

THE ARMENIAN QUESTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS, ITS IMPACT ON ARMENIA-AZERBAIJANI RELATIONS AND VISION OF THE NEAR FUTURE

(MEDENİYETLER VE JEOPOLİTİK ÇIKARLAR ÇATIŞMASI BAĞLAMINDA ERMENİ SORUNU, ERMENİSTAN-AZERBAIJAN İLİŞKİLERİNE ETKİSİ VE YAKIN GELECEK VİZYONU)

Emin ŞİHALİYEV

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Azerbaijan Academy of National Sciences
Nakhchivan State University, Dept. of IR
emin.amea@yahoo.com

Abstract: *There are different views that the worldwide conflict originate from the civilization relationships. This view is analyzed in this article; especially the role of Turkish Civilization in this relationship is researched. Some Western scholars in their analysis see Turkish civilization as part of the Islamic Civilization not an independent entity. However, we think this approach is wrong. In that case, thousand years of pre-Islamic Turkish civilization is ignored. The relationship between Western and Turkish civilizations has always been problematic and this has continued up to date. In this article were analyzed the clash of Western and Turkish civilizations and those reasons coming from the ancient times up to day. Also it is possible to come to such conclusion that, the Armenian question is the result and continuation of this clash. The author characterized the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict not only as a part of the clash of Western and Turkish civilizations, but also as a part of the clash of geopolitical interests. Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the greatest obstacles to security and stability in the South Caucasus. Despite the fact that the Armenia-Azerbaijani conflict started twenty years ago there is no resolution for this conflict and the one is not expected in the near future. Continuing occupation of 20% of the Azerbaijani lands by Armenia increase the likelihood of getting a new war. But what promises the war to Azerbaijan?*

Keywords: *Clash of civilizations, the clash of geopolitical interests, Armenian question, Armenia-Azerbaijani conflict, OSCE Minsk Group, Russia, Iran*

Öz: *Dünyada yaşanan çatışmaların medeniyetlerarası ilişkilerdeki sorunun bir ürünü olduğuna dair çeşitli görüşler mevcuttur. Çalışmamızda bu görüşler analiz edilmiş, bu ilişkilerde özellikle Türk medeniyetinin yeri araştırılmıştır. Bazı Batılı bilim adamları medeniyetleri sınıflandırırken Türk medeniyetini bağımsız bir dal olarak görmezden gelmekte ve İslam medeniyetinin bir parçası olarak sunmaktadırlar. Fakat biz bu yaklaşımın son derece yanlış olduğunu düşünüyoruz. Aksi taktirde Türklerin İslam'dan önceki en az 1000 yıllık tarihi ve medeniyeti silinmiş olur. Batı-Türk medeniyetleri arasındaki ilişkiler tarih boyu hep gergin ve çatışmalı olmuş, günümüze kadar süregelmiştir. Makalede Batı medeniyeti ile Türk medeniyeti arasında geçmişten günümüze yaşanan çatışmalar ve onların sebepleri analiz edilmiş, Ermeni meselesinin de bu çatışmanın bir sonucu ve devamı olduğu görüşüne varılmıştır. Yazar Ermenistan-Azerbaycan sorununu da Batı-Türk medeniyetleri arasındaki çatışmanın bir halkası olarak değerlendirmekle birlikte jeopolitik çıkarlar çatışması bağlamında da ele almıştır. Dağlık Karabağ sorunu Güney Kafkasya'da güvenlik ve istikrarın önündeki en büyük engellerden biridir. Üzerinden 20 seneden çok bir süre geçmesine rağmen çözüme kavuşamayan Ermenistan-Azerbaycan çatışması ne zaman çözüleceği konusunda belirsizliğini sürdürmektedir. Azerbaycan topraklarının %20'sinin Ermenistan tarafından işgalinin sürmesi yeni bir savaşın çıkma olasılığını artırmaktadır. Fakat olası bir savaş Azerbaycan'a ne vadediyor?*

Anahtar kelimeler: *Medeniyetler çatışması, jeopolitik çıkarlar çatışması, Ermeni sorunu, Ermenistan-Azerbaycan çatışması, AGİT Minsk Grubu, Rusya, İran*

Introduction

There is no doubt that in recent years a much debated question is that most wars and conflicts result from a clash of civilizations. Although there are those who think otherwise. Still, in light of the historical realities and analytical findings, it seems possible to prove that there is an ongoing conflict between the Western Civilization and the Turkish Civilization, that the Armenian issue is a byproduct of the conflict, and that the problem between Armenia and Azerbaijan results from the aforementioned Western-Turkish clash of civilizations. Thus we can conclude that current position of the Western countries on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and their double standards policy is completely a result of the conflict between the Western and Turkish civilizations. Yet, in spite of being a derivative of a Western-Turkish civilizational conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani clash is also a result of a competition between geopolitical interests. In this article, reasons behind the relations between the Western and Turkish civilizations that lead to conflict will be analyzed, the role of Armenian issue within these relations will be defined and lastly Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict within the context of civilizational and geopolitical interests are evaluated.

After famous American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington's book "Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" was published, his remarks on how "the central and most dangerous dimension of the emerging global politics would be conflict between groups from differing civilizations"¹ influenced and even frightened people. Huntington's remarks are perceived in a far more different meaning than the original intention and even criticized by some analysts. It's an undeniable fact that the concept "clash of civilizations" is terrifying. Still, it would also be unjust to deny the term altogether. Today, inter-civilizational relations have an important place in global politics. Leaving aside others, we can certainly hold that there is a clash between the Western civilization and Islam-Turkish civilization. Interestingly, some Western, Russian and Iranian scholars did not categorize Turkish civilizations as a unique one. Neither Samuel P. Huntington's,² nor Arnold Toynbee's,³ Francis Fukuyama's Herald Müller's,⁴ Boris Kuzik's, Yuriy Yakovets's,⁵ Abdul Huseyin Zarrinkub's or others' works or remarks treat the concept of Turkish civilization as an independent branch. Turkish civilization is presented as a part of Islam civilization. Naturally, Islamic

1 Samuel P. Huntington, *Medeniyetler çatışması ve dünya düzeninin yeniden kurulması* (İstanbul: Okuyan Us yayınları, 2005), s. 9.

2 Samuel P. Huntington, *Medeniyetler çatışması...*, s. 9

3 Arnold Toynbee, *İssledovaniye istorii*, (Moskva: ACT, 2010).

4 Harald Müller, *Kültürlerin uzlaşması* (İstanbul: Timaş yayınları, 2001).

5 Boris Kuzik, Yuriy Yakovets, *Tsivilizatsii: teoriya, istoriya, dialog, buduşyeye* (Moskva: İstitut Ekonomiçeskih Strategiy, T. 1, 2006).

civilization is an essential feature of Turkish civilization. But it is inevitable to accept Turkish civilization as an independent civilizational category like Arab civilization or Persian civilization, despite the fact that it perpetuates Islamic civilization. Azerbaijani scholars such as Rahid Ulusel⁶ and Erestü Habibbeyli⁷ find it inaccurate to include Turkish civilization within the Islamic civilization. That's unquestionably true. Because if we treat the issue from that perspective, we would be ignoring at least a 1000-years past until Turks adopt Islam.

Western-Turkish Clash of Civilizations and the Armenian Issue as a By-Product

After Turks adopted Islam, Western-Turkish civilizational relations developed on a Christianity-Islam basis. Today, Western civilization signifies the Christian world. Likewise, after their adoption of Islam, Turks became the guardian of Islam and they played a significant role in its spread. Thus, Western-Turkish civilizational relations always have been tense and that continues until today.

Metin Aydoğın shows that there is a widespread anti-Turkey and Turcophobic ideology and that is like a historical tradition. Turks' relations with the West are one of 1600-years of conflict and continuous wars. Northern Hun warriors caused the destruction of the Western Roman Empire as they ended the antiquity which was based on a sovereignty of the masses system while they started the Middle Ages. Sultan Fatih Mehmet the Conqueror had put an end to the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) as he laid the ground for the already dissolving serfdom-based Middle Ages. Turks dominated the world for over 1300 years against the West since the collapse of the Western Roman Empire until the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. Turks also resisted 8 separate Crusades by the Europeans and defeated them.⁸

Question comes to mind as to which civilization stands as the carrier for these Crusades: did the Turks resisted these Crusades, or were the Arabs?

Turkish researchers Ali Çimen's and Gökür Göğebakan's views are very clear on that particular question: Crusaders were Westerners who came from far away, but those who fought these Crusaders were Turks from the beginning. It was also Turks who ended the 200-years of Crusaders rule. This long struggle occurred on Anatolian lands located in between the East and

6 Rahid S. Ulusel, *Qloballaşma ve Türk sivilizasyonu* (Bakü: Çaşoğlu yayınları, 2005), s. 15.

7 Erestü Habibbeyli, *Sivilizasyonların kesişmesinde Türk Dünyası* (Bakü: Elm ve Tehsil yayınları, 2011), s. 38.

8 Metin Aydoğın, *Bitmeyen Oyun: Türkiye'yi Bekleyen Tehlikeler* (İstanbul: Kumsaati yayınları, 2003), s. 181-182.

the West, as Turks and German-Latin Westerners fought to fill the void of power in the region.⁹

The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru gives invaluable information on the struggle between the Turks and the Crusaders in his book entitled “Glimpses of World History”¹⁰

In fact, based on analytical findings from the historical processes, it is possible to say that the Crusades were a clash between the Muslim Turks and the Christian German-Latins, although they are categorized as the West’s campaigns against non-Christian peoples. Firstly, it was the Turks who stood in the way of the Christian west in all the crusades. Also, why wasn’t there a crusader unity when Arabs conquered Spain and attacked Europe? That’s because when the crusades began Arabs were in a passive period of their history. If we approach the matter from a realistic point of view, wasn’t it the holy purpose of the crusaders to save Jerusalem? And wasn’t this city in the Arab lands? Why they didn’t feel it necessary to save the holy land during when the Arabs lived their passive period in their history?

Turks were seen not as a community of people, but rather the devil barbarian capable of doing everything evil in Western subconscious mind, as they were already known as the “Scourge of God” in the eyes of the European rulers during the Middle Ages, and in general whole of Europe.

To put it bluntly, crusades were a fight by the Western civilization against the Turkish civilization. Anti-Turkey and Turcophobic crusader mentality is never a coincidence. Turks were seen not as a community of people, but rather the devil barbarian capable of doing everything evil in Western subconscious mind, as they were already known as the “Scourge of God” in the eyes of the European rulers during the Middle Ages, and in general whole of Europe.¹¹

These kinds of mystic ideas and mentality rooted in memories as well as past events helped emerge a fear and a hate psychology against the Turks in the West, while the Muslim Turkish state became the utmost rival and the enemy since the Siege of Vienna and their victorious march, and as a result brought the “Armenian Issue” on the agenda together with other factors as a tool for revenge, thus using it to bring Turkey under pressure. How the “Israel issue”

9 Ali Çimen, Göknur Gögebakan, *Tarihi değiştiren savaşlar* (İstanbul: Timaş yayınları, 2009), s. 111.

10 Jawaharlal Nehru, *Ümumdünya tarihine nezer* (Bakü: Gençlik yayınları, 1986), s. 267-272.

11 Sedat Laçiner, “Ermeni iddiaları ve terör”, *Ermeni sorunu el kitabı*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi basımevi, 2003), s. 103-104.

was brought before the Muslim and the Arabic world, hence the Turkic world (Turkey and Azerbaijan) were blighted with the “Armenian Issue”. These issues are a part of a parallel plan that the Christian Western world are conducting today. They exploit religious and national factors to increase their power and extend it. West exported the once Christian-Jewish conflict to Middle East by turning it into one of a Muslim-Jewish conflict.¹² However, the centuries-old Jewish issues stemmed from an anti-Semite movement rooted in the Christian theology, whereas it is originally an anti-Zionist political reaction to an externally imposed Israel problem by the Muslim people in the region after the WWII. Thus the original aim here is to conceal the Christian-Jewish enmity and replace it with a Jewish-Muslim conflict¹³ Thus the original aim here is to conceal the Christian-Jewish enmity and replace it with a Jewish-Muslim conflict. As was a Jewish-Muslim enmity between Israel and Muslim/Arabic countries created, so was a parallel enmity between Armenians and Turks launched. Thus, the Armenian issue is rooted in the inherited Crusader mentality against the Turks. Today, attitude towards Turkey and Azerbaijan by the Western states is essentially the embodiment of that mentality. Armenian issue is an important part of that hate towards the Turks.

British Prime Minister Gladstone made such remarks the end of the nineteenth century about the Turks: “What was the Turkish race and what is it now? This is not only a problem about Islam, but the fact that Islam integrated with a race’s own character. Since that dark day that Turks stepped on Europe, they have been the major non-human species of the humanity. Wherever they went, they left a huge bloodbath behind them. Wherever their sovereignty reached, civilization was destroyed there”.¹⁴

In 1919, British Lloyd George made these remarks: “As a looter community, Turks are a cancer of humanity and a scar that penetrated in the flesh of lands that they mismanage.”¹⁵

Probably Gladstone and Lloyd forgot about the torture and atrocities the British soldiers committed in India during the same period they made such remarks, so they turn a blind eye to their own actions and judge Turks.

While explaining Europeans’ view of Turks and Turkish history during a lecture at the end of the 1940s in Turkey, renowned German scientist Ord. Prof. Fritz Neumark said: “I should sincerely admit that Europeans do not like Turks and it is not possible for them to like Turks. Hostility towards

12 Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik derinlik: Türkiye'nin uluslararası konumu* (İstanbul: Küre yayınları, 2010), s. 380.

13 Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik derinlik...*, s. 381.

14 Sedat Laçiner, İhsan Bal, “İngiltere Ermenileri, lobicilik ve Ermeni Sorunu”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, sayı:7 (2002): s. 79.

15 Metin Aydoğan, *Bitmeyen Oyun...*, s. 185.

Turks and Islam has pervaded into the cells of Christians and the church. Europeans despise Turks because they are Muslims, however, let alone secularism, even if the Turks convert into Christianity they would still consider them as enemies.”¹⁶

These are confessions that have been verbalized very sincerely. Such general expressions not only reflect personal opinions, but the opinions of the states as well. The shadow of the Crusades has wandered over the West for quite a while. The growth of the Turks, who have been a part of Europeans’ agenda since the eleventh century and threatened the security of Europe until the second half of the eighteenth century, has always been against the interest of Europeans. Since the second half of the eighteenth century until 1923, Europeans threatened the security of the Turks and they grew against the Turks.¹⁷

Let us remember the Treaty of Sevres signed on 10 August 1920. According to this treaty, an Armenian state that included Doğubayazıt, Van, Muş, Bitlis and Erzincan in the East and a Kurdistan between Iraq and Syria were to be founded.¹⁸

12 out of 14 points that Woodrow Wilson pointed out in his speech in the American Congress on 8 January 1918 are about the Ottoman Empire: the Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire were to be given sovereignty and the non-Turkish parts were to be given an opportunity to develop autonomously.¹⁹ In light of this and other decisions, Treaty of Sevres was signed on 10 August 1920 by the Istanbul government. The sixth part of this Treaty was only about the Armenians.²⁰ The Treaty not only gave the Armenians the right to found a state on territories to be taken from the Ottoman Empire, but also provided Kurds in Turkey temporary autonomy in regions where they inhabited densely, which could have resulted in a complete independence later on.²¹ As expected, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was already brave enough to fight to prevent the application of this treaty and they mobilized the National Pact against it.²² Along comes

16 Metin Aydoğan, *Bitmeyen Oyun...*, s. 182

17 Haydar Çakmak, “Avrupa güvenliği ve Türkiye”, (Türk Dış Politikası, Uluslararası III Türk Dış Politikası Sempozyumu tebliğleri, Ankara: USAK yayımları, 2009), s. 265.

18 Erdal Sarızeybek, *Kurt kaparı* (İstanbul: Pozitif yayımları, 2010), s. 109.

19 Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1914-1990)* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür yayımları, 1991), s. 139

20 Nürşen Mazıcı, *Belgelerle uluslararası rekabette Ermeni sorununun kökeni (1878-1918)* (İstanbul: Gümüş basımevi, 1987), s. 105.

21 David McDowall, “The Kurdish Question: A Historical Review”, *In The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview*, ed. by Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl, (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 17.

22 See: Salahi R. Sonyel, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Dış Politika* (Ankara: TTK yayımları, Cilt: 2, 1986), s. 86; Şenol Kantarcı, “Tarihi boyutuyla Ermeni sorunu: Başlangıçtan Lozan’a”, *Ermeni Sorunu el kitabı (genişletilmiş ikinci baskı)*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi basımevi, 2003), s. 38.

this question: What might the West have aimed while they were dividing the Turkish territories for the foundation of an Armenian and a Kurdish state? Were the destinies of Armenians and Kurds their business? In our opinion, the answer to these questions should be sought in the revenge of the past inherited from the history, namely the mentality of the Crusades.

In the Treaty of Lausanne signed on 24 July 1923, important steps were taken. Turkey's independence was recognized, her borders were determined and the Treaty of the Sevres was canceled.²³ Turkey decisively stated that she did not have an inch of soil to be given to the Armenians, and if they needed more territories, there were other states with very large territories.²⁴ The achievement attained in Lausanne and the cancellation of the Treaty of Sevres do not mean that the anti-Turkish policies of the West are over. Even though the Sevres was cancelled, the conditions of the treaty are still being pushed to Turkey in every opportunity. On the way of Turkey - European Union relations those conditions are always brought up. Nicholas Sarkozy frequently indicated that "If Turkey is decisive in being an EU member state, she must definitely

One of the leading figures of the European Security policy, weapon control and disarmament, German professor Harald Müller who opposes the "Clash of Civilizations" thesis of Samuel P. Huntington and who deems that rhetoric as deadly believes that it is important to develop the dialogue among civilizations, however, his stance towards Turkey is no different from others. Müller says: "The problems that the minorities in Turkey are facing can be criticized. It is a must that the country makes massive changes before joining the EU. Turkey should be presented an open entry perspective, the conditions should be laid on table in a detailed way and a time plan should be prepared for the negotiations."²⁵ (Müller, 2001: 218-219).

Actually the conditions are pretty obvious. The logic of the Sevres is always on the agenda. The opening of the border gates is originally about the foundation of mutual relations. Let us focus on the Zurich Protocols, which were the cornerstone of the Armenian opening. As is known, the first important diplomatic treaty between Turkey and Armenia was signed on 10 July 2009 in Zurich, Switzerland, despite the fact that it was unnatural. The signing ceremony was attended by the Foreign ministers of Turkey, Armenia and the host country Switzerland as well as the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, French Foreign

23 Ali Aliyev, *Elince yaddaşı* (Bakü: Elm ve heyat yayınları, 2004), s. 170.

24 Şenol Kantarcı, "Tarihi boyutuyla Ermeni sorunu...", s. 39.

25 Harald Müller, *Kültürlerin uzlaşması*, s. 218-219.

Minister Bernard Kouchner and the EU's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana.²⁶ To focus the attention to a very important matter, the fact that representatives from the above-mentioned large countries joined the Zurich Protocols proves how willing they are for the foundation of Armenia - Turkey relations. Their real focus has not been a genuine will to help for the existence of real, sincere diplomatic relations, but rather has been to support the "unilateral concession" policy that Armenia demands from Turkey; which proves once again the anti-Turkish policies of the great powers as a historical tradition. These are new Crusades. If the shadow of the Crusades is still flying over the West, it is because of the collective subconscious that comes from the past against the Turks and Islam. The Crusades continue today and they continue their struggle against Turks and Islam under different names. One of the appliers of the Crusaders in the region is Armenia, who put forward the territory and genocide claims to Turkey, occupies the 20% of the Azerbaijani land and commits a genocide there. The duty that Armenians have carried out as "Crusaders" against the Turks is nothing new. The fact that Armenians had contacts with the Crusaders coming from Europe and formed alliances against the Muslim communities they lived in created sympathy towards them among the Crusaders.²⁷ Armenians did everything they could for the continuation of the Crusades. They were together with the Crusaders from Istanbul to Jerusalem. For Armenians, Crusaders were saviors. They believed that God sent the Crusaders to save them from the Turks.²⁸

British scientist Carol Hillenbrand writes in her book "The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives" that during the period when the Crusades were going on, Armenians betrayed the Turks and capitulated some castles by themselves in order to gain the sympathy of the Crusaders.²⁹

Prof. Dr. Mehlika Aktok Kasgarli, a retired lecturer from the Sorbonne University also provides valuable information concerning the Armenian-Crusader relations:

...In the sixteenth century, Pope Gregory XIII said during a sermon on "Privilege" in Vatican in the honour of the foundation of the Delegation of Catholic Armenian Priests: '...Among the services and

26 Sinan Oğan, "Türkiye-Ermenistan maçı, protokol, açılım ve Türkiye için riskler", (<http://www.turksam.org/tr/a1870.html>), erişim: 10.11.2009.

27 See: Sedat Laçiner, İhsan Bal, "İngiltere Ermenileri, lobicilik...", s. 73

28 Güray Kırpık, "Birinci Haçlı Seferinde ve Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Türk-Ermeni-Fransız münasebetlerinin benzer yönleri", *Turkish Studies, International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, Volume 3/4 Summer (2008): s. 537.

29 Kerol Hillenbrand, *Krestoviye poxodi. Vzgl'yad s Vostoka: Musulmanskaya perspektiva* (Moskva: Dilya, 2008), 74.

the sacrifices that the Armenian nation provided to the church and Christian authorities, there is one thing that should always be kept alive in our memories. When the Christian princes and the Christian armies went back to reclaim the mausoleum of the Jesus Christ, no nation or no community were as willing as Armenians about helping Christians. They gave their most talented persons to the Crusaders and provided them with animals (horses), food, drinks, accommodation as well as very valuable suggestions and weapons. With all their strength they helped Christians in these holy wars in a heroic and loyal way...

...Then the Armenians had to undergo the Turkish rule and they became their slaves. With a very deep sorrow, we are saying this. No ruling, no pressure has hurt them (the Armenians) so much and insulted the Christian church, religion and prayer manners so much. Although they suffered too much under pressure, many of them could continue to be loyal to our apostolic authority. They resisted every type of disaster and evil.³⁰ (Kaşgarlı, 2000: 33-34).

We see the same type of expressions and approaches in the report that the US President Woodrow Wilson presented to the congress on 24 May 1920: “The American public feels a deep pain for the atrocities that the Armenian public underwent and the hunger, poverty, insecurity and helplessness they are currently suffering... The reason why there is a sympathy towards Armenians among our public stems from naive consciences and the will to see all Christians being saved from insignificance, pain and tyranny and to see them among the free nations in the world.”³¹ The same expressions are seen also in the Treaty of Sevres, the speeches by other US presidents and all the resolutions of the European Parliament. What can the West’s policies towards Turks be, if not the Crusades? Armenians once stood by the Crusaders and today they are willing to carry on with the Crusade methods. By relying on them today, they propose the genocide and territory claims and they occupy 20% of the Azerbaijani soil, another Turkic state.

In this context, if this issue is to be evaluated from the perspective of the clash of civilizations, the policies of the West towards Turkey and even Azerbaijan and the attitude and the double standards that the Minsk Group of OSCE adopts are the result of a Crusaders Union.

30 Mehlika Kaşgarlı, “Haçlı Seferleri ve Ermeniler”, *Türk-Ermeni ilişkileri. 21.yüzyıla girerken tarihe dostca bakış*, (Ankara: AKDYYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi yayınları, 2000), s. 33-34.

31 Ersal Yavi, *1856-1923 Emperyalizm kaskacında Türkler, Ermeniler, Kürtler* (İzmir: Yazıcı yayınevi, 2001), s. 349-350.

Armenia - Azerbaijan Relations and Nagorno - Karabakh Problem in the Context of the Clash of the Western and Turkish Civilizations

Samuel P. Huntington asserts that relations between different civilizations will never be friendly and they will generally be cold and hostile to one another. He divides the clash between civilizations in two categories, namely 1) local or micro level; 2) global or macro level and indicates that the first one refers to the clash between groups belonging to different civilizations and asserts that this is common especially between Muslims and non-Muslims; while in global and macro level refers to the clash between large states of different civilizations.³²

The role that clashes between large states of different civilizations on a global and macro level have on micro level clashes between neighboring states belonging to different civilizations is an undisputable truth. It is possible to observe this role on Armenia-Azerbaijan clash as well. Samuel Huntington also indicated that “As long as Islam remains as Islam (which is what is going to be) and the West remains as West (Christian) the basic clash between these two civilizations will continue in the future just like it did for the last fourteen centuries.”³³ By that he also sent signals that meant the problem between Armenia and Azerbaijan, who belong to different civilizations, will continue..

In fact, the clash between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been going on for the last 20 years and the uncertainty as to when the conflict will resolve is still prevailing. First of all, both countries consider each other as enemies who they will never be able to come together. More than anything this is because of the fact that each side claims that the other side came to Nagorno-Karabakh region after them and they are the legitimate residents.³⁴ However documents prove that the Armenians were forced to move to the area by the Russians with the 15th article of the Turkmençay Treaty signed between Russia and Iran, which later resulted in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Scientist Nikolay Shavrov who was the Russian envoy in Iran at that period provides very valuable information about this issue: “We started the colonization by placing the others, not the Russians in the Southern Caucasus region. After the 1826-1828 wars, between 1828 and 1830, we placed more than 40.000 Iranian Armenians and 84.000 Turkish Armenians in the territories that had the best public areas... More than 1 million out of 1.3 million Armenians in Southern Caucasia as of the beginning of this

32 Samuel P Huntington, *Medeniyetler çatışması...*, s. 306.

33 Samuel P Huntington, *Medeniyetler çatışması...*, s. 312-313.

34 Takayuki Yoshimura, “Some Arguments on the Nagorno-Karabakh History”, p. 58, (http://srch.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no18/3_yoshimura.pdf), erişim tarihi: 16.01.2012.

century are not the native inhabitants of the region, but rather were placed by us...”³⁵

Armenian historian M.G. Nersesyan also verifies the mobilization of Armenians from Turkey and Iran to Karabakh and Yerevan region after the Turkmençay Treaty: “At the end of 1820s more than 40.000 Armenians from Iran and around 90.000 Armenians from Turkey were made to move to the region...”³⁶

Russian scientist A.P. Liprandi mentioned that Armenians came to Karabakh later³⁷ and he indicated that the issue with them moving to Southern Caucasia is a result of the imperialist policies that Russia applied in the region.³⁸ The information about the immigration policies can also be found in the studies of other Russian scientists such as I.K.Yenikolopov,³⁹ S.V.Şostakoviç⁴⁰ Armenian historian Ç.P.Agayan,⁴¹ V.A.Parsamyan⁴².

If the issue is looked upon from the perspective of historical truth, it is seen that Armenians came to Karabakh after the Azerbaijani Turks and there is no base in asserting that their existence on those territories is legitimate. However it would be unreal to assume that the issue will be solved through the historical truth. Just like the presidents before himself, Serzh Sargsyan already expressed bluntly that “their aim is to never leave the Karabakh region to Azerbaijani authorities.”⁴³

In such an atmosphere, there has been a belief that there will not be reconciliation and peace between the parties. Although a truce was declared in 1994, 20% of the Azerbaijani territories are under occupation. Although the efforts to reach peace has been accelerated with the incentive of the Minsk Group of OSCE, the peace negotiations that have been going on for more than 15 years do not meet the expectations or yield any results. To be able to determine the right way to end the conflict, its underlying reasons and

35 Nikolay Şavrov, *Novaya ugroza Russskomu delu v Zakavkazye: Predstavşaya rasporyadka Mugani inarodtsam* (Baku: Elm, 1911), s. 63.

36 M.G.Nersesyan, *İz istorii Russko-Armyanskih otnoşeniy* (Erevan: izd-vo AN Armyanskoy SSR, 1956), s. 227.

37 A.P.Liprandi, *Kavkaz i Rossiya* (Harkov: 1911), s. 46.

38 A.P.Liprandi, *Kavkaz i Rossiya*, s. 133.

39 İ.K.Yenikolopov, *Griboyedov i Vostok* (Erevan: Aypetrat, 1954), s. 137.

40 S.V.Şostakoviç, *Diplomatiçeskayadeyatelnost A.S.Griboyedova*, (Moskova: izd-vo sotçialno-ekonomiçeskoy literaturi, 1960), s. 154.

41 Ç.P.Agayan, *Rol Rossii v istoriçeskih sudbah Armyanskogo naroda (k 150 letiyu prisoyedineniya Vostoçnoy Armenii k Rossii)* (Moskova: Nauka, 1978), s. 220.

42 V.A.Parsamyan, *Zapadnaya Armeniya vo vremya I. Mirovogo Voyna* (Erevan: Ayastan, 1977), s. 411.

43 “Azerbaijan and Armenia: Peace prospects, Military Realities&the role of the Armenian Diaspora”, Caspian Information Center, no.16, October 2011, pp.1-2, (<http://www.caspianinfo.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/OP-No-16-Armenia-and-Azerbaijan-Peace-Prospects-Military-Realities-and-the-Role-of-the-Armenian-Diaspora.pdf>), erişim tarihi: 30.04.2012.

consequences should be evaluated objectively. According to the Armenian side of the story, the conflict has risen up thanks to blockade by Azerbaijan to the self determination of Armenians that live in the Karabakh region.⁴⁴ To defend the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, Armenia went into combat and the status-quo began.

Azerbaijan, however, believes that the conflict is as a result of “Hai-Tahd” doctrine, “the Great Armenia” ideology and its occupational policies.⁴⁵

Although the Minsk Group co-chairmen have attempted to create reconciliation with the peace negotiations that have gone on since 1994, they have not been able to make any progress. Because either their suggestions are not accepted by the conflicting parties or if one side accepts the suggestions, the other one thinks of them as completely negative. The three suggestions proposed by the Minsk Group of OSCE are as follows:

The “package resolution” presented in June 1997, “gradual resolution” presented in October 1997 and the “common state” solution that was presented in November 1998. The first two of these resolutions have been rejected by Armenia while the last one has been rejected by Azerbaijan. Apart from these resolutions, a new roadmap to resolution of the conflict was drawn in Madrid, Spain on 29 November 2007 in a meeting between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and co-chairmen of the Minsk Group of the OSCE, which would later be known as “Madrid Principles”.⁴⁶ Another step towards the resolution of the conflict is the Moscow Declaration signed in November 2008. The declaration which was signed by the Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev and

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44 Robert Koçaryan, “İskat Vıgodı v Sglajivanii Protivoretçiy”, *Mejdunarodnaya jizn*, №2 (2003): s. 31-32; Vladimir Kazimirov, *Mir Karabahu. Posredničestvo Rossii v uregulirovanii Nagorno-Karabakhskogo konflikta* (Moskva: Mejdunarodniye otnoşeniya, 2009), s. 271; Rafael Avetisyan, *Armeniya v strukture sovremennix mejdunarodnix otnoşeniy Kavkazskogo regiona*, Sankt-Peterburg, 2011, tema dissertatçii i avtoreferata po VAK 23.00.04, (<http://www.dissercat.com/content/armeniya-v-strukture-sovremennykh-mezhdunarodnykh-otnoşenii-kavkazskogo-regiona>).

45 E.A.Şihaliyev, “Psihologičeskaya i Religioznaya Podopleka Armyanskogo Voprosa”, *jurnal “Naslediye”*, Moskova, №6 (48) (2010): s. 48-51; Emin A. Şihaliyev, *Ermenistan-Azerbaycan çatışması sivilizasyonların çatışması bağlamında* (Bakü: Elm ve Tehsil, 2011), s. 106-124; Haleddin İbrahimli, *Değişen Avrasya’da Kafkasya* (Ankara: ASAM, 2001), s. 43-53.

46 Rövşen İbrahimov, “Dağlık Karabağ Sorununun Uluslararası Hukuk Açısından Değerlendirilmesi”, *Karabağ: Bildiklerimiz ve Bilmediklerimiz*, Reha Yılmaz içinde (Bakü: Kafkaz Üniversitesi Beynelhalk Münakaşaları Araştırma Merkezi, No: 002 (2010), s. 395

the Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan emphasizes on the resolution of the conflict through peaceful means and in the framework of the international law. Madrid principles of 2007 are also emphasized in the resolution. Madrid principles suggested that Armenians withdraw from territories other than Karabakh that they occupied and then a process towards referendum to be followed in Karabakh. Armenia did not accept the Madrid principles.⁴⁷ Armenia is decisive in not withdrawing the 5 regions it occupied (a few years later another two regions) before the status of the Nagorno Karabakh is determined. Armenia believes that if their army withdraws from the 5 regions it is occupying, it is going to be in a useless situation from a military and geopolitical perspective and the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh will be in danger. Moreover they believe that when they withdraw their defense system on the war zone, in other words, return the 5 regions, Azerbaijan will be militarily advantageous and Armenia will be weak and disadvantageous. Therefore, Armenia refuses to withdraw from the territories that it is occupying. While the Armenian side says that the resolution can only be attained by giving Karabakh independence, Azerbaijan emphasizes that there can be no further resolution than giving Karabakh the right to autonomy.⁴⁸

It is against the international rule that Armenia demands in the first phase the status of Nagorno-Karabakh to be determined. The status can only be determined after the occupation is over. It seems that the attitude of states and international organizations as to determine which side is wrong and which is right does not reflect the reality. Some UN Security Council Resolutions have been adopted for the ending of the conflict. These are the resolutions numbered 822 dated 30 April 1993, 853 dated 29 July 1993, 874 dated 14 October 1993 and 884 dated 11 November 1993. Although occupying forces are asked to withdraw from occupied territories in these resolutions, the names of the occupying and the occupied states were not mentioned and the occupying party violated these resolutions.⁴⁹

The resolution adopted in the UN General Assembly on 14 March 2008 is the most important decision taken on this subject during the last periods. The resolution has been passed with 39 votes in favor and 7 against and it

47 Elnur İsmayılov, "Türkiye-Ermenistan münasebetleri kontekstinde Dağlık Karabağ münakaşası", *Karabağ: Bildiklerimiz ve Bilmediklerimiz*, Reha Yılmaz içinde (Bakü: Kafkaz Üniversitesi Beynelhalk Münakaşaları Araştırma Merkezi, No: 002, 2010), s. 173-174; Kamer Kasım, "Türkiye'nin Kafkasya Politikası: Fırsatlar ve Güvenlik Problemleri", (Türk Dış Politikası Uluslararası III. Türk Dış Politikası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri, Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu (USAK) yayınları, 2009), s. 63; Emin A. Şihaliyev, Ermenistan-Azerbaycan çatışması medeniyetlerin çatışması bağlamında..., s. 65.

48 Samir Hamitov, "Dağlık Karabağ Münakaşası 2020 Yılında: Barış, Yoksa Müharebe?" *Dirçeliş-XXI asır Dergisi*, № 153-154 (2011): s. 151.

49 Emin A. Şihaliyev, *Ermenistan-Azerbaycan çatışması...*, s. 215; Araz Aslanlı, "Ermenistan'ın Azerbaycan Topraklarını İşgali Sorununun Hukuki Boyutu: Azerbaycan'ın Meşru Müdafaa Hakkı Devam Ediyor mu?", *Ermeni Araştırmaları Dergisi*, sayı: 9 (2003): s. 104.

emphasizes on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and it demands Armenians to withdraw from the occupied territories. The resolution also includes the displaced people's right to return to their homelands. In the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly, the second article that the Council proposed which demanded that "the Armenian forces must immediately withdraw from occupied Azerbaijani territories without any conditions". However the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group of OSCE, namely Russia, USA and France voted against it, which made Azerbaijan lose its trust in the Minsk Group. If the article had been applied, the conflict would have been resolved by now. However, the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group (Russia, USA and France) proposed balanced territorial integrity indicating that a resolution could only be applied with the consent of Armenia.⁵⁰ (Mustafa, 2008). However there is no term of balanced territorial integrity in the international law. By rejecting the resolution that recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and declared that Armenia is an occupying country, the states that adopted the reconciliatory role openly prove that they support Armenia. Although Azerbaijan indicated many times that the conflict's peaceful resolution can only be attained through international law in all official and unofficial dimensions, the forces which try to appear as if they are willing for the resolution of the conflict find it more realistic for the parties to make compromises and emphasize that there may be no winning side of the resolution of this conflict and if the international law is not followed then the parties should reach a common agreement. In which dimension can this agreement happen? In other words, should Azerbaijan make compromises for its occupied territories or should it be in mutual collaboration with Armenia in order to be the demilitarized state of the 21st century? Of course, this is not a realistic way to resolve the issue. In addition, it seems highly unlikely that Armenia will withdraw voluntarily from the territories it occupied. Azerbaijan has announced that it will not have any kind of relations with Armenia unless they withdraw from the territories occupied.

In other words, the incentives that the Western nations take for the resolution of the conflict yield no results. As a matter of fact, the real reason why these incentives yield no results is that the policies of these states are vague. Although the USA, France, the UK, Germany and other Western countries recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, they do not accept the fact that Armenia is an occupying country, they do not demand it to withdraw from the territories it occupied. On the contrary they find it more realistic for the conflicting parties to reconcile between themselves and they view the issue from the perspective of the Minsk Group of OSCE. If the parties

50 Aziz Mustafa, "Arabuluculardan Yeni İkiyüzlülük", *Zaman Gazetesi*, 19 Mart 2008.

themselves are going to resolve this issue, it is not possible to understand which duty the Minsk Group of OSCE is carrying out.

Despite the fact that the Western states declared they recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, their approach towards the occupational policies of Armenia and Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is evaluated within the framework of the Minsk Group of OSCE. The indecisiveness of co-chairmen of European states and especially other western states of the Minsk Group -the USA and France-, their reactions towards the UN Security Council's decisions (March 2008), prove the double-standard policies of the West and behind this approach there are deep-rooted reasons. It is the truth that "the Armenian factor" is a pressure tool that Russia can use both politically and economically against the states in the region and states concerned. Russia uses Armenia as a balance factor against Turkey's, the USA's, NATO's and the European Union's policies on Caucasia and thanks to Armenia it keeps its political and militaristic existence in Caucasia. With the military bases it has in the region, it keeps Azerbaijan and Georgia under control and it takes the necessary measures against a possible intervention that might be carried out from the South. On the other hand, Russia considers the Caucasian states as its previous provinces and therefore cannot tolerate the independence of Azerbaijan or its taking part in the energy projects. Moreover, Russia is protecting and arming Armenia to teach a lesson to Azerbaijan. Therefore it may be understood that Russia supports Armenia against Azerbaijan. However, the indecisiveness of the West about the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and its reaction against the UN Security Council resolution demanding Armenia to withdraw from the occupied Azerbaijani lands prove the incomprehensible policies of the West. If the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is considered as a local conflict, the double standard policy of the West might not be understood, but if the issue is evaluated from a global point of view, the real reasons will appear.

First, let us evaluate the conflict in a local framework. The conflict of Armenia-Azerbaijan is frozen for one reason: the opposite attitudes of the conflicting sides. Both sides are in "a game with a result of zeros". If the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is recognized, Nagorno Karabakh will have to give up its "de-facto" independence and Armenia will have to give up the ideal of "Great Armenia". If the "de facto" independence of Nagorno Karabakh transforms into "de jure" independence, then Azerbaijan will have lost a great part of its territories and its territorial integrity will be destroyed. For this reason, the attitudes of the co-chairmen of OSCE other than Russia are unclear. In other words, the Western states always have to balance the steps they take towards one side with another step towards the other side. The states that are not the co-chairmen of OSCE always evaluate the problem

from the framework of the Minsk Group of OSCE and they want to have mutual sincere relation with both states. However while other Western co-chairmen - the USA and France - demand that the conflict be resolved in a peaceful manner, they blatantly react to the decisions of the UN Security Council. For them, the priority is reconciliation between the conflicting parties. American specialist in Southern Caucasus conflicts Tomas Ambrosio has expressed the attitude of the USA about the conflict clearly: "If an agreement cannot be reached between the parties, the attitude of the USA will not change. When other international and local problems are taken into consideration, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict does not have a lot of importance."⁵¹

Ambrosini also made remarks about the future of the peace negotiations: "Even though some meetings materialize behind the close doors, from the outside they look different. During these meetings, the parties make their own suggestions, and in case there is no reconciliation, they look as if they will fire the war again. Then the parties return to their own countries and accuse the other party and express sorrow over the fact that they could not reach the consequent phase on the resolution of the conflict. There is no doubt that the current heads of states of the Minsk Group countries and their successors will face the same issues and problems. The successors of their successors will be in the same situation. To be more specific, the current situation, or at least the peace negotiations that are going on, is better than the parties to open fire to one another. In my opinion, the parties and mediators will continue with this diplomatic tradition."⁵²

The approach of the European states including France as one of the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group to the situation Azerbaijan is in has taken the shape of a clash between Western- Turkish civilizations rather than only an Armenia-Azerbaijan clash. For this reason, it would be more correct to review the issue from a clash of Western-Turkish civilizations in the framework of the global "Armenian issue" rather than a local framework.

Although the prolongation of the conflict between Armenia-Azerbaijan stems from the Caucasian policy of Russia, it is in a complete accordance with the interests of the West. The Western states evaluate the Armenian issue from a national, religious and psychological point of view and indirectly support the Christian Armenia.

51 "Amerikalı analitik Dağlıq Qarabağ münakaşasının halli ile bağlı bedbin prognoz verib", (<http://az.apa.az/news.php?id=228962>).

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Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Problem in the Context of Conflict of Interests

a) The review of the problem in the context of Russia's geopolitical interests.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict has a special dimension for Russia's geopolitical priorities and interests. It is not possible to think of the conflict without Russia. Politician Vefa Guluzade said: "If the root of the problem that enslaved the Azerbaijani people is observed, it can be seen that the Azerbaijani Turks are the victims of the Russian national ideology of world domination, while the Armenians are one of the tools by which this domination is materialized.⁵³ As a matter of fact, for a long time Russia has been working for there to be unrest in Azerbaijan, and to gain back its old influence on Azerbaijan and make Azerbaijan once again one of its colonies. For this purpose it supports Armenia. However the real duty of this state as one of the members of the Minsk Group of OSCE is to work for a permanent and just peace to dominate between the two states. Let us remember once again the second article of the resolution that was approved on 14 March 2008 concerning "the Situation in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan" in the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly. When the resolution was put to vote in the UN General Assembly, Russia was one of the 7 states that voted against it.⁵⁴ The fact that Russia was on the opposite front proves that Russia does not intend to materialize a peace mission. There is no doubt that as a state that created the conflict itself, Russia will not be willing for the resolution of the conflict without attaining its own demands and interests. One of the issues mentioned here is that it is no coincidence that Russia as one of the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group of OSCE was added to the orbit of the conflict. More specifically, by getting itself added to this orbit, Russia declared once again that the key to resolve the issue is in its hands. More than anything, Azerbaijan is an important target for Russia. Obedience by Azerbaijan will help close the door to Turkey from the Turkic world, which will increase Russia's influence on the Turkic world once more. An independent Azerbaijan is an important gate in terms of relations among the Turkic World for political, moral, national and also economical thanks to the rich energy sources it has and it has the role of a corridor towards and from the West. However a dependent Azerbaijan will help the relations to be closed off within the Turkic World which then could lead it to integrate once more with Russia politically making it vulnerable to oppression. The

53 Vefa Guluzade, *Geleceğin Ufukları* (Bakü: Azərbaycan yayınları, 1999), s. 101.

54 Kamer Kasım, "Origins and consequences of the Karabakh conflict", (Basic principle for the settlement of the conflicts on the territories of the GUAM States, Baku: 15-16 April, 2008), pp. 66.

geopolitical reasons that make Azerbaijan attractive for Russia can be counted as follows:

- By keeping Azerbaijan in the sphere of influence, Russia can spread its influence to the Near East and the Central Asia; moreover it could use Azerbaijan as a strategic air force military base.
- By keeping Azerbaijan in the sphere of influence, to make the West dependent on itself economically.
- To avoid having to purchase strategic resources from foreign markets, owning the natural resources of Azerbaijan, which is prosperous.
- By having an influence on Azerbaijan, to split the Turkic World and to prevent Turkey from influencing the Turkic World.

As Russian military was taken out of Azerbaijan and Russia had no confidence in Georgia, Armenia has transformed into the only agent of Russian interests and aims.

However when Azerbaijan refused to conform and avoided building Russian bases on its territories and declined the demands of Russia, Russia lost its trust in Azerbaijan and misused its role in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict by legalizing its military existence in Armenia and applied political pressure on Azerbaijan.

Armenia believed that this was a wonderful opportunity and in a way capitulated itself to the hands of Russia. It sees itself as Russia's geopolitical operation arena in the Caucasus and the "applier" of Russia. Because it believes that without Russia it would not be possible to breathe in this atmosphere. This can be compared to artificially-founded Israel's situation in the Middle East, which cannot breathe were it not for the USA. As Russian military was taken out of Azerbaijan and Russia had no confidence in Georgia, Armenia has transformed into the only agent of Russian interests and aims. Armenia has an inclination to continue occupying Azerbaijani territories so long as such policies of Russia continue.

Russian strategist Aleksandr Dugin reviews the importance of Armenians and Armenia: "Armenians are a Christian people who could comprehend their geopolitical connections with Russia very well. Armenians reside on strategically very important territories as the road to Azerbaijan and Central Asia pass through Armenia and Karabakh. Yerevan has transformed into a significant ring that breaks Turkey off the intercontinental lands⁵⁵

55 Aleksandr Dugin, *Rus Jeopolitiği: Avrasyacı Yaklaşım* (İstanbul: Küre yayımları, 2004), s. 78.

Together with this very true and logical approach, it is also possible to review the Armenian geopolitics from Russia's point of view as follows:

- To use Armenia as a balance element against Turkey's policies on the USA, NATO and the EU;
- To keep Azerbaijan and Georgia under control by keeping its political and military existence in the Caucasus thanks to Armenia and the bases it has in the region;
- To have the chance to be able to create ethnic conflicts in the region by way of using Armenia and Armenians;
- To transform Armenia into a watchdog of Russia's political and economic interests in the region;
- In general, to take the necessary precautions against interventions that may be carried out from the south by way of defending and controlling the Caucasus..

To observe the issue more broadly, the "Armenian factor" is not only a political but also an economic tool for pressure against Georgia and Azerbaijan. This is mostly because Russia cannot bear the independence of Georgia and Azerbaijan and their energy projects.

After Russia understood that it is not possible to keep the Western capital away from the Caspian Sea, it tried every way to get the Azerbaijani oil flown through its own territories. In order to demonstrate that the Northern route is much more secure, Russia started the War of Chechnya and then it could get the Baku-Novorossiysk approved initially as an oil export route by way of pressuring the Western countries and oil companies. Russia also asserted that there might be serious ethnic and political problems in the region and it started a huge campaign against the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Together with this very true and logical approach, it is also possible to review the Armenian geopolitics from Russia's point of view as follows:

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Alternative energy projects were not convenient for Russia, the biggest exporter of oil and gas to world markets and especially to Europe. The real issue that disturbed Moscow was the fact that its chance to put political and economic pressure on former Soviet Republics and European countries diminished and it would no longer profit as much as it used to from the transit charges.⁵⁷ After evaluating all of the above, Russia decided to take action in order to gain back its previous influence as one of the largest powers in the world. Both to prevent the materialization of alternative energy projects and to make Europe economically dependent, on 8 August 2008, Russia attacked Georgia and created two artificial independent states on its territories by

56 Ali Hasanov, *Çağdaş Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Azerbaycan'ın Dış Politikası* (Bakü: Azerbaycan yayınları, 2005), s. 672.

57 Nika Chitadze, "Gürcistan-Rusya Savaşının Ardından Güney Kafkasya'da Güvenlik", *Türk Dış Politikası. Uluslararası III. Türk Dış Politikası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri*, Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu (USAK) yayınları, 2009), s. 123-124.

destroying its territorial integrity. This can also be considered as the heaviest response to the West.⁵⁸

Georgian researcher Nika Chitadze explains Russia's attack on Georgia by Moscow's will to monopolize the energy transport from Asia to Europe,⁵⁹ and to control the pipelines on Georgian and Azerbaijani territories.⁶⁰

By this way, Russia both tried to prevent the materialization of the energy projects creating a medium for serious ethnic and political tensions both in Azerbaijan and Georgia, it supported the separatist powers in both regions and it increased the number of Russian military bases in Armenia. By the same token, Armenia needed Russia's military support for any military intervention that might come from Azerbaijan or Turkey.

Since 1991 Armenia has been attaching utmost importance to military relations with Russia and the country got full support from Russia for the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories as well. After Armenia became an independent country, it developed its military ties within the framework of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) especially with Russia and within this context, it took part in the Collective Security Treaty Organization which the member states of CIS signed in Tashkent on 15 May 1992 and got the accepted legislation ratified in the Armenian Parliament on 7 October 2002.⁶¹ A memorandum called "General Aspects of Integrated CIS activities" that the CIS heads of states signed was also supported by Armenia. On 10 February 1995 Armenia accepted the treaty "Collective Security Concept Among the member states of Treaty of Collective Security" and in November 1995 Armenian Parliament ratified it. Within the framework of CIS, Armenia is represented in two military organs namely "Air Defense System Coordination Committee" and "Military Technical Committee".⁶²

The basis for the military cooperation between the two countries was formed when the Armenian and the Russian Presidents signed the Moscow Treaty which covered the legal status of the Russian armed forces that were deployed in Armenia on 21 August 1992.⁶³ The military cooperation between the two countries developed even more during the management of the Armenian head

58 Nika Chitadze, "Gürcistan-Rusya Savaşının Ardından...", s. 125.

59 Nika Chitadze, "Gürcistan-Rusya Savaşının Ardından...", s. 129.

60 Nika Chitadze, "Gürcistan-Rusya Savaşının Ardından...", s. 132.

61 Natsionalnoe Sobranie Armenii Ratifiçirovalo Ustav Organizaçii Dogovora o Kollektivnoy bezopasnosti, (<http://www.newspb.ru/allnews/155192/>).

62 Hatem Cabbarlı, *Ermenistan-Rusya İlişkileri veya Rusya'nın Bir Eyaleti "Bağımsız Ermenistan"* (Ankara: ASAM yayınları, 2004), s. 21

63 Emin Arif Şihaliyev, *Kafkasya Jeopolitiğinde Rusya, İran, Türkiye Rekabetleri ve Ermeni Faktörü* (Ankara: Naturel yayıncılık, 2004), s. 113.

of state Petrosian and various military agreements were signed. Until 1992, the 7th Defence Army of the Former Soviet Union remained in Armenia. Around the middle of the same year, 16th and 17th divisions of the 7th Defense Army were handed down to Armenia. In accordance with the conditions of an agreement signed between Armenia and Russia on 21 October 1994, Russia was allowed to build two military bases in Gyumri and Yerevan.⁶⁴ As a matter of fact, these military bases were already present in Armenia even before the Soviet Union collapsed. However after Armenia declared independence, there was uncertainty concerning the legal status of the bases. As Armenia considered the bases as the guarantor of its national independence, it did not create any problems for Russia on this issue. In August 1997, the Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian signed the Agreement for Friendship and Mutual Assistance with Russia. The second article of the agreement is as follows: "...If the agreeing parties confront or undergo any type of armed attack, they will start negotiations with each other, provide security and act together for the protection of the security".⁶⁵

The third article indicates: "...If the peace and security of the agreeing parties is threatened by a state or a group of states, the agreeing parties will assist each other including military assistance in accordance with the 51st article of the UN agreement on providing peace and security."⁶⁶

In 2000, another agreement was signed between the parties that proposed handing over the military base in Gyumri to Russia for 25 years together with its real estate unrequitedly with the possibility of an extension of 5 years if the parties demand.⁶⁷ On 20 August 2010, Russia extended the duration of the military bases in Armenia until 2044.⁶⁸

According to what comes out of these agreements, if Azerbaijan attempts to take back its occupied territories by using its own legal rights, it will confront military intervention from Russia. Russia's military presence in Armenia has enabled Russia to intervene in political events not only in Armenia but all over the Caucasus. Today, Armenia has 29 military posts in total with 12 posts in Gyumri, 4 in Ahuryan, 1 in Ashtarak, 7 in Yerevan, 1 in Kapan and 2 in Nubareshen.⁶⁹ If the locations where the Russian military bases are

64 Marat Kenjetaev, "Oboronnaya Promishlennost Respubliki Armeniya", <http://cast.ru/russian/publish/1997/oct-dec/1.html>

65 Hatem Cabbarlı, *Ermenistan-Rusya İlişkileri...*, s. 21

66 Hatem Cabbarlı, *Ermenistan-Rusya İlişkileri...*, s. 22

67 Dina Malışeva, "Problemı Bezopasnosti na Kavkaze", (http://www.ca-c.org/online/2001/journal_rus/cac-01/05.malishr.shtml).

68 Elhan Şahinoğlu, "Rusya-Ermenistan askeri işbirliğine karşı Türkiye-Azerbaycan işbirliği", (<http://www.21yyte.org/tr/yazi.aspx?ID=5350&kat1=1>).

69 Marat Kenjetaev, "Oboronnaya Promishlennost Respubliki Armeniya", (<http://cast.ru/russian/publish/1997/oct-dec/1.html>).

placed is observed, it will be seen that 14 bases were deployed in regions that are near the border with Turkey.⁷⁰ This gives Armenia the chance to focus on Azerbaijan in terms of martial means by diminishing its security needs over the Turkish border.⁷¹ Armenia did not settle with that and it deployed the some of the signal units that left Georgia on 22 December 2002 on its own borders. These units were handed over to Russia's Commandership of South Caucasus Military Units.⁷²

Since the signing of the agreements between Armenia and Russia for military cooperation, Russia assists Armenia with weaponry and ammunition. In accordance with the information we received through the "Media Forum", only in 2008 the weaponry assistance was worth as much as 800 million dollars.⁷³

As it is one of the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group of OSCE, Russia's attitude is unacceptable for its moderator role. Russia is both moderating between the conflicting parties and arming the Armenia. Moscow's share in Armenia's weapon export is 96%.⁷⁴ This figure reveals Russia's role since the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started. However Russia claims that its actions are the results of its commitments as a member of Collective Security Treaty Organization and they have nothing to do with its activities in the Minsk Group of OSCE. Russia even expressed that Azerbaijan would be receiving the same assistance were it a member of the Organization as well. As can be seen, Azerbaijan is blamed for the whole situation in a sarcastic way. The fact that Armenia is a part of the Organization while occupying 20% of the Azerbaijani territories makes it impossible for Azerbaijan to be a part of it. By being a member of Collective Security Treaty Organization and deploying the Russian military bases on its own territories, Armenia protects itself both from Turkey and Azerbaijan and guarantees the security of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁷⁵ So, from whom will Azerbaijan protect itself by being a member to the same organization? From Armenia and Russia?

Also after the incidents that arose between Russia and Georgia in August, Moscow headed towards closer military cooperation with Yerevan. By taking

70 Hatem Cabbarlı, *Ermenistan-Rusya İlişkileri...*, s. 22.

71 Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "Military Confidence Building and Arms Control in Unresolved Territorial Conflicts", (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, PRIF-Reports No. 89, 2009), p.11.

72 Hatem Cabbarlı, *Ermenistan-Rusya İlişkileri...*, s. 22.

73 Rusya'nın Ermenistan'a verdiği 800 milyon dolarlık yeni silahların listesi su yüzüne çıktı, (http://www.mediaforum.az/articles.php?lang=azp&age=00&article_id=20090108032400605).

74 Paul Holtom v.d. "Trends in International Arms Transfers 2011", SIPRI, March 2012, (<http://books.spri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1203.pdf>, erişim tarihi: 13.09.2012).

75 See: Robert Smigielski, "Prospects for Nagorno-Karabakh Settlement Following the Russia-Georgia Conflict", *Polish Institute of International Affairs*, no.10 (10) (16 February 2009), p. 19-20.

this step, Russia shown that the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is against its own interests. Were it otherwise, Russia would not have sold weaponry to Armenia that was worth 800 million dollars. This movement does not serve for the purpose of the peace in the region, on the contrary, it created a medium for rising tensions and instability. In general, Moscow's remarks on foreign policy shows that it still considers the former territories of the Soviet Union and the Caucasus as its own geostrategic interest region. In this regard, Russia has a key position in the Caucasus, hence the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

b) The review of the problem in the context of Iran's geopolitical interests

Despite the fact that the Azerbaijani people are Muslims and historically and culturally has similarities to Iran, the Islamic Republic of Iran implicitly supported Armenia's military aggressions towards Azerbaijan. This attitude is because of the concerns that a stable Azerbaijan could interfere with Iran's own national integrity. The concern that Iran is feeling, namely opposing the Azeri nation is because of Iran's tendency to be against ethnic tensions. The number of Azeris that live in Northwestern Iran is twice the number of Azeris that live in Azerbaijan -according to some estimates 30 million-. This fact scares Iran of a potential separatism among its own Azeris.

One of the most important strategists in the world, Zbigniew Brzezinski indicates that "If Azerbaijan succeeds in a stable political and economic development; the Iranian Azeris will adopt the idea of a greater Azerbaijan."⁷⁶

As Iran intends to prevent this scenario from happening, it deems a weak Azerbaijan essential for its own existence.⁷⁷

With tendencies to integrate within southern Azerbaijan and Northern Azerbaijan, Iran's regional policy requires strengthening Armenia. Armenia is also a factor that protects Southern Azerbaijan from the influence of the Turks.⁷⁸ In other words, as Iran believes that Turkey would play an important role in a possible request for independence among its population with a Turkic origin, it is developing its ties with Armenia rapidly.

76 Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Büyük Satranç Tahtası: Amerika'nın Önceliyi ve Bunun Jeostratejik Gereklere* (İstanbul: Sabah yayınları, 1998), s. 122-123.

77 Vüsal Gasımlı, Zaur Şiriyev, Zülfiye Veliyeva, *İran-Ermenistan ilişkileri, Jeopolitik Gerçeklik Versus Siyasi iddialar* (Bakü: 2011), s. 27.

78 Nazmi Gül, Gökçen Ekici, "Azerbaycan ve Türkiye ile Bitmeyen Kan Davası Ekseninde Ermenistan'ın Dış Politikası", *Avrasya Dosyası, Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Stratejik Araştırmalar Dergisi, Azerbaycan Özel*, Cilt: 7, sayı: 1 (2001): s. 390.

Another reason that approximates Iran to Armenia is that Armenia is the only Christian neighbor of Iran. In accordance with the “Dialogue of Civilizations” thesis of Muhammed Hatemi, one of the old presidents of Iran, the country intended to show the good relations between the two countries as a brotherhood example and by this way make the Iranian fundamentalism seem more moderate.⁷⁹

The major reasons why the Armenia rapidly developed its relations with Iran are because of the embargos that Turkey and Azerbaijan applied on Armenia and because it was isolated from the regional transportation projects and relations. As Armenia is a landlocked country with no access to the sea, Iran is one of the spots from which it can open to the world. This is an unchangeable reality enforced by the geography where Armenia lies. In the first years of its independence, Armenian Minister Rouben Yegoryan defined the Iranian-Armenian cooperation in these words: “Iran is our future. Our most important priority is to develop roads and sea routes that have connections with Iran. This will enable us to reach Iran’s markets and the ports on the Persian Gulf.”⁸⁰

Iran-Armenia relations develop on the following major points and they shape the strategic cooperation policies between the two states:

- Both Armenia and Iran think of each other as a gate opening to the outside world from political and economic points of view
- Strategically valuable projects have been materialized between the two countries
- Increasing integration tendencies in South and North Azerbaijan and the problem this creates on Iran-Azerbaijan relations
- Increasing integration efforts by Turkey and Azerbaijan in every field, hence the need to balance Turkey’s position in the region
- Iran and Armenia were left out in the projects that would carry Azerbaijan’s energy resources to the world markets
- Iran’s intention to benefit from the strong Armenian lobby in the USA and Europe against the Jewish lobby carrying out activities against Iran

79 Nazmi Gül, Nazmi, Gökçen Ekici, “Ortak Tehdit Algılamaları Ve Stratejik İttifaklığa Doğru İlerleyen İran-Ermenistan İlişkileri”, *Stratejik Analiz*, Cilt:2, sayı:22 (2002): s. 43.

80 Mesut Çaşın, “İran Silahlı Kuvvetleri”, *Avrasya Dosyası*, ASAM yayınları, cilt:2, sayı:1 (1995): s. 48.

Although Armenia has good relations with Iran, who gains more and more power in the region, focuses even more on research to develop uranium, is usually referred to when problems in the Middle East are mentioned, challenges global powers. In the event that the USA attacks Iran, Armenia is well aware of the fact that its economy will be hit harshly. Aleksandr Iskenderyan, the head of the Caucasian Institute, indicates that Yerevan is quite uncomfortable about this situation. He expresses that the economic existence of Armenia depends on Iran and a possible attack on Iran would bring nothing positive for Armenia.⁸¹

Serzh Sargsyan mentioned his discomfort about a possible case of attack on Iran by the USA, which he believed would bring about heavy consequences for the Armenian economy, with these words: “Iran is a very valuable country for Armenia. Not only because we lived together for centuries and we are neighbors to one another, but also for other reasons Iran is very important for us. The truth is that Iran is one of the two countries thanks to which we are in contact with the rest of the world. If Iran confronts any problems that would be as if Armenia’s trachea narrows”⁸²

International pressures around Iran and tensions with Iran-West relations drags Armenia’s future into a dead-end. For its own future, Armenia has to review its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Armenia should withdraw from the territories it is occupying and should quit the assertions it puts forward. Only this way it can save itself from an economic collapse and take part in the energy projects in the integration process. Otherwise, Armenia will have to resist economic pressures from Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Ruben Safrastyan, the head of the Institute of Eastern Languages in the National Science Academy of Armenia, specified that in case military operations against Iran start, Azerbaijan would benefit from the situation by getting approval from the Western states and the USA and he deemed Azerbaijan as a threat.⁸³

If Iran confronts problems and Armenia gets weak as a result, it would be for Azerbaijan’s interests without any doubt. However, the idea that the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is dependent upon the tensions between Iran, the USA and the Western states is not completely true. Because such a resolution was not even included in the plans of the USA and the Western states. From an economic point of view, it is true to consider

81 Ermeni politologlar: “İran’la müharebe başlayacağı tegdirde Gerb Dağlık Karabağ münakaşasını herbi yolla hell etmek için Azerbayacan’a yaşıl işig yandırıcag”, (<http://az.apa.az/news.php?id=265501>).

82 Эхо Москвы/Передачи/Интервью/Четверг,27.01.2011: Серж Саргсян, президент Армении. <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/beseda/744902-echo.phtml>

83 Ermeni politologlar: “İran’la müharebe başlayacağı tegdirde Gerb Dağlık Karabağ münakaşasını herbi yolla hell etmek için Azerbayacan’a yaşıl işig yandırıcag”, (<http://az.apa.az/news.php?id=265501>).

Azerbaijan as a threat. Azerbaijan specifies in every opportunity that it increased the tools for pressure against Armenia by its own means and it will continue doing so.⁸⁴

It would be useful to mention an important issue here. Azerbaijan has never taken part in the policies of some states such as the USA and Israel against Azerbaijan. It harshly denounced such policies and kept the interests of the state and the nation at the base. According to some information that was achieved, the USA and Israel had planned to benefit from Azerbaijan as an “attack starting center” during a possible attack on Iran’s nuclear reactors. However Azerbaijan knew that such an action would yield negative consequences in the region and it openly expressed that it will not allow the use of its territories in such an event.⁸⁵

Iran tries to demonstrate its good relations with Armenia as an example to the brotherhood of Islam and Christianity and it accuses Azerbaijan of forming good relations with Israel and the USA and betraying the religion of Islam. However Iran is willing to cooperate with Armenia in every field even though Armenia displaced around million people occupies 20% of Azerbaijan, a member of the Islamic civilization, and it uses the holy buildings as armouries.⁸⁶ This figure proves that Armenia is not a country that can be sacrificed in terms of Iran’s geopolitical interests.

Possibility of Use of Force by Azerbaijan

Although a truce was reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1994 about Armenian occupation of 20% of the Azerbaijani territories, since then there is a vague situation as “neither war nor peace” between the two states. Armenian political scientist Artem Vartanyan analyzed the vague and complicated relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia defined the conflict as “**a problem that burns without flames but rather smouldering**” and he indicated that the problem would still not be solved for a long time. However Vartanyan suggests that Karabakh should be given under the Russian mandate first for 20 years or a longer period and a referendum should be held in the region afterwards for the final solution of the matter.⁸⁷ In other words, Vartanyan finds it more realistic to leave the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict to Russia’s monopoly. Without any doubt, though this is the personal

84 Elnur Aslanov. Devletin düşmanları barede, yahut Prezidentin konuşmasında dair sözardı. <http://www.gun.az/tribune/56526.print>

85 Ömer Kocaman, “ABD ve İsrail Azerbaycan’dan yardımını umuyorlar”, (<http://www.turksam.org/tr/yazilar.asp?kat=5&yazi=788>).

86 Musa Gasimov, *Azerbaycan’ın harici siyaseti (konsepsiyon meseleleri)* (Bakü, Mütercim, 1997), s. 77.

87 Artem Vartanyan, “Problema uregulirovaniya konflikta v Nagornom Karabahe i rol mejdunarodnykh organizatçiy”, Moskva, 2011, tema dissertatçii i avtoreferata po VAK 23.00.04, (<http://www.dissercat.com/content/problema-uregulirovaniya-konflikta-v-nagornom-karabakhe-i-rol-mezhdunarodnykh-organizatsii>).

opinion of the author, it actually reflects Armenia's foreign policy. On the other hand, Azerbaijan supports that the problem should be taken out of Russia's monopoly.

While Samir Hamitov, an Azerbaijani political scientist, defined the problem as a “**labyrinth**”⁸⁸ another Azerbaijani foreign policy specialist thought of the problem as the “**Palestine syndrome**”⁸⁹ These are evaluations that we find very true and right.

As a matter of fact, while the labyrinth has an entrance, it is very difficult to find the exit and the paths within it are very complex. The statuses of the entrance and the exit become equal as long as the right path is not found. Therefore there is no other way than wandering within the labyrinth until the exit is found. The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is just like a labyrinth.

If the development process of the peace negotiations since the 1990s and the 20th century is looked through, it will be seen that whenever Azerbaijan begins to seek alternative resolutions for the conflict as a result of the uncertainty of the resolution process, either Armenia or the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group of OSCE try to gain back Azerbaijan's trust by offering new suggestions. At the consequent phase of the negotiations, when the Armenian side pulls away, all of the process goes back to the same uncertainty. Since 1994, the year a truce was reached, the same uncertainty has continued. It is highly possible that the problem will continue in line with this scenario. The fact that the Minsk Group of OSCE was not able to make any progress, the resolution process has had a never ending uncertainty and turned into a “Palestine Syndrome” or “Kashmir Syndrome” causes anxieties such as the problem might continue for a long time or a sudden war may break out. How would a possible war affect Azerbaijan's future? It is not possible to guess the result of the war before it even started. Armenia's alliance with Russia hence the balance of power against Turkey and Azerbaijan in the region drives Azerbaijan to be more careful about a possible military move.⁹⁰

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88 Samir Hamitov, “Dağlık Karabağ Münakaşası...”, s. 156.

89 Zaur Şiriyev, “Azerbaycan'ın Karabağ politikası ve stratejik vizyonu”, *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Cilt:6, sayı:12 (2011): s. 112.

90 Gayane Novikova, “Implications of the Russian-Georgian War in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Limited Maneuverability” Caucasus Edition, (<http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/implications-of-the-russian-georgian-war-in-the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-limited-maneuverability>), erişim tarihi: 18.09.2012.

According to some analysts, for Azerbaijan to be able to start a military move, the country should first ensure Russia's impartiality. For this purpose, Russia should be given political, military or economic compromises, it should be recognized as a party in energy transport and production, it should be provided a military base within the Azerbaijani territories and Azerbaijan should be a member to the Collective Security Treaty Organization.⁹¹

If it is taken into consideration that Armenia, occupying 20% of the Azerbaijani territories is a member of this organization, it is not possible for Azerbaijan to be a member of it under any circumstances. By joining this organization, Armenia intended to protect itself from Turkey and Azerbaijan. So, by joining the same organization, from whom will Azerbaijan protect itself? From Armenia or Russia? Moreover, Russia's stance on the Karabakh matter did not change even though Azerbaijan joined the CIS, rented the Gebele Radar Base to Russia and cooperated with Russia in the field of energy. In other words, No compromise that Azerbaijan will give to Russia will make Russia change its attitude towards the problem.

Some analysts believe that Azerbaijan does not have the ability to materialize an extensive military operation against the occupation of its territories.⁹² As a matter of fact, with its developing economy and military power, Azerbaijan has an incomparable superiority against Armenia. Azerbaijani army has the power to dismiss the Armenian forces from its occupied territories. If this conflict was only an Azerbaijani-Armenian one, then Azerbaijan could have materialized it. Here, it is enough to remind that Russia provided Armenia weaponry worth 1 billion dollars illegally and Armenia extended the period of Russian military deployment on its territories until 2044 with an agreement signed in 2010. The most important article of the new agreement is that the military bases of Russia would protect the security of Armenia. If Azerbaijan attempts to retrieve its occupied lands from Armenia by using its legal rights, it will confront Russia's military intervention.

It is not realistic to assume that Azerbaijan would receive military and political assistance from foreign states. Azerbaijan's trust in the West has already been weakened with the indecisiveness of the Minsk Group of OSCE and the double-standard approach of some states. Azerbaijan saw Russia's power and the best example to the West's untrustworthy friendship in the Russia-Georgia war the last time. The real purpose of the attack was for Russia to be able to demonstrate that it could still play hard. The Russian

91 Aleksandra Jarosiewicz, Krzysztof Strachota, "Nagorno-Karabakh-conflict-unfreezing" Center for Eastern Studies, p.6, (<http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2011-10-26/nagornokarabakh-conflict-unfreezing>), erişim tarihi: 18.09.2012.

92 C.W.Blandy, *Azerbaijan: Is War Over Nagorny Karabakh a Realistic Option?*, Advanced Research and Assessment Group. Caucasus series 08/17, (United Kingdom: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, May 2008), p. 7.

military had collapsed in 1990s and Russia had to renew the image of its army. It also intended to prove to former Soviet states that the alliance with America and the guarantees it would provide had no value. It was a small attack against a small state, but it was an attack against a state that was highly close to the USA. The unresponsiveness of the USA in the operation and the disregard of Europe surprised both the region and the Eastern Europe. The message that the USA sent was limited to diplomatic notes and it proved that the USA was too far and Russia was too close and as long as the USA kept its soldiers in the Middle East, its attitude would be the same.⁹³ Russia took this decision assuming that the real interests of the USA were in the Middle East rather the Caucasus region.

George Friedman, the author of countless articles on national security, geopolitics, and intelligence and the founder of STRATFOR, world's leading intelligence company, believes that it is senseless that the USA makes so many promises to Georgia. Friedman believes that Georgia would not provide the USA a lot of gaining. In other words, he believes that the US strategy in Georgia should not be followed any more. This is a strategy that remains from the Americans' understanding that such positions are without any risks and expenses. In a period when risks and expenses rise, the US should manage its expenses more carefully and it should accept that Georgia is more of a loss rather than a gain.⁹⁴

Georgia's dependence on Russia may create a domino effect on Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is in the position of a key supplier for the southern corridor, hence the energy diversity of Europe. This fact indirectly limits Russia's political influence on European matters. Therefore, if Russia takes more courage with the regression of the US and especially with its successful move to control Georgia, it might use its widened freedom of movement to intimidate Azerbaijan. Under such conditions, Azerbaijan will not have the tendency to challenge a reanimated Russia.⁹⁵ Azerbaijan already lost its confidence in the West, which made promises to Georgia that it could not keep. Azerbaijan knows that it does not have any support, and in the event that it enters into a war with Russia would influence its future with serious conditions. On the other hand, in the event that Azerbaijan starts military operations to protect its territorial integrity, it might have serious problems with integration with Western states and international institutions working for the democratization of the world. This is because the resolution of the conflict with war is not accepted by any international institutions of which Azerbaijan is a member.

93 George Friedman, *Gelecek 10 Yil* (İstanbul: Pegasus yayınları, 2011), s. 169-170.

94 George Friedman, *Gelecek 10 Yil*, s. 182

95 Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Stratejik Vizyon: Amerika ve Küresel Güç Buhranı* (İstanbul: Timaş yayınları, 2012), s. 111

Otherwise, it might result in freezing or cancellation of Azerbaijan's membership in these institutions. However, if Armenia and other states leave no choice to Azerbaijan, a war can be preferred despite everything. The resolution of the conflict in the legal framework is limited. In such a situation, the power factor gains momentum. However, this requires a long time. To retrieve its occupied territories, Azerbaijan should wait for the appropriate strategic conditions. Otherwise, to start a war without preparations can cause a serious chaos in the country. If Azerbaijan could not declare an absolute victory over Armenia, if the war lasts longer than planned and the casualties increase, there would be disapproval in the country. Foreign interventions would increase the disapproval and in the end, there would be an atmosphere of confusion and chaos. In this case, Azerbaijan could face ethnic problems as in the beginning of 1990s and the independence of the country could be under serious threat. For this reason, Azerbaijan should first complete its military education, be completely ready for a long-lasting war, be able to resist long-lasting economic and political sanctions and wait for the appropriate strategic conditions. When would such strategic conditions come along? Answering this question is pretty difficult.

In our opinion, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict will continue as a truce for a long period. There will always be uncertainty as to when the problem would be solved and Azerbaijan will start seeking alternative solutions again. Armenia and the Minsk Group of OSCE co-chairmen will make new propositions and in the consequent phase, Armenia will pull away again. Then the situation will turn into uncertainty once again. Armenian and Azerbaijani heads of states or foreign ministers will have talks on different dimensions, and before every talk, new remarks will be made as to how hopeful they are and how high their expectations are, but in the end no results will have been reached again. Therefore the truce will continue. Under these conditions, it might be concluded that the time is on Armenia's side. A new generation in Azerbaijan is growing that never experienced the Karabakh war. Forgetfulness is threatening Azerbaijan greatly. Armenia foresees that the occupation will be permanent within this process. There is no doubt that time gave the Armenians the opportunity to gain more power on territories they occupied. Armenia increased its military power with weaponry it received from Russia and other states and it turned into a militaristic state. However, no matter how much Armenia developed its military power, it is in an economically- backwards state. Even though Armenia keeps Azerbaijani territories under occupation, it has not had the chance to own the territories it occupied for reasons such as economic recession, demographic decrease and recognizing of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan by other states even though they do not pronounce that Armenia is an occupying force. Armenia turned into the slave of the territories that it kept under the

occupation. More precisely, Armenia got weaker, economically backwards and dependent while it intended to enlarge, grow and gain strength.

In conclusion, it is seen that the time is not on Armenia's side. Even though this state is keeping the Armenian territories under occupation, it cannot be considered as a winner as the occupation drove the country into economic and demographic recession and the double standards policy also influenced it. The most obvious proof of this is the fact that Armenia still has not been able to internalize the territories it is occupying and over time it turned into the slave of those. As a result of this, Armenia left itself outside of the integration process and the energy projects. Azerbaijan, however, developed economically despite the occupation and became the economic leader of the region. It is possible to assume that the conflict will continue in line with the "long term truce" scenario. It cannot be said that Azerbaijan is completely comes out of this problem as a winner, but at least when compared to Armenia, time is on Azerbaijan's side and it is increasing its means of economic pressure.

While Azerbaijan supports the peaceful resolution of the conflict, it indicated that it would not make any compromises on its territorial integrity and it would consort to the military means as the last option if necessary. Especially the fact that the Military Doctrine of Azerbaijan canalizes the defense spending to the use of the army's tactical and strategic capacity and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict was deemed as the primal national subject created reactions among the international community. Although Armenia considered the increase in Azerbaijan's military spending as a political maneuver, when Azerbaijan adopted the Military Doctrine on 8 June 2010 proved that Azerbaijan is not bluffing. In the Military Doctrine, it is stated that if military intervention is inevitable in line with geopolitical realities for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, such an intervention will be carried out. It is also stated in the Doctrine that international problems are not supported in ways that are against the international law and in line with the rights that the international law provides Azerbaijan, military force will be resorted to save Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 regions around it from Armenian occupation and this issue has been repeated continuously in the document.⁹⁶

Conclusion

It is a reality that a deep conflict between the Western civilization and Turkic

⁹⁶ For further information, see: Azərbaycan Respublikasının Herbi Doktrinası, Azərbaycan Respublikasının Milli Meclisi, 08 Haziran 2010. <http://meclis.gov.az/?/az/law/183#comment>

civilization has been continuing for centuries. Just like in the past, today, the shadow of the crusades is wandering over the West and the war against the Turkic civilization is continuing under different names. The Armenian issue that is always on the agenda of the Western states, the genocide claims, the West's pressure on Armenia-Turkey relations as well as the indecisiveness of the international institutions and the Minsk Group of OSCE and a double standards approach to the conflict are all proof of this. Without any doubt, also the Cyprus issue, PKK factor and other factors are a part of this. Even though the hostility towards Turks that is inherited from the past looks as if it is more towards Turkey rather than Azerbaijan, in reality both countries are in the same situation. The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict should be reviewed from the perspective of the global Armenian problem rather than as a local problem. On the other hand, while Armenia carries out the duties given to it without questioning as the puppet of the West, Azerbaijan constitutes a hindrance against the materialization of the West's interests. In this perspective, no progress has been made by the OSCE Minsk Group for the resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

One of the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, Russia, approaches the problem completely within the framework of its own interests. Russia is both undertaking the mediator role between the conflicting parties and arming Armenia. As mentioned, Russia's share in Armenia's weapon export is as much as 96%. This figure proves the role Russia played from the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict until today. Russia's move is unacceptable considering its mediating role. However, Russia clearly declared that the key to the conflict is in its hands by intervening in the conflict. It is not right to evaluate the situation only as an "Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict" If this was really an "Armenian-Azerbaijani" conflict, the Azerbaijani side would have resolved the issue itself either peacefully or with a war. Judging from these evaluations, it can be concluded that it is not completely up to the states of Armenia and Azerbaijan to determine the "War and Peace" issue. Various pressures and the "Armenian issue" inflicted upon Turkey and Armenia stem from the traditional strategies of Russia, the USA and European states and the clash of the civilizations. Behind the Armenian issue, Armenian terrorism and the ongoing bloody murders, there is neither the real independence of the "poor" Armenian people nor their future. Throughout the history, the real aim of these states was to earn a state and a nation that would be dependent to them and serve them and this potential was discovered in Armenia and the Armenian nation. Today, the powers that are interested in the Armenian issue abuse the issue for their own geopolitical, economic, national and religious interests.

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