major political crisis for the Soviet central government — an undeclared Armeno-Azeri war, the de facto independence of Karabagh, a cease-fire declared in 1994 (that has held up remarkably well), and a number of moves on the part of the international community to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Chief among these have been the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), whose three-member Minsk Group has been charged with encouraging negotiations between the parties concerned in order to reach a settlement on the Karabagh question.

There is no space here to detail the various stages and events, initiatives and declarations, that took place between 1988 and 1994; the flight of the Armenian population from Azerbaijan (some 250,000 people); the flight of the Azeri population from Armenia and Karabagh, the Armenian occupation of the southwest corner of Azerbaijan (ultimately 20% of the republic's territory); the flight of the Azeris from the occupied territories outside of Karabagh; or the course of the war and the atrocities committed by both sides in connection with it. What is important here is the search for a workable solution that can be accepted and lived with by all three sides—Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Karabagh.

Officially, the first two republics—both members of the CIS—are still negotiating a settlement. President Robert Kocharian of Armenia (a native of Karabagh and its former president) and his counterpart, President Haidar Aliiev of Azerbaijan, meet two or three times each year. They also sit down together when the leaders of the CIS member states hold their semi-annual meetings in Moscow. On the latter occasions, Kocharian and Aliiev often find time for private conversations, although nothing of what is discussed on such occasions is revealed. It has been suggested with some sarcasm that they drink a few glasses of raki and perhaps enjoy a game of tavoli—the implication being that the two leaders are not personally on bad terms, which it is quite possible.

Since the establishment of the cease-fire, the three co-chairmen of the Minsk Group have attempted to broker an agreement aided by the fact that both the Armenian and Azeri governments need to end the expense of remaining on a continuous war footing. Both governments also have good reasons for wanting to be able to present their people with at least a simulacrum of “victory.” Naturally, as one has learned to expect in any democracy, the opposition in both countries is quick to cry “sell-out,” if not “treason,” to any

solution proposed by the government in power.

Meanwhile, the United States, with a vocal Armenian lobby in Congress and strong oil interests in Azerbaijan, has taken its own initiative to push both parties to a solution, and under American pressure the presidents of both countries have met three times. In the autumn of 1999, an agreement was finally announced—documents outlining the agreement were to be signed in Istanbul that November. The October 1999 massacre in the Armenian parliament upset everything, however. Nothing has, in fact, been resolved in regard to Karabagh, and the agreement that was finally signed in Istanbul concerned itself mainly with questions relating to oil pipelines.

By the time of my visit to Karabagh a year later, the cease-fire had endured for over six years, long enough for the establishment of a status quo that neither side admits to accepting—a status quo on the order of the ones that obtain in Cyprus and Korea, or which had done so for so many decades in divided Germany. Recently, Ambassador Kerry Cavanaugh, who serves as the American representative on the Minsk Group, met with Presidents Kocharian and Aliiev and charged them with arriving at a solution—in effect, a plea for a return to the negotiating process of last fall.

At present, Highland Karabagh is a self-styled independent republic. It is not, however, recognized as such by any other state—not even, officially at least, by Armenia. It is not a part of the CIS, but it does have a consulate in Yerevan and representatives to the European Community and the European Parliament. Its representative in the United States is the director of the Highland Karabagh Republic Public Affairs Office. Unification of the Karabagh Republic with that of Armenia is obviously a goal on both sides, and the closest ties of cooperation exist between the Karabagh and Armenian governments. Nevertheless, no unification of Karabagh and the Armenian Republic is in sight. Such a move would simply be too dangerous.

Officially, then, the independence of Karabagh was achieved through the activities of the Karabagh Armenians working on their own, and Karabagh is viewed in Yerevan as a territory that has broken away from Azerbaijan. While no one for a moment believes that Armenia had nothing to do with the Karabagh War, should the Azeris ever become sufficiently organized to launch a campaign to recover the lost territory, the Azerbaijani government has, at present, no legal justification for attacking Armenia. Should Armenia annex Karabagh, however, this could be construed as an act of war, thereby giving Azerbaijan—were it stable and properly organized—a justification for invading Armenia proper as an enemy nation invading and occupying Azeri territory. With the population of Azerbaijan surpassing seven

million and that of Armenia having dropped through emigration to probably not much more than two million, there is no telling how far a decently trained Azerbaijani army might be able to advance should it invade Armenian territory, nor is there any guarantee that the Armenians would be able to drive them out.

As far as the local Armenians are concerned, they intend to remain in Highland Karabagh and to maintain their independent status. “We will die before we live again under the Turks” was a comment that I heard repeatedly from the local people, many of them hard-bitten men of thirty who had fought for the liberation of Karabagh and had seen their comrades fall while they were scarcely more than boys. Thousands of men died for the cause, and nearly every family was affected in some way.

For its part, the Armenian Republic makes no secret of its intention to ensure that Karabagh remains Armenian. A new road (highway is too grandiose a term) has been constructed to link Goris in Armenia with the Karabagh capital, Stepanakert, with funds raised by Armenian-Americans at annual campaigns held each Thanksgiving—a project undertaken at the request of the Armenian and the Karabagh governments, which obviously know what their priorities are. In addition, the construction of a north-south road, desperately needed in a country whose mountains and valleys run west to east, has just been begun. It is the second step in the American-Armenian funded road building project, the first stages of which I saw being gouged out by bulldozers. Armenia also contributes to various aspects of the Karabagh economy (e.g., partially funding the Karabagh school system, though I met with teachers who had not been paid in five months because funds from Armenia had yet to arrive). Yerevan is also paying Armenians in Armenia proper to settle in Shushi. Shushi was once the third largest city in Transcaucasia after Tiflis and Baku, with a joint Armenian and Azeri population, but under the Soviets it became an Azeri-populated center in the heart of Karabagh.

There are other signs that the Karabagh Armenians are digging in for the long haul. Since the enclave’s declaration of independence, the Armenian archiepiscopal see of Karabagh has been reestablished (the Archbishop, Khachak Barsamian, is a most prominent and able cleric). The Armenian cathedral in Shushi has been completely restored, as were the two great Armenian monasteries in the region, Gandzasar and Amaras, with a seminary under construction at the former. The Sarsang dam and reservoir, constructed late in the Soviet period, have been carefully preserved. The Azeris did not destroy the dam, for that would have caused a flood in Azerbaijan, but neither did the Armenians, because they saw their importance for the economic develop-

ment of Armenian Karabagh.

Most recently, the parliament of Highland Karabagh voted unanimously on 3 October 2000 to restore the traditional names of the five districts that comprise the enclave. More significant, I believe, is the settlement of Armenians in the “occupied territories” on either side of the Lachin corridor linking Armenia to Karabagh, and the renaming of Azeri villages there. The Armenians are adamant that any settlement must include a physical connection between Karabagh and the Armenian Republic. The region of Lachin is now being called Kashatagh (restoration work has begun there at the remote monasteries of Dadivank and Tsitsernavank), while the region of Kelbajar to the north is now officially known as Karvatjar. Clearly the Armenians are digging in for the long haul.

Four possible resolutions to the “Karabagh Question” present themselves presently. The first might be called the Azeri ideal: a restoration of the status quo ante whereby Azerbaijan gets back Highland Karabagh with no strings attached. This, of course, would be totally unacceptable to the Armenians, both in Karabagh and in Armenia, who have shed their blood to liberate the enclave from non-Armenian rule.

The second could be called the Armenian ideal: the republic of Highland Karabagh and all the territory between it and Armenia proper become part of the Republic of Armenia. In return, the remaining occupied territories (Armenian forces currently occupy five districts in Azerbaijan proper outside the boundaries of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast), having served their purpose as bargaining chips, would be returned to Azerbaijan.

Third, and more likely, would be some sort of compromise. Before a dispute like this can be solved, one must be able to see the other side’s point of view. The Azeris would have to recognize that this territory is, and has been, an Armenian-inhabited region from ancient times and that the Armenians, having lost so much of their territory in the past, cannot simply write it off. The Armenians, for their part, would have to accept that the Azeri government needs a solution that enables it to save face. No Azeri politician could possibly remain in power if he accepted the loss of Highland Karabagh as a *fait accompli*.

A possible solution to this dilemma was offered some years ago by an American official, Paul Goble, whereby Armenia would offer Azerbaijan some desirable piece of real estate in return for retaining Karabagh. Specifically, Armenia could cede the districts that comprise Zangezur in southern Armenia, a tempting offer to Baku since this would enable Azerbaijan to link up directly to Nakhichevan, an Azeri territory presently cut off from Azerbaijan precisely by

Zangezur. It would also link Azerbaijan proper with Turkey. It is difficult to see, however, how Armenia could accept such an arrangement. Not only would it mean exchanging one piece of Armenian territory to acquire another that it already holds through force of arms, but it would cut off Armenia from Iran, a relatively friendly state and an active trading partner. It would also leave Armenia surrounded by Turks along almost its entire frontier, save the relatively short border with the not entirely friendly Republic of Georgia.

More recently, a fourth possibility has been suggested: some sort of condominium that would enable both Armenia and Azerbaijan to claim victory while leaving the people of Highland Karabagh under local rule. Since Highland Karabagh in the Soviet period was supposed to be autonomous within Azerbaijan to begin with, such an arrangement in practical terms might simply mean the establishment of a genuinely autonomous government under nominal Azeri authority, along with strong guarantees from the Armenian government. A refinement of the condominium solution has been offered recently based on the constitution of Andorra, an autonomous polity between France and Spain that rules itself internally but whose international affairs are subject to the joint oversight of the government of France (which inherited these rights from the Count of Foix during the French Revolution) and the Bishop of Urgol in Spain, which before 1789 had shared with Foix the feudal overlordship of the territory and now shares it with the president of France.

Unfortunately, the most probable outcome (if one can call it that) is what might be called the Cypriot model: a bogging down of the political process and long-term maintenance of the status quo post-bellum. In these circumstances, no one will be happy, but everyone will learn to live with it.

CONCLUSION

Armenian complaints against Azeri policies in Highland Karabagh date back at least to the late 1950s. By then, the Azeris had had forty years to make their rule agreeable to the Armenian inhabitants of the region. Instead, they had made them decidedly dissatisfied. After the first complaints were lodged, another forty years passed during which the Azeris had ample opportunity to improve the situation for the Karabagh Armenians. They did not do so. The Armenians are a different people from the Azeris, and they simply do not wish to remain under Azeri rule. This fact was, and remains, the crux of the Karabagh question. Any solution that puts the Armenians of Karabagh back under direct Azeri control would be no solution at all.

Cooperation in the Caucasus: Models Versus Reality

Leila Alieva

There is little doubt that violent conflicts in the Caucasus have hindered economic and political development in the region since the collapse of communism. Regional economic prosperity depends upon the development of the region's rich natural endowments (particularly its plentiful reserves of oil and gas), which in turn requires secure access to foreign markets. Unfortunately, these markets, except for Turkey's, are distant from regional producers, which makes the issue of transportation a crucial one. Indeed, it is not humanitarian or political considerations that account for the region's strategic importance to Europe and the United States. On the contrary, it is first and foremost their desire to ensure secure and reliable transportation arteries to get Caspian basin oil and gas to the international marketplace.

Western governments were initially hesitant to become directly involved in the Caucasus. Above all, they feared irritating regional powers, particularly Russia. Eventually, however, they realized that their strategic objectives could not be achieved without becoming engaged on the ground. Once they did so, they discovered that, despite the fact that they were concerned primarily with economic issues, they would have to accommodate regional politics and the preferences of local leaders. Most of the latter wanted to encourage Western involvement, which led them to adopt policies and rhetorical positions that would make them look more "European," including repeated public commitments to "conflict resolution."

After eight years of mediation, bilateral talks, and consultations, there has been little progress in settling regional conflicts. At this point, it appears that all available approaches to conflict resolution have been exhausted. In part, the reason for this has been that regional leaders have had to maintain internal political stability even as they deal with the complexities of their geopolitical environment. This balancing act has required extraordinary political skill, particularly because the interests of outside powers have often been in conflict. Another problem has been that regional leaders have assumed that reaching settlements means achieving their own objectives, not finding mutually satisfactory solutions through compromise. Rhetorical commitments to conflict resolution have in turn raised unrealistic expectations about the likelihood of settlements on the part of external mediators, even as they generate intense political opposition domestically. Finally, regional leaders, instead of talking directly to each other, have attempted to convince external actors to support their positions in the hopes of changing the balance of political power in their favor.

It was against this backdrop that the leaders of the South Caucasus appealed recently to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to draft a "stability pact" for the region (or as some referred to it, a "security pact"). In fact, the three leaders once again have their own ideas about the objectives of the proposed pact. For Armenia, Russia would be a protector and the guarantor of its victories on the battlefield in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. Any pact should also be designed to reduce the likelihood that Azerbaijan would use force to retake territory from the Armenians. Armenia also hopes that any pact will allow Armenia to participate in the development of the energy and transportation systems in the region. Azerbaijan and Georgia, on the other hand, hope that a pact will restore their territorial integrity and limit Russia's ability to interfere in their internal affairs. They also hope that it will encourage Western involvement in the region at Moscow's expense.

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The OSCE responded to the request for draft “stability pact” by turning to a European non-governmental organization to draft a proposal. The group responded by offering a so-called “3+3+2” formula based on (1) cooperation between the three states themselves; (2) support from three key regional powers, Iran, Turkey, and Russia; and (3) support from the United States and Europe. Guarantees of security and steps toward conflict resolution would be followed by the creation of a “South Caucasus Community” analogous to the former “European Community.” Thus, the initial emphasis would be on increased trade and economic cooperation.

The problem with this approach, however, is that it ignores the internal political considerations and strategic concerns of the three South Caucasus states. Armenia and Azerbaijan are effectively in a state of war, albeit an undeclared one. Indeed, the conflict over Karabakh and its surrounding areas divides not only Armenia and Azerbaijan but the entire region. National security and conflict resolution are therefore the primary factors that determine the common interests (if any) of Armenia and Azerbaijan. In other words, common security concerns form the most realistic basis for any future cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and any arrangement that does not take security concerns into account will fail.

The weakness of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is suggestive in this regard. The CIS was founded primarily because Russia hoped that it would help preserve its influence over the post-Soviet space. Its member states, however, have had widely divergent security interests, and the CIS has thus been an extremely weak organization. In contrast, the common security concerns of the GUUAM countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) are genuine and significant. They united by their insistence that the letter of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty be adhered to, by their desire to defend their territorial integrity, and by their common opposition to Russian meddling in their internal affairs. These common objectives have served as the basis for economic cooperation, particularly in regard to pipeline routes and the benefits of a free-trade zone. However desirable a security pact for the South Caucasus might be, political realities, and especially the priority that respect for their territorial integrity has for Azerbaijan and Georgia, will undermine any arrangement that does not take these factors into account.

The idea of using integration in Europe as a driving force for regional cooperation is also suspect. While all the South Caucasus states want to become part of Europe, popular support for integration will come into question if they are forced to sacrifice vital interests for the European project.

Certain requirements for joining the European club, such as religious freedom or further democratization, may also be perceived as threats to state interests or as steps undermining regime stability. If this proves the case, they may turn to other structures or alliances that accommodate their vital interests more effectively.

In fact, there are already signs of such developments. Leaders in all three South Caucasus countries have been trying to improve bilateral relations with Russia or particular Western governments, depending upon who is willing to address their security concerns more decisively. Moreover, Armenia, despite its generally pro-Western orientation, has continued to cooperate with countries such as Iran and Russia, again because of security concerns. The more Baku is disappointed with American and European willingness to help it deal with its security problems and its overriding objective of preserving its sovereignty over Karabakh, the more likely it is that it, too, will look for alternative alliances.

The specific arrangements envisaged by the proposed pact reflect the dominant role taken by the Europeans in the process. The proposed peacekeeping force is supposed to be provided by the OSCE, an arrangement that is intended to address the sensitivities of Russia (and Europe) to the military role played by Washington and NATO in Europe and since the end of the Cold War. In fact, however, the involvement of Russia and Iran in the proposed scheme contradicts American policy and conflicts in some cases with local views on how regional cooperation should develop. Many local actors believe that regional cooperation only will be possible through a weakening of Russian and Iranian influence. The Georgian and Azerbaijani governments also believe that only Washington and NATO are capable of acting decisively in political emergencies, and that only they can counterbalance the efforts of their great northern neighbor to weaken them internally. Finally, disagreements between Europe and Washington over the architecture of regional cooperation continues to divide the Caucasus along traditional lines, with Armenia supporting the European proposals and Azerbaijan and Georgia approaching them with skepticism.

Attempts to account for Russian interests in the proposal seem reasonable, particularly because recently there have been signs of a change in Russian policy toward the Caucasus. In the past, Moscow has allied itself with Armenia in an effort to weaken Azerbaijan and Georgia, the intent being to keep all three states under its control. The growing number of bilateral meetings between Russian and Azerbaijani officials, and an increase in Moscow’s efforts to mediate the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, suggest that the Putin government is aware of changing realities in the South Caucasus

and is adjusting its policies accordingly. However, the nature of Putin's power base, which is traditionally conservative and strategically ambitious, makes such a shift unlikely. It is also hard to know what the limits of Russian interests are, just as it is hard to predict whether Western governments will have the capacity and desire to counter Russia if its objectives prove unlimited. Finally, Russia's shift in policy may be countered by the resistance of Russian institutions, power centers, and interest groups that prefer Moscow's past policies.

Another important question raised by the proposed pact is the relationship between economic, political, and security aspects of regional cooperation. The proposal attempts to tie these aspects together into a single inseparable knot. However, the assumption that these aspects are mutually reinforcing should be met with some skepticism. Disruption of economic links is an unfortunate but natural consequence of violent conflict. Typically, diplomatic and political relations have to improve between warring parties before economic cooperation is possible. Economic cooperation may serve as a powerful incentive to conflict resolution, but it is not necessarily a precondition for it.

The absence of trade and economic relations between conflicting parties in the South Caucasus confirms the effect that political conflict has on economic relations. It is also a reminder of the degree to which the titular peoples of the former union republics, including those in the Caucasus, believed that they were economically self-sufficient, despite the reality of extreme economic interdependency. This reality and the nature of the economic ties between union republics was itself a consequence of the Soviet colonial system, whereby all economic linkages were determined by Moscow. The governments of the Caucasus republics were thus precluded from determining the nature and direction of their external economic relations. Moreover, it meant that the peoples of the region were unaware of how interdepen-

dent they actually were. Moreover, the people of the region assume even today that some powerful outside actor can force regional economic cooperation that regardless of the poor state of political relations. In fact, to expect economic "pragmatism" from the peoples of the region is entirely unrealistic, particularly where the tanks of an occupying power remain on its territory and when hundreds of thousands of IDPs are living in tent camps. How would Americans have reacted after Pearl Harbor to a suggestion that their government participate in an "energy sharing project" with Japan?

The vicious circle of unresolved conflicts in the South Caucasus thus leaves little room for a major breakthrough. The region's wars have created alliances and interest groups that benefit from frozen conflict. For there to be any real hope for an improvement in political relations, all parties will have to make a genuine effort to take each other's perceptions and interests seriously. The role of the international community should not be to help each state survive regardless of the nature of its relations with its neighbors. Rather, it should be to convince all parties to adopt policies that will improve political dialogue. The international community should also encourage scholarly and cultural exchanges, discussion groups, conferences, and meetings between intellectuals and officials in the region that are devoted to conflict resolution and the long-term benefits of greater cooperation. Intellectuals should work together to establish a spirit of compromise within their own societies, and intense communication between communities should be encouraged. Finally, movement toward more open societies should be supported — closed society help foster a "siege mentality" and "enemy images." Despite Western skepticism about the benefits of increased human contacts, their effect is substantial and should not be underestimated. Economic cooperation should be treated not as a cause of conflict resolution but as a reward for mutual respect and a willingness to change one's own attitudes.

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