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**Dissertation**

**Contemporary History and Methodology of International Mediation  
of Armenian-Turkish Relations**

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## **Introduction**

International mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations evolved parallel to consecutive stages of independent state building in the Republic of Armenia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Together with the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution the normalization of relations with Turkey became a challenging task of Armenia's foreign policy and national security agendas. This research outlines the above-mentioned dimensions in the context of the contemporary history of international mediation of Turkish-Armenian relations since 1991. The history of the US-sponsored official and public negotiations between Armenia and Turkey, Swiss-American facilitation of *football diplomacy* and other, less significant mediation activities are viewed from different angles and in the context of international security. International mediation initiatives have been on the rise within the framework of Armenian-Turkish reconciliation and normalization talks since Armenia regained independence.

### **The relevance of the research**

The topicality of the research is based upon the mandatory separation of two aspects of peace building, normalization and reconciliation, with regard to the international mediation of negotiations between Armenia and Turkey. Theoretical concepts and argumentation are reinforced by personal diplomatic experience in conflict resolution, Armenia-Turkey dialogue and Nagorno Karabagh talks in particular. Some of the mediation initiatives, both by third countries and non-state actors are listed and discussed for the first time. From a historiographical point of view, the relevance of the research is all the more tangible, as the dissertation offers an academic inventory and comparative analysis of Armenia-Turkey official and public diplomacy talks viewed in the context of the geopolitical interests of third countries. Of particular importance is the fact that in the present day, against the background of major geopolitical developments international mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations is becoming a history in the making. The research views these relations both in the regional and global security context. The future international mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations is in need of new approach and re-calibrated vector. The dissertation provides a theoretical background based on the multifaceted study of the past diplomatic experience, paving the way for practical steps within alternative mediation strategy of Armenia-Turkey normalization process.

## **The goals of the research**

The goal of this dissertation was academic summary and historical overview of major and notable international mediation attempts to normalize bilateral relations between Armenia and Turkey since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Official and public diplomacy initiatives were analyzed in conformity with foreign policy priorities of the two countries, objective and subjective obstacles to establish diplomatic relations and the role of third countries in Armenia-Turkey proximity talks. The other objective was to reveal crucial methodological and political mistakes made by international mediators since 1991 to explain past failures. This was done with the purpose that new peace initiatives by third countries and non-state actors could take those mistakes into consideration.

## **The timeline of the research**

The research is focused on the history of international mediation of Armenia –Turkey relations since 1991. The mediation between Yerevan and Ankara was shaped and developed parallel to the evolution of the substance and nature of the standoff between the two countries. In this respect, three “geopolitical” time cycles can be singled out:

- 1991-1995, when Armenia-Turkey conflict was viewed by third countries as an issue of bilateral importance
- 1995-2001, when after the establishment of gas and oil infrastructure in the South Caucasus, Armenia-Turkey conflict began to be perceived as an issue of regional importance
- 2001-present, when after 9/11 attack because of geographical proximity to the war against terror it began to be perceived as an issue of global security importance

The third geopolitical cycle of Armenia-Turkey standoff and its mediation can in its turn be split into two sub-periods:

- 2001-2008, preparation of the roadmap for the Zurich Protocols
- 2008-2015, the beginning, the development and the predictable end of the Swiss-American mediation before the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

In subchapter 4.1 several historical allusions are made to the first facilitation attempts by the UK and US to address Armenia-Turkey relations in 1918-1920.

## **The methodological basis of the research**

The contextual description and definition of official and public diplomacy serves as methodological basis of the research. It can be summarized as follows:

- **Track 1** diplomacy is a formal dialogue between official representatives of conflicting parties. Such talks can be either direct or, more often, mediated by third parties. Prior to the talks the conflicting parties should first formally accept international mediators/facilitators. The latter can either present their roadmap to solve the problem in question, or facilitate the resolution plan already in existence.
- **Track 1.5** diplomacy between parties in conflict is a relatively new notion in scientific literature. It implies a semi-official dialogue between negotiating teams, which can include representatives of both public and governmental circles. While the composition of these teams might vary in each particular case, there is one thing in common: the backchannel to the official authorities should always be in place. Within Track 1.5 format international mediators/facilitators must first make sure that this backchannel to the official authorities is credible and fully operational.
- **Track 2** diplomacy is the most accepted and widely known format of public diplomacy. It is an unofficial dialogue between various societal representatives of the parties to a conflict, usually sponsored and mediated by third parties. Distinct from Track 1.5, it as a rule excludes the participation in the negotiating teams of representatives who have any formal affiliation with official authorities. Whereas the backchannel to the authorities in question is often in place, it is not as regular and institutionalized as in Track 1.5 diplomacy.

We could have singled out another negotiation format as Track 3 diplomacy. These are unofficial contacts between intellectuals, various social and cultural groups facilitated by local and international sponsorship. Such meetings and events do not have a clear-cut political agenda, which would cover issues that constitute the root causes of the conflict in question. Instead they can be described as proximity contacts seeking to find common grounds wherever possible. However, taking into account the specifics of Armenian-Turkish relations after 1991, it appeared to be more logical to include this sub-venue of public diplomacy into the Track 2

format.

### **The novelty of the research**

International mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations is for the first time viewed in its entirety and in line with the evolution of Armenia's statehood after the country regained independence. Armenia-Turkey normalization and reconciliation processes were observed in the context of bilateral, regional and global security. Two aspects of conflict resolution and corresponding negotiation formats were clearly defined. Normalization refers to the opening of the common border and establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia without political preconditions. Reconciliation is focused on the discussion of historical past with a view to build a common dignified future. In the first case, the participants of negotiations should be the governments of the two countries with or without corresponding international mediation. In the second case, the Armenian Diaspora representatives should join the negotiation process. Although there were other, at times, conflicting definitions of normalization and reconciliation in specialist literature, this is the first time when they were defined not only according to the goals of negotiations, but also to their participants. In this sense, this is a novelty not only for the academic research of Armenia-Turkey relations, but also for the study of similar political conflicts. A comparative analysis the mediation of Palestinian-Israeli talks that led to the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993 and the roadmap that led to the signing of the Zurich Protocols is conducted for the first time. Another novelty is the compulsory separation of normalization and reconciliation negotiation formats. The research suggests that normalization talks should be conducted within the Track 1 diplomatic format, while reconciliation issues should be addressed within the framework of Track 1.5 and Track 2. Alternative strategy of Armenian-Turkish diplomacy recommended in Chapter V is also a new concept. This is the first time that the political and economic rationale of establishing Armenia-Turkey border trade format is presented along with concrete legal mechanisms necessary to implement such a project. The analysis of new geopolitical circumstances that could urge Russia to assume a role of the key mediator in the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations can also be considered as an academic novelty. This is the reason why the description of the recent developments and positive changes in Moscow's relations with Ankara are included into a separate subchapter. Last but not



least, while there is a comprehensive academic study of Armenia-Turkey relations by Armenian scholars, the research of the international mediation of these relations is as yet not systemic enough. In this sense, the dissertation might provide a stimulus for new academic research on this issue in Armenia.

### **The content and structure of the dissertation**

Comprehensive analysis of Turkey's *policy of zero problems* with neighbors in comparison with Armenia's *pro-active* foreign policy is presented in Chapter I. Parallels are drawn between President Turgut Özal and Ahmet Davutoglu doctrinal concepts, particularly with regard to the *policy of zero problems with neighbors* and relations with Armenia. The motivation behind inviting Switzerland as a mediator is analyzed in detail. The engagement of Turkey and Armenia in international mediation in the last 25 years is also discussed. Little known examples of Armenia's participation in conflict resolution during the first years of independence are juxtaposed with a description of Turkey's ambition to become an influential actor in world politics. The peculiarities and differences of the foreign policy of small and big states are highlighted within the same context. AKP's Stability and Cooperation Platform is described in comparisons with other security pacts designed for the South Caucasus region, including Armenia's 3+3+2 proposal of 2001. The analysis of the commonalities of the composition of Armenian and Turkish diplomatic teams in 1991-1997 is presented in subchapter 1.5. Subchapter 1.6 gives a multifaceted analysis of methodological and political mistakes of international mediation of Armenian-Turkish relations. The research singles out the merging of two negotiation formats, reconciliation and normalization, as the main methodological mistake of the mediators. Yielding to the predictable pressure from Azerbaijan and establishing a direct link between the Armenia-Turkey normalization process and the Karabagh conflict resolution is viewed as political mistake. The first subchapter of Chapter II is focused on the initial steps of the US mediation of Armenian-Turkish proximity talks. Subchapter 2.2 follows the reasons behind the increase of mediation initiatives. Subchapter 2.3 highlights the evolution of traditional political mind-set in the Diaspora. It also probes into the merits and limitations of political pragmatism in Armenia in 1991-1997 reflected in the *pro-active* foreign policy of the present. Chapter II incorporates historical overview and comparative analysis of several Track 1,

Track 1.5 and Track 2 initiatives of the Turkish-Armenian dialogue. In Chapter II we also highlighted an important difference between international mediation and facilitation, as well as interconnection between normalization and reconciliation talks. In the history of contemporary diplomacy the borderline between the mediation and facilitation is so fluid that at times they could be mistaken for political synonyms. However, the latter refers more to a logistical and technical support of negotiating sides. The former implies an equal and substantive participation of third parties in the given talks to elaborate and implement the roadmap that could lead to the normalization of relations between conflicting parties. All the aforementioned diplomatic formats and corresponding international mediation initiatives have been used within the framework of Armenian-Turkish reconciliation and normalization talks since 1991. The description of the first steps of the US mediation is presented in a separate subchapter. Subchapter 2.4 is dedicated to the concepts of false parity and transitional justice reflected in the methodology of international mediators of Armenian-Turkish normalization and reconciliation talks. The failure of mediation initiatives is viewed in connection with these two notions of political science. Subchapter 2.5 establishes a link between transitional justice and Armenian exit strategy from *football diplomacy*. In the conclusion of Chapter II it is suggested that the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia of January 12, 2010 provided exit strategy from the ratification of the Zurich Protocols not only for Armenia, but also for Turkey.

The main focus Chapter III is the theoretical description and analysis of the Swiss mediation/facilitation of Armenian-Turkish Track 1 talks in 2007-2009. Subchapter 3.1 probes into the underlying reasons, which urged Turkey to invite Switzerland as the mediator. It also explains why Armenia accepted this mediation initiative. Subchapter 3.2 gives a comprehensive overview of the Swiss mediation history putting it into the context of two aspects of peace building: reconciliation and normalization. Organic connection to the Track 1.5 talks within the framework of Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) is examined. Parallels are drawn between the Track 1.5 mediation of the Oslo Accords of Palestinian-Israeli talks and the negotiations preceding the signing of the Zurich Protocols. Subchapter 3.3 defines the result of the Swiss-American mediation as *perfect* diplomatic failure, because each and every country directly or indirectly involved in the negotiation process preceding the signing of the Zurich.

Protocols benefited from its ambiguous outcome. The short-term political gains of each third country, as well as Turkey and Armenia are presented in detail. Subchapter 3.4 highlights the evolution of the link between the Nagorno Karabagh issue and the mediation of Armenia-Turkey normalization talks. It also discusses EU's mediating role, as well as the venues of involvement of the OSCE, BSEC and NATO in the facilitation of the dialogue between Yerevan and Ankara.

Chapter IV begins with a brief description of minor international mediation and facilitation offers for Turkish-Armenian rapprochement in the early and mid 2000s by third countries including Canada (2003), Lebanon (2002-2003) and Italy (2005). A conclusion is drawn that all the initiatives by the mediator-countries have been predicated by their position with regard to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Subchapter 4.2 is dedicated to the changing dynamics of Russia's position with regard to Armenia-Turkey relations. Tactical and strategic alliances that seemed quite improbable 5-7 years ago are gradually becoming a reality today. An enhanced cooperation with Turkey is one of the venues the Putin Administration is actively trying to explore. Within this geopolitical context it is no longer improbable to expect an increase of Moscow's role making Russia a major mediator of Turkish-Armenian relations.

Chapter V offers an alternative approach to the Armenian-Turkish mediation *roadmap*. It gives preference to less ambitious, but more manageable programs that, using various cross-border trade mechanisms, can prove applicable for the normalization of relations between the two neighbors. The activities and methodology of non-state actors as mediators of Armenian-Turkish Track 2 diplomacy are observed in a separate subchapter. Special focus is placed on organizations like American Jewish Committee and American oil companies, AMOCO in particular. The funding of these initiatives is presented in line with their geographical origin and analyzed accordingly. The main emphasis of Chapter V is the possibility of establishment of Armenian-Turkish Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs), which would allow the products manufactured in the designated area duty-free access to the US markets. It would envisage a partial opening of the Turkish-Armenian border. This cross-border mechanism that was designed by the Clinton administration in the mid 90s mainly for countries in political conflict has already proved its worth in the Middle East both politically and economically. The research

offers a *roadmap* to pass a corresponding amendment in the US Congress to designate and establish QIZs across the Turkish-Armenian border with a possible extension to the rest of the South Caucasus.

The conclusion of the research summarizes the analysis of the reasons behind the failure of the mediation/facilitation initiatives to normalize Armenia-Turkey. The motivation of the mediators and the funding of the initiatives are viewed in connection with strategic interests of third countries. Major geopolitical developments that can influence the dynamics of Armenia-Turkey relations are also listed. A historical overview of various sports diplomacies in relation to Armenian-Turkish *football diplomacy* is offered in Appendix I. Appendix II presents a list of recommendations to amend and reconfigure the roadmap of the mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations. Appendix III outlines major global and regional security factors that could influence international mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations

### **The object and subject of the research**

The object of the research is the contemporary history of Armenia-Turkey relations viewed in the context of Armenia's independence, its foreign policy agenda and national security challenges. The subject of the research is the international mediation of these relations, which evolved within the framework of different geopolitical cycles and in conformity with regional transformation. The study of the vital interests of third countries and international non-state actors was also incorporated into the subject of the research.

### **Approbation of the research**

The theoretical concepts and historiographical data of the research were incorporated into the author's syllabus at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. Contemporary history of Armenia-Turkey relations and methodology of international mediation/facilitation were included into the course titled Global and Regional Security Studies. Comparative analysis of different examples of sports diplomacy in relation to Armenian-Turkish *football diplomacy* has also been used in the lectures and seminars at Tufts University, public talks and appearances at other universities in the US, such as BU and Wellesley College. The concepts of the research were also approbated at international seminars and roundtable discussions within diplomatic community held at leading think tanks in Washington DC, such as

the CSIC and Atlantic Council. Swiss-American mediation and the reasons behind the failure of ratification of the Zurich Protocols were discussed during the author's lecture/seminar at the UNDP office in Yerevan in August 2014 attended by foreign diplomats accredited to Armenia and local academic community representatives. A special simulation game was designed by the author to virtually restore the entire mediation process of *football diplomacy*, which is performed by each and every group of Tavitian Scholars coming annually to study at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. Students from Armenia are assigned different negotiating roles with a view to research the Swiss-American roadmap, put it into historical perspective and suggest alternative scenarios for the diplomatic dialogue between Yerevan and Ankara. During two of the simulation seminars at the Fletcher school (2011 and 2012) and a roundtable discussion at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University students from Turkey also participated. Public lectures and roundtable discussions with Armenian-American communities and advocacy groups were held in Boston, Providence and Washington. In 2013 international mediation of Armenian-Turkish Track 2 projects, including the prospects to establish joint QIZs was discussed at the Carnegie Endowment with Thomas de Waal, a leading US/British expert on Armenia-Turkey relations and the South Caucasus. Academic approbation of the research is complemented by a series of corresponding political negotiations. In 2003 alternative diplomacy and the project of establishing Armenian-Turkish QIZs were discussed in Washington with the then Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, former US Ambassador to Turkey Marc Grossman and Ambassador Matthew Bryza, then working for the US National Security Council. The same year similar discussions were held with the then US Ambassador to Armenia John Ordway, US Ambassador to Azerbaijan Ross Wilson and Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister David Peleg during official visit to Jerusalem.

### **Practical importance and applicability of the research**

The conclusions and recommendations of the research can prove useful for international mediators within the framework of Armenia-Turkey Track 1, Track 1.5 and Track 2 negotiation formats. The analysis of the methodological mistakes made by the mediators in the past, the proposed mandatory separation of Armenia-Turkey normalization and reconciliation talks are of practical value for new mediation initiatives. A list of concrete steps offered in conclusion of

Chapter V can help to design an outline of the new roadmap to start an alternative mediation process of Armenia-Turkey relations.

### **Scientific sources and literature review**

The dissertation was written on the basis of various American, European, Russian, Turkish, Armenian, Israeli, Arab, Azerbaijani and Georgian sources, specialist literature and documents. Since the topic of the research was the contemporary history and methodology of the international mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations, special emphasis was put on the study of professional opinions and academic literature of the third countries. Academic research in Turkey, as well as articles in Turkish media on the mediation of official and public diplomacy with Armenia were also thoroughly studied. Various scientific sources and academic literature were studied with regard to the two aspects of peace building, normalization and reconciliation. In the case of Turkey and Armenia, reconciliation presupposes serious and consistent societal involvements from both countries and of the Armenian Diaspora worldwide.<sup>1</sup> In Armenia's case, the very existence of 6-million-strong Diaspora is the direct consequence of the Genocide and deportations. Internationally mediated normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations without any political preconditions should be viewed as a necessary foundation stone for eventual reconciliation. However, it is counterproductive to include major elements of reconciliation into the texts of the protocols on establishment of diplomatic relations between countries in political conflict. This is the aspect, which most of the specialist literature on international mediation of political conflicts has been either completely overlooking or underestimating. The majority of the academic sources on the issue in question fall short of clearly defining the difference between the two above-mentioned aspects of peace building. International mediation can be defined as engagement of mutually acceptable and authoritative third party in the normalization of bilateral relations between conflicting parties. According to Lawrence Susskind and Eileen Babbitt mediation is a voluntary gesture of the conflicting parties, who are determined to arrive to some form of suitable agreement but are unable to do so without the engagement of a third party.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Shougarian, Rouben, Evolution of American Interests in the Black Sea/South Caucasus Region and Mediation of Armenian-Turkish Relations. *Normalization, reconciliation and transitional justice*, Spectrum, *Regional Security Issues: 2011*, Center for Strategic Analysis, Yerevan, 2012

<sup>2</sup> Susskind, Lawrence and Babbitt, Eileen, "Overcoming the Obstacles to Effective Mediation of International Disputes," in Jacob Bercovitch and Jeffrey Z. Rubin eds., *Mediation in International Relations, Multiple Approaches to*

Jacob Bercovitch and Allison Houston define mediation as an extension of the negotiation process, “where third party intervenes with an intention to change the outcome of a particular conflict.”<sup>3</sup> Richard Haass, the President of the Council for Foreign Relations in New York singles out a number of necessary preconditions for successful mediation such as: mutual desire for accord; formula with benefits for all parties; a negotiating process that is acceptable to all; leadership that is strong enough to maintain compromise.<sup>4</sup>

According to Jeffery Rubin, for international mediation, facilitation or any other form of conflict resolution technique to be effective, three things are required: a) disputant motivation to settle or resolve the conflict in question; b) mediator opportunity to get involved, and c) mediator skill.<sup>5</sup> Crocker, Aall and Hampton define mediator readiness as a critical element for the effectiveness of negotiations.<sup>6</sup> Juergen Dedring points out to terminological confusion with regard to defining conflict resolution and mediation. He speaks about different aspects of mediation and political vocabulary used to define them. That is why with regard to facilitation of negotiations between conflicting parties different researchers offer a multitude of terms to define particular stages, such as prevention of conflicts, crisis management and reduction, transformation of military confrontation into political disputes, etc. With regard to the mission of international mediators at more advanced stages of conflict resolution scientific literature often speaks about termination and settlement. Yet this, at times, random accumulation of definitions is quite controversial, as it is “reflective of the diverse academic disciplines and professional foci engaged in conflict-related studies and renders general judgments extremely precarious and

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*Conflict Management* (Great Britain: Macmillan Press LTD, 1992)

<sup>3</sup> Bercovitch Jacob, and Houston, Allison, “The Study of International Mediation: Theoretical Issues and Empirical Evidence,” in Jacob Bercovitch ed. *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996): 12

<sup>4</sup> Haass, Richard, *Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990

<sup>5</sup> Rubin, Jeffery Z. (1991). Psychological Approach. In Victor Kremenyuk ed. *International Negotiation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

<sup>6</sup> Chester A. Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson with Pamela Aall, “Ready for Prime Time: The When, Who and Why of International Mediation”, *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 2, April 2003, p. 152

imprudent.<sup>7</sup> In this respect and with regard to terminological confusion mentioned above, Johan Galtung is of the opinion that interstate conflicts are much more complex than they are generally deemed. This is true first and foremost when it comes to the perception of immediate external effects of a conflict associated with regional “trouble” and “direct violence”.<sup>8</sup> Galtung is right when he speaks about the innermost, hidden aspects of a standoff between parties. Behind the external effect perceived as ethnic or political turmoil “there is also the violence frozen into structures, and the culture that legitimizes violence. To transform a conflict between some parties, more than a new architecture for their relationship is needed. The parties have to be transformed so that the conflict is not reproduced forever.”<sup>9</sup>

Any international conflict, historical or current, military or political, frozen or ongoing, is unique. Therefore, interstate problems cannot be measured with the same yardstick, as is often the case not only in practical diplomacy, but also in corresponding specialist literature. That is why academic generalization of the methodology of international mediation should avoid simplifications and a uniform approach. Facilitated or direct dialogue between countries seeking to normalize bilateral relations has to always proceed with caution. It needs to take into account both accumulated experience in international mediation and the peculiarities of the conflict in question. All factors and phenomena, which are common to interstate conflicts, as well as the peculiarities of the Turkish-Armenian standoff should be thoroughly studied and taken into account by the international mediators of proximity talks between Ankara and Yerevan. The diplomatic experience of the last twenty-five years reveals a number of methodological mistakes that have been made within different Armenian-Turkish negotiation formats. These mistakes could have been avoided, had the generalization of mediation technique not been replaced by methodological uniformity. Rouben Safrastyan, Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the NAA, offers a case study of Armenian-Turkish relations since 1991. He reveals their principal difference from the rest of similar cases involving countries in ongoing political or historical

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<sup>7</sup> Dedring, Juergen, *On Peace in Times of War: Resolving Violent Conflicts by Peaceful Means*, *The International Journals of Peace Studies*, available at: [http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol4\\_2/dedring.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol4_2/dedring.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Galtung, Johan. 1996. *Peace by Peaceful Means. Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. PRIO. London & Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage

<sup>9</sup> Ibid



conflict. Contemporary political science, while generalizing the cases regarding the absence of relations between neighboring countries often overlooks the uniqueness of Armenian-Turkish relations. As a starting point of his argument, Safrastyan points to one of the most popular books on conflict resolution, "Talking with the Enemy" by a British researcher G. R. Barridge:

"Thus, the Armenian-Turkish relations could serve as one of the main cases used for theoretical generalization when studying the ways and means of "non-conventional diplomacy" or, speaking specifically, as a research of bilateral relations between the states in case of absence of diplomatic relations. However, researchers ignore the experience of the Armenian-Turkish relations, on the whole. For example, the pioneer work entitled "Talking to the Enemy" by Professor of the Leicester University, G.R. Barridge."<sup>10</sup>

With regard to the definition of two aspects peace building within the framework of Armenian-Turkish talks the following observation of Vahram Ter-Matevosyan should be singled out: "The Armenian participants primarily favored the term 'normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations', rather than reconciliation, which some Turkish participants tended to favor. It was a common belief among the Armenian participants that reconciliation should follow the normalization process, which implied that reconciliation is a more challenging and difficult process. Normalization, in the Armenian terminology, implied certain basic confidence-building measures that would allow Armenian society to recognize that official Ankara is determined to develop normal relations with Armenia."<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, the fact that Turkey was among the first countries to recognize Armenia's independence in 1991 allowed more flexibility for starting a dialogue between the neighboring countries even without international mediators. On the other hand, Turkey proved to be too hesitant to take the next logical step. Since the early 1990s Ankara has begun looking for excuses to postpone the establishment of diplomatic relations with Yerevan, conditioning it by the situation around Nagorno Karabagh. Hence the normalization of relations with Turkey started to get viewed as a confidence building measure for reconciliation. The absence of trust in both countries became a major challenge for international mediators: "The lack of diplomatic ties between Turkey and Armenia cripples the normalization process of

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<sup>10</sup> Safrastyan, Rouben, Armenian-Turkish Relations: From Interstate Dispute to Neighborliness, CPS International Policy Fellowship Program, 2003-2004, p.13, available at: [http://www.academia.edu/2265436/Armenian-Turkish\\_relations\\_from\\_interstate\\_dispute\\_to\\_neighborliness](http://www.academia.edu/2265436/Armenian-Turkish_relations_from_interstate_dispute_to_neighborliness), consulted June 11, 2012

<sup>11</sup> Ter-Matevosyan, Vahram, *Track Two Diplomacy between Armenia and Turkey: Achievements and Limitations*, Caucasus Analytical Digest No 86, July 26, 2016

bilateral relations as well mutual perceptions in both countries. The inexistence of sufficient dialogue channels mingled with the burden of historical legacies has created a mutual mistrust among the two societies...”<sup>12</sup>

In his memoirs Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian describes Armenian-Turkish relations as complicated, because of the burden of the historical past, and the simultaneous need to establish good-neighborly relations in the region to live in stability and peace.<sup>13</sup> He views the processes of normalization and reconciliation as two opposite polls, which need to be brought to harmony. However, to achieve this goal the two aspects of peace building first need to be separated both in practical diplomacy and in corresponding academic literature. In an article published in *New York Times* on the eve of the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide President Serge Sargsyan wrote: “Historical truth aside, as long as the last section of the Iron Curtain -- the Turkish-Armenian border -- remains closed, it will impede the healthy development and regional integration in the Caucasus region, and will inject a constant element of instability in a strategically sensitive part of the world.”<sup>14</sup>

David Philips’s book “*Diplomatic History, The Turkey-Armenia Protocols*” and his Testimony to the House Foreign Affairs committee were thoroughly studied and used in the research to follow the link between Armenian-Turkish public diplomacy within the framework of TARC and the Swiss-American mediation of official negotiations between Armenia and Turkey. The parallels to the Track 1.5 Palestinian-Israeli talks that had led to the signing of the Oslo Accords were drawn on the basis of analytical study of Dean G. Pruitt’s, “*Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks*” and Avi Shlaim’s “*The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process.*” Global and regional aspect of geopolitical developments in the context of international mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations was researched on the basis of the book by a leading Russian expert Sergey Markedonov “*The Big Caucasus. The Consequences of the “Five Day War”, Threats and Political Prospects*”, as well as works by Svante Cornel, Carol Migdalowitz, Fiona Hill, Igor Torbakov,

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<sup>12</sup> Görgülü, Aybars; Gündogar, Sabiha Senyücel; Iskandaryan, Alexander; Minasyan, Sergey, Turkey-Armenia Dialogue Series: Breaking the Vicious Circle, TESEV-Caucasus Institute Joint Report, 2009

<sup>13</sup> Oskanian, Vartan, By the Path of Independence. *The Big Challenges of the Small Country*, from the Diary of the Minister, p. 149, Civilitas Foundation, 2013

<sup>14</sup> Op-ed piece by President Serge Sargsyan, International New York Times, September 24, 2014, available at: <http://armenpress.am/eng/news/777589/>, last consulted December 12, 2014

Thomas de Waal, James Warhola, Piotr Zalewski, and other experts on the Black Sea and the South Caucasus region. The Armenian view on regional geopolitics was examined based on analytical articles by Richard Giragosian, Hakob Chakryan and Alexander Iskandaryan. It is important to put the international mediation of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement into the context of current geopolitical developments. The regional importance of the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations cannot be divorced from global security challenges of the present. The process of Armenian-Turkish normalization and subsequent reconciliation is a common European problem, which also has Russian, Middle Eastern and Trans-Atlantic dimensions. The main issue of reconciliation- the Armenian Genocide is not only the darkest page in the relations between the two geographical neighbors, but also a part of common European and Eurasian history and, therefore, shared responsibility. Therefore, the political conflict between Armenia and Turkey has to be mediated not only as a bilateral issue, but also within the framework of Eurasian and Euro-Atlantic security. This needs to be taken into account by corresponding specialist literature and international researchers of the mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations.

## Chapter I

### 1.1 *Turkey's zero problems with neighbors*

To understand the rationale behind Turkey's decision to invite Switzerland as the mediator of a diplomatic dialogue with Armenia one needs to probe into doctrinal provisions of Ankara's *policy of zero problems with neighbors* and its indivisible derivative-*Stability and cooperation platform*. This is done in comparison with Armenia's *pro-active* foreign policy and its decision to accept the Swiss mediation/facilitation. Along the same lines the engagement of Turkey and Armenia in international mediation in the last 25 years should also be discussed.

Little known examples of Armenia's participation in conflict resolution during the first years of independence are viewed in conformity with a description of Turkey's ambition to become an influential actor in world politics. The peculiarities and differences of the foreign policy of small and big states need to be highlighted within the same context.

The analysis of commonalities in the Composition of Turkish and Armenian diplomatic teams in 1991-1998 and evolving links to the Karabagh negotiations help to throw light upon the geopolitical realities of the present. Turkey would have hardly engaged in *football diplomacy* with Armenia in the mid and late 90s. To take such a high profile, pro-active public initiative Turkey first needed major changes not only in its foreign policy, but also in societal and political mind-set. These changes did not necessarily presuppose substantive domestic reforms, but rather a semblance of them and, more importantly, revolutionary modification of the message Ankara wished to send to the rest of the world. In other words, what Turkey needed at the dawn of the XXI century, against the background of tectonic regional and global geopolitical changes, was a completely different international image. Therefore, on the one hand the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* was a prerequisite for *football diplomacy*, on the other hand, *football diplomacy* was the necessary vehicle for the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) to implement the policy of *zero problems with neighbors*. In international politics whenever a state proclaims a new era in external relations, it usually means that the ruling administration is determined to make doctrinal changes in its foreign policy. The irony of Ankara's new message of *zero problems with neighbors* to the rest of the world was that while Turkey tried to build a

positive international image, it, in fact, simultaneously admitted that the country had ongoing problems with all geographical neighbors.

In his book “The New Turkish Republic” Graham Fuller highlights psychological peculiarities and root-causes of Kemalist mind-set, which survived long into the post-World War II years. He puts his argument into following terms:

“While the republic did face genuine external enemies, Kemalist ideology tended to incorporate a fear of external powers and conspiracies as a key element in its world out-look. This paranoia toward the outside world helped both to preserve Turkey's domestic power and to justify an authoritarian approach to guarding the nation against external threats.”<sup>15</sup>

Michael A. Reynolds, assistant professor at Princeton University goes a step further in explaining Turkey's foreign policy in pre-Davutoglu times. He speaks about the professional gap and discrepancy that existed between Ankara's knowledge of American and European policies and the lack of preparedness to address the relations with immediate neighbors:

“The fundamental precept of the foreign policy course laid out by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, summed up in his famous phrase, “Peace at home, peace in the world,” was that Turkey should bury its imperial past, avoid foreign entanglements, and focus on internal development. Thus the Turkish Republic deliberately isolated itself from its neighbors, especially those to its south and east...As a result, Turkey today has a strong cadre of diplomats, professors, analysts and others fluent in English and familiar with the United States and Western Europe, but it lacks the sort of expertise about its own neighborhood that one might assume it would naturally possess given its imperial history.”<sup>16</sup>

From the mid-80s *this paranoia* started to be gradually replaced by Prime Minister Turgut Özal's open-mindedness, an early prototype of Davutoglu's academic experiments and future political vision. However, as Ekrem Eddy Güzeldere rightly puts it: “the political relations to most of the neighboring countries remained tense until the late 1990s. This changed slowly with the improving of the relations with Greece under foreign minister Ismail Cem”<sup>17</sup> Ismail Cem himself admitted that Turkey was responsible for some of the mistakes that had been made in the past: “When I came to the Ministry I realized that our relations with many of our neighbors were not

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<sup>15</sup> Fuller, Graham, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press: 2008

<sup>16</sup> Reynolds, Michael A., *Turkey's Troubles in the Caucasus*, Insight Turkey, Vol.10/No 4/2008, pp. 15-23

<sup>17</sup> Güzeldere, Ekrem Eddy, *Turkish Foreign Policy: From “Surrounded by Enemies” to “Zero Problems”*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Munich Germany, August 2009

good, and I thought that at least some of the blame must lay with us. We adopted a principle where, for every positive step towards Turkey, we would respond with two positive steps.”<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* did not start from absolute scratch. The only exception, according to a number of Turkish and international experts, was the relationship with Armenia. For example, Soli Ozel, a Turkish political analyst, is of the opinion that Turkey’s policy of *zero problems* has not started from zero, except for the normalization of relations with Armenia.<sup>19</sup>

Volker Perthes, the director of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin believes that Davutoglu’s policy of *zero problems with neighbors* is a protracted replica of Kemal Atatürk's motto,<sup>20</sup> which reads "Peace in the country, peace abroad". Taking into account the current regional and global security developments, as well as Turkey’s geographical location, such a U-turn in Ankara’s foreign policy should not appear surprising.

However, even the above-mentioned exception, which Turkish political scientists often single out with regard to the non-existent relations with Armenia, is questionable. This is because in 1991-1992, before the formal closure of the border, there had been a short history of meetings between Armenian and Turkish heads of state as well as diplomats both in bilateral and multilateral formats. Armenia’s inclusion into the Black Sea Cooperation Council during that time period testifies to the fact that Armenian-Turkish relations in the post-Soviet era did not have an altogether negative start.

Interestingly enough there have also been reports in the Turkish media that President Turgut Özal 6 years before the collapse of the Soviet Union had been seriously considering the possibility of starting a dialogue with Diaspora Armenians to address the shared past with a view to prevent potential damage to Turkish interests in the international arena. In 2012, nineteen years after Özal’s death, his cabinet members had a conversation with *Today’s Zaman* about his

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<sup>18</sup> Cem, Ismail, *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya*, Istanbul: Kültür Yayınları, 2009

<sup>19</sup> Cited in Turkey and its Foreign Policy in the Time of Gul-Erdogan-Davutoglu, by Corneliu Pivariu, March 5, 2010, available at: <http://www.globalsecuritynews.com/Europe-Asia-Broader-Middle-East/corneliu-pivariu/Turkey-and-its-foreign-policy-in-the-time-of-Gul-Erdogan-Davutoglu>, consulted May 18, 2012

<sup>20</sup> Perthes, Volker, Turkey’s Role in the Middle East: An Outsider’s Perspective, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12/N0 4, 2010, pp. 1-8

so far unpublished thoughts on the issue of establishing a proximity dialogue with Armenia and Armenians.<sup>21</sup>

According to the former Minister of Education Vehbi Dinçerler, who also held the position of a state minister in Özal's administration, as far back as in 1984 the former president "ordered his advisors to work on possible scenarios about the economic and political price Turkey would have to pay if Turkey compromises with the Armenian diaspora, an early Turkish acceptance of the term "genocide." Another scenario was also prepared. This plan sought to gauge the political cost of a Turkish acceptance of genocide within 20 to 30 years if Turkey is forced to accept it one day. His aim was to solve the problem before it got too late and through few concessions after reaching a deal with the Armenians, Dinçerler noted."<sup>22</sup>

Turgut Özal had been thinking about the ways of a possible rapprochement with the Armenians since the mid 50s of the last century when he studied economics at Texas Tech University in the United States. This was the time when he first met with representatives of the Armenian-American community and had the opportunity to assess the remote prospects of the inclusion of the Genocide recognition into the US foreign policy agenda.

The same source reports that "During a visit to the US in 1991 Özal unexpectedly said in a hotel lobby in front of a group of diplomats and journalists after a meeting with representatives of the Armenian lobby, "What happens if we compromise with the Armenians and end this issue?"<sup>23</sup>

In the early 80s, long before Armenia regained independence Turgut Özal had already been seeking for American facilitation/mediation to establish a proximity dialogue with Diaspora Armenians. According to Vehbi Dinçerler, "during his term as prime-minister and then president Özal sought to learn what Armenians wanted from Turkey through Americans."<sup>24</sup> In fact, this can

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<sup>21</sup> Today's Zaman, Late President Turgut Özal worked to solve 'Armenian genocide' dispute, April 23, 2012, available at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-278371-late-president-turgut-ozal-worked-to-solve-armenian-genocide-dispute.html>, last visited November 19, 2013

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Armenianow.com, Former Turkish President: "What happens if we compromise with the Armenians and end this issue?", April 25, 2012, available at: [http://www.armenianow.com/genocide/37602/armenian\\_genocide\\_recognition\\_turkish\\_president\\_ozal](http://www.armenianow.com/genocide/37602/armenian_genocide_recognition_turkish_president_ozal), last visited December 3, 2013

be qualified as the first attempt by Turkey to seek international mediation to normalize relations with Armenians around the world.

As the Soviet Union was about to collapse and, Armenia was on the path to regain independence, President Özal would continue addressing Turkey's need to face its past. He realized it all too well that history, no matter how difficult to admit, could not just be shelved indefinitely. His awareness of potential problems and the fear of the international recognition of the events of 1915 as *genocide* became especially acute during his visits to the United States. In the early 90s, shortly before the disintegration of the Soviet Union he had engaged in informal discussions with Armenian-Americans on this issue.

In January 1990 the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published an article, which described the following episode:

"Turgut Özal, the president of Turkey, made his first visit to Philadelphia yesterday and was greeted by a jeering, flag- and sign-waving crowd of more than 100 Armenians, Greeks and Cypriots. Özal was here to give a luncheon speech before the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia. Before his speech, Özal, protected by scores of local police and the Secret Service, chatted at a reception with local Turkish-Americans. Among those he talked with was one decidedly non-Turk, the Rev. Patee Metjian, pastor of the St. Sahog and St. Mesrob Armenian Church in Wynnewood. They talked about Kaysarea, a Turkish area where Father Metjian's family comes from, said the clergyman. Then he asked Özal how Armenians were being treated in Turkey. "He said, 'We're treating them very well.' I said there were a few things that weren't going well. I wanted to get it across in person that human rights are being violated," Father Metjian said."<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, while Özal's approach to Turkey's neighbors and the world at large was undoubtedly more open-minded than that of his predecessors, during the first years of the war in Nagorno Karabagh, as soon as the Armenian side, against all expectations began to take the upper hand, he suddenly became a hard-liner promising to teach Armenia another lesson. The comment on Armenian military success in Karabagh largely ascribed to the late President Özal was described in Edmon Azatian's article. He pointed to the fact that after Armenia regained independence the Turkish leaders not only continued the policy of the Genocide denial, but also went as far as to threaten Armenia and Armenians with a possible direct military intervention in and around Nagorno Karabagh: "Still fresh in our memories is the threat by then Turkish

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<sup>25</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, *Protest Greets Turkish President*, by Murray Dubin, posted January 25, 1990. Available at: [http://articles.philly.com/1990-01-25/news/25910316\\_1\\_armenian-protest-turkish-president-turkish-area](http://articles.philly.com/1990-01-25/news/25910316_1_armenian-protest-turkish-president-turkish-area), last visited September 12, 2013



President Turgut Özal, at the outset of Armenia's independence, who asked rhetorically whether 1915 had not taught a lesson to Armenians and if they are itching for Turkey to drop a few bombs over Yerevan."<sup>26</sup>

While, it is quite clear that such or a similar statement could have been made for domestic consumption, the doubts about the sincerity of the Özal administration with regard to potential reconciliation with Armenia increased not only within the Diaspora but also in the newly independent republic.

It took almost 20 years for Özal's *open-minded* approach to international relations to develop into doctrinal political philosophy of the AKP. The new voice first came from the academic circles, when Ahmet Davutoglu, during his tenure as professor at the Beykent University in 2001 published a book on Turkey's foreign policy titled "Strategic Depth". At first the book, which proposed to re-think relations with immediate neighbors, did not stir a lot of interest in political circles. It called on Ankara to admit its Ottoman past and come forward with a new strategy. Davutoglu emphasized that after the collapse of bipolarity and the end of the cold war Turkey should gradually transform its regional influence into a global one.<sup>27</sup>

What happened after the AKP came to power in 2002 was not a routine change in foreign policy, but an attempt to revolutionize Turkey's political mindset. Ufuk Ulutas, Director of Foreign Policy Studies at SETA Foundation in Washington DC considers the year of 2009 to be special in Ankara's foreign policy. He traces the fundamental change to the early 2000s, when the doctrinal principles of the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* were put into practice. The "long-lasting disputes with its neighbors have been reshaped through the adoption of the "zero-problem-with-neighbors" policy. Turkey's zero-problem-with-neighbors policy is aimed at maximizing cooperation with its neighbors while minimizing problems in its surrounding regions."<sup>28</sup>

Davutoglu began to build Turkey's new political philosophy and expand its geography beyond the Middle East. He often spoke of Turkey's sagacious mission in the Middle East.<sup>29</sup> He

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<sup>26</sup> Azatian, Edmon, Shinzu Abe is not Alone, Armenian Mirror-Spectator, February 6, 2014, visited March 28, 2014

<sup>27</sup> Güzeldere, Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ulutas, Ufuk, *Turkish Foreign Policy in 2009: A Year of Pro-activity*, Insight Turkey, Vol. 12/ N.1/2010, pp. 1-12

<sup>29</sup> Davutoglu, Ahmet, *Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy*, Foreign Policy, May 20, 2010, available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/05/20/turkeys-zero-problems-foreign-policy/>, consulted May 9, 2013

claimed that Turkey “can use its unique understanding of the Middle East, and its diplomatic assets, to operate effectively on the ground. Turkey's Lebanon policy, its attempts to mediate between Syria and Israel and achieve Palestinian reconciliation, its efforts to facilitate the participation of Iraqi Sunni groups in the 2005 parliamentary elections, and its constructive involvement in the Iranian nuclear issue are integral parts of Turkey's foreign-policy vision for the Middle East.”<sup>30</sup>The same point is argued in an article by Dr. Mustafa Kibaroglu, the Head of the International Relations Department of the Okan University in Istanbul. He speaks about general consensus among international affairs experts and diplomats that Turkey is located at an important geopolitical crossroads in a difficult neighborhood. While the relations with the Black Sea/South Caucasus countries are of special importance, the main focus of Ankara’s politicians and security analysts is Turkey’s “relations with Middle Eastern neighbors, namely Iran, Iraq, and Syria.”<sup>31</sup>

Having outlined Turkey’s vision and role in the Middle East Davutoglu focused on the relations with the Black Sea and South Caucasus neighbors. In 2010, he ventured to draw some mid-term conclusions claiming first positive results of Turkey’s new foreign policy. He spoke about the seven years (2003-2010), during which the *policy of zero problems with neighbors* was carried into life.

On the one hand, Davutoglu would proudly stress that ties with these neighbors were put on “a more cooperative track,”<sup>32</sup> on the other he could not avoid addressing the state of the relations with Armenia. The latter, according to Davutoglu, despite the signing of the Zurich Protocols in 2009 “remains the most problematic relationship in Turkey's neighborhood policy.”<sup>33</sup>

Thus, Turkish–Armenian relations are singled out as a special case even within the framework of the *policy of zero problems with neighbors*. The same should be right for the methodology and approach of the international mediators as far as the rapprochement between the two countries is concerned. The paradox is that conventional conflict resolution strategy has

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Kibaroglu, Mustafa, *What Went Wrong with the “Zero Problems with Neighbors Doctrine?”* Turkish Policy Quarterly, Volume 11, Number 3, Fall 2012, available at: <http://www.turkishpolicy.com> archive, consulted May 9, 2013

<sup>32</sup> Davutoglu, Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

not been fully applicable in the context of Turkish-Armenian relations:

“In terms of both “frozen” conflicts in the Caucasus and Turkey’s current foreign policy doctrine, Turkey-Armenia relations are in many ways an anomaly. There is no direct war or violent conflict at present between the two countries, nor is there likely to be in the near future; thus Armenia- Turkey relations are rarely considered as a case study in traditional conflict resolution literature dealing with the Caucasus. And although Turkey has a history of periodically tense relations with virtually all of its neighbors, only in the case of Armenia did it close its border, in 1993.”<sup>34</sup>

During the same time period Turkey was on the brink of war with other neighbors, namely Syria and Greece. While the deterioration of relations with Syria was accounted for by its alleged support for the PKK, the ongoing problem with Greece was a territorial dispute over the Imia or Kardak islets in the Aegean Sea. However, Turkey’s relations with both Syria and Greece did improve after 2002 until the onset of the Arab Spring. This was done in conformity with the policy of *zero problems with neighbors*. The practical result was the liberalization of the visa regime. Meanwhile, Turkey’s border with Armenia remained unilaterally closed and the diplomatic relations between the two countries were never established.<sup>35</sup>

To be able to implement the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* Turkey needed to transcend the borders of its foreign policy well beyond its relations with geographical neighbors. It needed what Davutoglu called *pro-active* and *pre-emptive diplomacy* to elevate its role in the world politics:

“Turkey’s regional policy is based on security for all, high-level political dialogue, economic integration and interdependence, and multicultural coexistence. Consider Turkey’s mediation between Israel and Syria, a role that was not assigned to Turkey by any outside actor. Other examples of pre-emptive diplomacy include Turkey’s efforts to achieve Sunni-Shiite reconciliation in Iraq, reconciliation efforts in Lebanon and Palestine, the Serbia-Bosnia reconciliation in the Balkans, dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the reconstruction of Darfur and Somalia... Today, Turkey has a great deal of say in the international arena.”<sup>36</sup>

There are three methodological and five operational principles in the framework of Turkey’s new foreign policy. The fifth operative principle is, according Davutoglu, a so-called

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<sup>34</sup> Maraşlıyan, Narod, Elanchenny, Susae, *Breaking the Ice: The Role of Civil Society and Media in Turkey -Armenia Relations*, p. 3, Global Political Trend Center, Istanbul Kültür University, Publication No: 170), April 2012, available at: [http://gpotcenter.org/dosyalar/BreakingTheIce\\_ElanchennyMarasliyan\\_April2012.pdf](http://gpotcenter.org/dosyalar/BreakingTheIce_ElanchennyMarasliyan_April2012.pdf), last visited July 15, 2013

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Davutoglu, Ibid

*rhythmic diplomacy*, which is quite important from the point of view of the relations with Armenia. It is also in conformity with Turkey's ambition to be a global actor in international affairs and conflict resolution, as well as its resolve to accept and even invite international mediators to help normalize relations with its neighbors.

Davutoglu used the term *rhythmic diplomacy*, first and foremost, with regard to Turkey's new role as a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, which envisaged chairing three critical commissions concerning Afghanistan, North Korea, and the fight against terror. On the other hand, the relations with immediate neighbors were also in need of a new operational rhythm. Thus, *rhythmic diplomacy* could be described as a pendulum oscillating between Turkey – a recipient of Swiss-American mediation to normalize the relations with Armenia, and Turkey – a provider of facilitation services in the Middle East, the Balkans and Africa.

Outlining Turkey's foreign policy strategy for the next 10 years, Davutoglu first spoke about full membership in the EU by 2023. It is noteworthy that even before the accession plans could come to fruition, he had already underlined Turkey's ambition to immediately become “an influential member”<sup>37</sup> among other European states. His second objective was pro-active Turkey-centric regional integration in the fields of security and economics. Conflict resolution in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region and beyond is the third priority, while active participation in global affairs and a decisive role in international organizations are the next two objectives for the upcoming decade.<sup>38</sup>

Turkey needed to declare these goals and mechanisms to achieve them *loud and clear* to send a message to the rest of the world that it was prepared to make a significant contribution to international security in the XXI century. Davutoglu vowed that Turkey would “take an interest in every issue related to global stability, and contribute accordingly. This collective effort will make Turkey a global actor in this century. Turkey's actions are motivated by a great sense of responsibility, entrusted to it by its rich historical and geographic heritage, and by a profound consciousness of the importance of global stability and peace.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Davutoglu, Ibid

However, the *policy of zero problems* with neighbors and the image of a global actor, which the AKP and Ahmet Davutoglu tried to build, started to crumble in the wake of the Arab Spring. This is true not only because Ankara refused to take any constructive steps to ratify the Zurich Protocols, but also because Turkey's response to the Arab Spring violated its own principles of non-interference and impartiality. The backbone of the *policy of zero problems with neighbors* is what Davutoglu defines as "equidistance", i.e. impartiality and objectivity. However, as far as Turkey is concerned, the sincerity of such an approach and a desire to be an honest broker have always been questionable. This became obvious "particularly when it came to the Israeli-Palestine dispute, where the government seldom missed a chance to bolster its regional and Islamic credentials by slighting the Israelis. But in the wake of the Arab Spring, equidistance appears to have gone into the gutter..."<sup>40</sup>

The growing discrepancy between declared goals of Turkey's new foreign policy, its methodological and operational principles on the one hand, and the facts on the ground on the other, are becoming more and more obvious in the context of geopolitical developments around ISIS and Ankara's controversial and dubious role in them. This not only puts into question the sincerity and, at times, competence, of Turkey's involvement in international affairs as an honest broker and a global actor, but also undermines its credibility in the relations with geographical neighbors. *Zero problems* might soon turn out to be another tactical move, behind which quite different strategic goals have been hidden. Turkey's true objectives behind the willingness to engage into *football diplomacy* with Armenia in 2008 might also raise additional questions not only among Swiss-American mediators, but also within the international community:

"While Turkey's foreign policy struggles in the Middle East may have been inevitable, its isolation elsewhere seems self-inflicted. Today, the country risks returning to the mindset of the 1990s, when tensions abounded with Arab and European countries, conspiracy theories poisoned the political debate, and Turks — convinced they were a country under siege — repeated faithfully, "The Turk has no friend but the Turk." Erdogan, it seems, has taken his country from "zero problems" to international headaches as far as the eye can see."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Zalewski, Piotr, *From Zero Problems to Zero Friends*, Foreign Policy, August 22, 2013, available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/22/how-turkey-went-from-zero-problems-to-zero-friends/>, last visited May 16, 2014

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

## **1.2 Stability and cooperation platform**

While the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* was in need of various operational tools, *football diplomacy* included, it also had to be harnessed to a relevant security framework. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and transition from bipolarity to unipolarity, Turkey has offered two security and stability models for the Black Sea/South Caucasus region.

The first one goes back to January 16, 2000, when Süleyman Demirel, the then president of Turkey came forward with an initiative titled *A Pact for the Caucasus Stability*. It should be noted that the second president of Armenia, Robert Kocharian submitted his version of a regional security architecture that was based on 3+3+2 model, i.e. the three countries of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan,) three influential neighbors (Russia, Turkey, Iran) and two supra-regional actors, the USA and the EU. This was a modification of Dr. Michael Emerson's EU-centric 3+3+1 model, to which Iran was added.

While the role of supra-regional actors (the US and EU) in the above-mentioned security pact initiatives was not clearly defined, there was a general understanding that one of their most important functions would be the mediation of the existing conflicts in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region.

In 2000, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) offered a slightly modified version of Demirel's initiative. The latter was extensively discussed in academic and political circles, but according to a Georgian expert Maia Manchkhvili, despite all efforts, this initiative eventually failed, as Russia never accepted it. It is obvious that while this view was quite informative, it was definitely influenced by Tbilisi's own standoff with Moscow: "Russia neither wanted the world community and Turkey among them, to be actively intervened in its sphere of interests, nor did it seek for achievement of peace in Caucasus. Despite the existence of a quite promising idea of partnership, none of the country leaders talked about the specific Pact. Finally, the realization perspective of this idea completely vanished."<sup>42</sup>

The second Turkish initiative was voiced immediately after the Georgian-Russian war of August 2008. In fact, the inauguration of the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) was nothing other than Turkey's quick response to the Georgian-Ossetian and Georgian-Russian

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<sup>42</sup> Manchkhvili, Maia, *Turkish Security Models for South Caucasus Region*, Tbilisi State University, Georgia, Aug 08, 2014, [Foreign Policy](http://researchturkey.org/author/maiamanchkhvili3/), Available at: <http://researchturkey.org/author/maiamanchkhvili3/>

conflicts. Immediately after the August 2008 events “Erdoğan visited Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan to promote the CSCP. The government in Yerevan also expressed an interest in it, as it was concerned about the damage to the Armenian economy caused by the Russian blockade of Georgian ports at the time of the conflict.”<sup>43</sup>

Since the early 90s Turkey’s new role in the South Caucasus has been conditioned by the dynamics of its relations with Russia that despite the disintegration of the Soviet Union still remained the most influential player in the region. As Jeffrey Mankoff puts it Turkey is an important player in the South Caucasus region, second only to Russia. It re-focused and recalibrated its policy in the Caucasus after the AKP came to power. Turkey sought to expand its influence in each and every sphere, first and foremost in the energy field.<sup>44</sup>

In the late 1990s, even before the AKP came to power, Turkey had already embarked upon a rapprochement with Russia. Ankara had to admit Moscow’s hegemony in the Caucasus. Turkey downsized its ambition to play a more influential role in the region, concentrating its efforts on building business and economic ties with Russia. However, the Georgian-Russian war made Turkey reconsider this approach, as it feared to lose access to the Central Asia. In Ankara’s opinion, the war also jeopardized entire infrastructure of the Baku–Tbilisi– Ceyhan (BTC) and the South Caucasus gas pipeline.<sup>45</sup> According to Mankoff “subsequent Turkish attempts at regional mediation have had little success: The Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (released in the aftermath of the war) was designed to promote a multilateral dialogue on regional conflicts, but was never embraced by other states in the region...”<sup>46</sup>

Ahmet Davutoglu realized all too well that the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* needed to extend above and beyond basic theoretical principles. The AKP designed the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform to establish a functional link between the doctrinal principles of the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* and practical diplomacy. The new initiative envisaged a 3 + 2 format, with Turkey and Russia on the one side of the equation and Armenia,

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<sup>43</sup> Migdalowitz, Carol, AKS’s Domestically-Driven Foreign Policy, Turkish Policy Quarterly, Volume 9, Number 4, 2010, available at: <http://www.turkishpolicy.com/dosyalar/files/Carol%20Migdalovitz-AKP%27s%20Domestically%20Driven%20Foreign%20Policy.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Mankoff, Jeffrey, The Big Caucasus. *Between Fragmentation and Integration*, A Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program, p.11, Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2012

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

Azerbaijan and Georgia on the other. Distinct from previous regional security pacts there was no mention of the United States or any international organization in the first draft of the new Pact. It was only at a later stage that Prime Minister Erdoğan suggested that the UN also had a role to play in the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform.<sup>47</sup>

It is less surprising that Turkey did not include Iran in this so-called *Five Format*, as both Demirel's initiative and CEPS proposal described above had not done so either. As for the EU, it was also omitted from the 3+2 equation. As a result, many regional and supra-regional players were not happy with the framework and format of the Platform.<sup>48</sup>

Turkey's new role in the region and also as a global player has been gradually upgraded parallel to Ahmet Davutoglu's promotion on individual level. In fact, his professional career was a mirror image of Turkey's growing ambitions in the international arena. Every new position he took would upgrade Ankara's involvement in regional and global security affairs: "Since the start of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government's second term in office (July 2007 to date), which coincided with an upgrading of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Senior Advisor Ahmet Davutoglu's role, Turkey's foreign policy has begun to pursue a regional "soft power" role. The Georgian-Russian war of August 2008 served as a catalyst for Turkey's immediate quest for security in pro-active terms."<sup>49</sup>

Thus, the following conclusion can be drawn: the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform, *rhythmic diplomacy* and the *policy of zero problems with neighbors*<sup>50</sup> constituted a tripartite strategy of the AKP government. Each of the three constituent parts corresponded to a certain phase in Ahmet Davutoglu's professional career. Davutoglu's predecessor as foreign minister, Ali Babacan, conditioned the success of Turkey's engagement in the South Caucasus by its relations with each of the three countries of the region. In this regard, he singled out Ankara's only attempt to exercise not individual, but regional approach. This approach came forward shortly after the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008, when the Caucasus Stability and

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<sup>47</sup> Manchkhvashvili, Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Fotiou, Eleni, "Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform": What is at Stake for Regional Cooperation? ICBSS Policy Brief No 16, June 2009

<sup>50</sup> Ibid



Cooperation Platform was introduced.<sup>51</sup> For some reason Babacan forgot to mention Demirel's *Pact for Caucasus Stability* offered in 2000, instead he stated that in 2008 "Turkey offered an alternative platform to facilitate communication between the countries of the region and a framework to develop stability, confidence and cooperation."<sup>52</sup>

Paradoxical as it sounds, Armenia was only country from the region, which was relatively positive about the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform. The only objection was voiced by Armen Rustamian, a member of the National Assembly from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF): "Non-involvement of Iran in this format of Caucasian Platform meant to have a time-bomb put in the region, which could explode the existing security system at any time."<sup>53</sup>

Georgia was not happy with Turkey's demonstrable attempt to exclude the US and the EU from the security architecture of the Black Sea/South Caucasus region, especially because all previous similar initiatives envisaged a concrete role for supra-regional partners. The Armenian government tried to remain positive, at times even turning a blind eye to the issues, which it would have questioned in other political circumstances.

An international conference organized by the Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) in March 2012, presented a detailed summary highlighting different reactions by Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia to Ankara's initiative:

"Even though the initiative was a positive one, the timing and its format were criticized. One of the major faults of the initiative was the exclusion of the EU and the US from the platform. This was of particular concern to Georgia, which has close relations with both parties. In addition, Turkey was not seen as an objective player in the region. Turkey was, and still is, considered to be closer to Azerbaijan than Armenia. In the end, the platform was rejected by both Azerbaijan and Georgia, while Armenia did not directly oppose the platform initiative, perhaps because Ankara approached Yerevan on this issue without preconditions. Although the initiative did not happen, one of the by-products of this project was the initiation of Turkey's approach towards Armenia in the form of a road map, enhanced by football diplomacy, before the very positive signing of two protocols to normalize relations. Even though the platform initiative was proposed in the aftermath of the August 2008 war, the primary objective of this suggestion was to help find a solution to the Armenia-Turkey and Armenia-Azerbaijan conflicts."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Babacan, Ali, "Turkish Initiatives, Calming the Caucasus." *International Herald Tribune*, September 23, 2008. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/opinion/23iht-edbabacan.1.16407371.html>, visited April 11, 2014

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Manchkhshvili, Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Görgülü, Aybars and Krikorian, Onnik, *Turkey's South Caucasus Agenda: Roles of State and Non-State Actors*, a summary of an international conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, organized on March 2, 2012 by Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) and Turkish Economic Social Studies Foundation TESEV, available at:

### **1.3 Turkey as an international mediator in recent years**

Turkey's new political philosophy was in need of auxiliary means and tools to promote its short and long term goals. That is why the AKP's declarative openness towards immediate neighbors, and open-mindedness with regard to the rest of the world, were accompanied by Turkey's pro-active steps to become a mediator of regional and international conflicts. Michael A. Reynolds offers the following description of Ankara's new attempt to become a visible player in the world politics:

“Old habits and institutional practices die hard, however, and playing an active role in such a complex region is no simple matter. As a way to gradually break out of the old mindset and gain experience in regional affairs without excessive risk, Turkey has recently begun trying its hand at the role of mediator in regional conflicts. For example, Turkey has involved itself in negotiations between Syria and Israel, and Turkey's Foreign Minister Ali Babacan has at times tried to position himself as a broker between the West and Iran. Now, Turkey is expected to host meetings between Afghanistan and Pakistan.”<sup>55</sup>

The official site of the Turkish Foreign Ministry gives a wide geography of geopolitical issues Turkey wishes to engage. It becomes clear that Ali Babacan and Ahmet Davutoglu had ambitions to position modern Turkey not only as a regional power, but also as an influential global actor. Like the US, Turkey prioritizes global security threats and sees a role for itself not only in places of traditional interests, but also wants to stay engaged in the “Afro-Eurasian landscape.” Like Russia it introduces the term “near-abroad”. The Foreign Ministry puts a special emphasis on preventive diplomacy and mediation since any development in this landscape can have a potential impact on Turkey.<sup>56</sup>

The same philosophy and approach are applied with regard to Turkey's involvement in mediation in Kyrgyzstan, Iraq and Lebanon, as well as trilateral cooperation with Serbia and Croatia to promote the peace process in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition Ankara took up a facilitation role in another trilateral negotiation format with Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, the “Mediation for Peace” initiative launched by Turkey with Finland in September 2010 in New York under the auspices of the UN is also based upon the principles of coordination

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[http://www.epfound.org/files/southcaucasusagenda24\\_07\\_12web.pdf](http://www.epfound.org/files/southcaucasusagenda24_07_12web.pdf), consulted April 11, 2014

<sup>55</sup> Reynolds, Ibid

<sup>56</sup> First Istanbul Conference on Mediation, “Enhancing Peace Through Mediation”, 24-25 February 2012, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa>, consulted June 11, 2014

<sup>57</sup>Ibid

and complementarity, which are deemed necessary for the success of a mediation process. This approach fits perfectly into the framework of what Ahmet Davutoglu described as three methodological and five operational principles of Turkey's new foreign policy. In 2012 and 2013, Turkey organized two high-profile conferences on international mediation in Istanbul. While the first Conference titled "Enhancing Peace through Mediation" was dedicated to theoretical and conceptual issues, during the second conference "Keys to Effective Mediation: Perspectives from Within" specific conflict cases were discussed.<sup>58</sup> Following the success at the UN, "Turkey along with Finland and the Swiss Presidency formed a "Friends of Mediation Group" in the OSCE on March 6th 2014 in Vienna. In addition to serving as a platform for sharing experiences, the main objective of this Group is to raise awareness among the OSCE members on the importance of mediation as an effective tool for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Recognizing the need for harnessing the growing interest on the peace making agenda in general and mediation in particular... Turkey hosts annual "Istanbul Conferences on Mediation".<sup>59</sup> It is not surprising that Ahmet Davutoglu came forward with idea to host conferences on international mediation. In attendance were foreign ministers, retired and active diplomats, as well as university professors. Davutoglu, who co-sponsored the initiative of establishing an international mediation centre in Istanbul with Finland, stressed that his country's geographical location is perfect for such a centre.<sup>60</sup>

It should be noted that the conference and the idea of the establishment of a international mediation centre in Istanbul had strong support from the president of the U.N. General Assembly, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser. According to Dorian Jones the conference had a three-fold objective: raising awareness of the importance of mediation, increasing mediation capacity

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<sup>58</sup> United Nations, Sixty-seventh Session of the General Assembly, A/67/980, Agenda item 33, Summary report of the Second Istanbul Conference on Mediation, "Keys to Effective Mediation: Perspectives from Within", 11-12 April 2013, available at: [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/site\\_media/html/a-67-980-2013-istanbul-conference-summary-report.pdf](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/site_media/html/a-67-980-2013-istanbul-conference-summary-report.pdf), consulted June 14, 2014

<sup>59</sup> Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/resolution-of-conflicts-and-mediation.en.mfa>, consulted June 15, 2014

<sup>60</sup> Jones, Dorian, *Turkey Seeks to Be International Mediation Center*, February 26, 2012, available at <http://www.voanews.com/content/turkey-seeks-to-be-international-mediation-center-140605183/171034.html>, accessed November 3, 2013

within the United Nations and on a regional level, and for Turkey to enhance its role within its own region.”<sup>61</sup>

One of the most internationally expected yet quite controversial mediation initiatives came out of Turkey with regard to the recent crisis in Syria, with which Turkey has a 900 km-long border. It came in the midst of new geopolitical developments, global security threats and continuing failures to establish peace. In a related article Dorian Jones pointed to the growing criticism by the international community with Turkey’s mediation efforts in Syria. In this regard Selcuk Unal, the spokesman of the Turkish Foreign Ministry tried to justify Ankara’s failure by the lack of success of other mediators. He said: “The Arab League efforts failed, the U.N. Security Council resolution failed, that is why we have initiated a series of diplomatic efforts, which culminated in the Tunis meeting.”<sup>62</sup>

Turkey’s ambiguous policy in Syria put into question the sincerity of Ankara’s new declared goals as a global actor and mediator. On the other hand, Davutoglu’s promises of even-handedness, mutual cooperation, stability and preventive diplomacy in *near abroad* have been diluted by the on-going blockade of Armenia and the refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Yerevan without preconditions.

#### ***1.4 Armenia’s pro-active foreign policy as a synchronized counterpart of zero problems with neighbors - Armenia in international mediation/facilitation and conflict resolution after independence***

While Ahmet Davutoglu and the AKP described and defined *pro-active and pre-emptive diplomacy* as a third operational principle of the policy of *zero problems with neighbors*, President Serge Sargsyan and the ruling Republican party spoke about Armenia’s *pro-active* foreign policy.

As we described above, whenever a state proclaimed a new stage in foreign relations, coming up with a special name for it, it usually meant that there had been issues in the past that needed to be rectified. In Turkey’s case, where the changes were revolutionary, the proclaimed policy of *zero problems* was a public confession that there had been serious problems with all geographical neighbors. Contrastingly, Armenia’s *pro-activeness* was of evolutionary character.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

This was an indication that the new Armenian administration had plans to upgrade the previous policy of *complementarity*, which had not been pro-active enough. It was by no means an indication of the change of entire political and societal mind-set as it happened with the AKP since it had come to power. Nor was it an ambitious attempt to play an important role in world politics. Armenia's declaration of *pro-active* foreign policy was a signal sent to the international community that after the previous ten years of *complementarity*, which turned out to be quite uneventful in Yerevan's relations with Ankara, a change should be expected first and foremost in Armenia's resolve to engage into a substantive, internationally mediated dialogue with Turkey. Meanwhile, Davutoglu's *zero problems* with neighbors to a great extent was addressed to Armenia as he admitted in a doctrinal article published by *Foreign Affairs* in 2010: "In 2009, for example, we achieved considerable diplomatic progress with Armenia, which nevertheless remains the most problematic relationship in Turkey's neighborhood policy."<sup>63</sup>

Foreign policy and diplomacy of small states is different from that of the larger ones:

"It is generally assumed that because of the different international contexts in which small and large states operate, their foreign policies will reflect different sets of constraints. Domestic level pressures will have more relevance for explaining the foreign-policy choices of states, which are less exposed to the international environment. For example, Jervis<sup>64</sup> argues that the security dilemma is particularly acute for small states that cannot afford to be cheated and are less likely to be buffered from the consequences of foreign policy mistakes. Unlike great powers, small states lack a 'margin of time and error' when responding to external exigencies."<sup>65</sup>

Armenia's foreign policy since independence went through three consecutive stages, which corresponded to three presidential administrations. The first president introduced the *policy of balance*, which was followed by the second president's *policy of complementarity* and the current administration's *pro-active* foreign policy.

In comparison with doctrinal changes in Turkish foreign policy during the last 13 years, it will be relevant to note that since independence, Armenia, being a security-conscious country, has tried to avoid revolutionary changes in building its relations with geographical neighbors and the world at large. This is because the above-mentioned "margin of time and error" was of

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<sup>63</sup> Davutoglu, Ibid

<sup>64</sup> See: Jervis, Robert, *Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma*, World Politics, 30 (1978), 167-214, at pp. 172-3.

<sup>65</sup> Elman, Miriam Fendius, *Foreign Policy of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in its own Backyard*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, available at: <http://maihold.org/mediapool/113/1132142/data/Fendius.pdf>, consulted May 16, 2014

paramount importance for newly independent Armenia. Therefore, its foreign policy, no matter how it was called (*balance, complementarity or pro-active*), was, despite certain important methodological and operational differences, by and large based on the principles of continuity and succession.

The vector of Armenia's geopolitical orientation, its relations with Russia and the West predicate these principles. The state of relations with Turkey, on the one hand, makes Armenia a security-conscious country. On the other hand, together with the Nagorno-Karabagh problem it serves as a common denominator for Armenia's foreign policy, whenever there arises a need to make hard choices between Russia and the West. It should be stressed though that no matter how radical Armenia's orientation choice might appear to be in different periods of the history of the third republic, it has always been open to accept international mediation to normalize relations with Turkey.

As for Armenia's participation in international mediation the following should be noted. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia has made several modest attempts to act as an international facilitator both in the South Caucasus region and beyond. The first Armenian initiative to mediate interstate conflicts came to the fore as early as January 1991, when the domestic situation in the Republic of Lithuania and its relations with Russia deteriorated to the point of military clashes with the Soviet Army. It was then that after consultations with the Kremlin administration Levon Ter-Petrossian, the then President of the Armenian Supreme Soviet and Nikolay Dementey, the President of the Belorussian Supreme Soviet, volunteered to visit Vilnius, and after two-day talks successfully brokered a truce agreement between the conflicting parties.

Armenia's second involvement as an international mediator can be traced back to December 1991. At the request of President Gamsakhurdia's administration, two members of the Karabagh Committee, Ashot Manucharyan, the then acting Minister of Internal Affairs and David Vardanyan, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on International Relations, paid a three-day visit to Georgia to facilitate a dialogue between the Georgian government and the opposition. This mediation helped to prevent a large-scale civil war in Georgia, especially as it was followed by Armenia's consent, after Azerbaijan's refusal, to provide temporary asylum to

President Gamsakhurdia and his cabinet on their way to Chechnya. This facilitation was coordinated with the incoming Georgian administration. Political consultations were also held with the Russian and US embassies in Yerevan.

In 1993, Armenia received another mediation request from Georgia, when President Shevardnadze asked President Ter-Petrosian to send a peacekeeping force to Abkhazia. The situation on the Georgian-Abkhazian border was out of control as far as transportation routes were concerned. At that time, the Georgian military had neither the capacity, nor the necessary equipment to secure safe passage of goods and establish border control. After a special meeting of the National Security Council and long debates at a closed-door session of the National Assembly, the Georgian request was declined. The argumentation behind such a decision was that it would have taken Armenia two days to get into Abkhazia/Georgia and twenty years to get out. Just like in all previous cases involving Georgia, Armenia held diplomatic consultations with Moscow and Washington prior to announcing its decision. Both capitals were full of praise for Yerevan's decision not to send peacekeepers to Georgia. No doubt, the factor of half a million-strong Armenian community in Georgia was taken into consideration. Armenia's military presence at the border with Abkhazia even at President Shevardnadze's request could have been misperceived as a potential threat to Georgia's territorial integrity.

### ***1.5 Some Methodological Commonalities in the Composition of Turkish and Armenian diplomatic teams in 1991-1998 - Links to the Karabagh negotiations***

It is noteworthy that in the 90s the same team of Turkish diplomats that participated in the Karabagh negotiations (Ambassadors Omer Ersun and Candan Azer; and later Ambassador Unal Cevikoz) was also responsible for Turkish-Armenian confidential proximity talks. The same goes right for the Armenian side; Ambassadors at large, Gerard Libaridian and David Shahnazaryan were representing their country in both negotiation formats. It should also be underlined that one and the same team of US diplomats were monitoring and facilitating those two different negotiation tracks. The paradox of the early 90s is that despite the aforementioned interoperability and identical approach to the composition of the diplomatic teams of both countries, the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement was not directly conditioned by the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict. Azerbaijan was incomparably less sensitive to Turkish-

Armenian contacts than it is today. Turkey, on the other hand, was less susceptible to political pressures and provocations from Baku.

It should, of course, be noted that the Turkish-Armenian border checkpoints had not been officially closed until the spring of 1993 when, during the counteroffensive, the Kelbajar region was taken by the Armenian self-defense forces. Therefore, the direct link/conditionality between the two negotiation formats was created not because Turkey was overtly concerned about the quick and peaceful resolution of the NK problem, but because Azerbaijan after a short-term military success in Northern Karabagh in 1992, suddenly began to lose the war in 1993.

The real connection between Armenia-Turkey relations and the Nagorno Karabagh conflict had nothing to do with Turkey's demands addressed to the Armenian side to withdraw from the territories around Nagorno Karabagh as a precondition to open the common border with the Republic of Armenia. This link was not political, but rather psychological. Without imposing any conditionality to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey, the Armenian side could not help but seeing a clear connection between the events of 1915 and the Azerbaijani aggression against Nagorno Karabagh in 1988-1992. The historical memories were intermingled with the present day standoff.

The Armenian pogroms in Sumgait, the Azerbaijani aggression against the civilian population in Nagorno Karabagh and the blockade imposed by Turkey have gradually made the psychological link with the Genocide much more palpable. This aspect of the Karabagh conflict resolution, not the conditionality imposed by Turkey, should have been taken into serious consideration by international mediators.

With regard to the point described above, Dennis Sandole makes the following observation:

"... In the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (an Armenian area in Azerbaijan), Armenians tend to "see" Azerbaijanis as "Turks." Consequently, Armenians see that Armenia with a population of 2-3 million (and 3-4 million Armenians in the diaspora) is surrounded by 7 million "Turks" in Azerbaijan, plus 63 million Turks in Turkey, for a total of 70 million Turks surrounding 2-3 million Armenians. Against this David and Goliath background, they also see the Azeri "Turks" as trying to "finish off the job they started in 1915!" In this particular scenario, dealing effectively with the Armenian-Turkish conflict relationship (perhaps the first genocide of the 20th Century) may be a necessary condition for



dealing effectively with the subsequent (and current) conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”<sup>66</sup>

The first consistent and full-time Track 1 mediation of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement would come to the fore only as late as in 2005, when the Swiss Foreign Minister Remy visited Turkey. During the decade separating the 80<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Genocide, American mediation would mainly consolidate its efforts in Track 2 initiatives. The Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC), of which we will speak in detail in the following chapters, can be best described as Track 1.5 as it paved the way for the future Swiss-American Track 1 mediation format. This is what makes the methodology of the international mediation of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement different from the mediation of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution talks. The latter has remained on Track 1 under the auspices of the CSCE/OSCE being at times amended by short-lived public diplomacy initiatives.

This has always been the case since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The short-lived Russian-Kazakh (Yeltzin-Nazarbayev) Karabagh mediation of 1992 or other similar initiatives never graduated beyond the official negotiation framework. Some improvised steps to combine the Track 1 format with cultural diplomacy were taken by the Armenian and Azerbaijani Ambassadors to Moscow, who in 2006 paid a joint visit to Yerevan and Baku to meet with local intellectuals<sup>67</sup>, but this was basically as good as it got with Armenian-Azerbaijani Track 2 talks. The Soviet era attempts to mediate the Nagorno Karabagh conflict at its onset in 1988-1990 (intermediate status, Special Rule Committee in Stepanakert headed by Arkady Volsky) had all been undertaken on Track 1.

Modest Track 2 mediation initiatives on the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution, sponsored mainly by British and German NGOs and think tanks (Conciliation Resources; LINKS; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) came at a much later stage and were an academic derivative/extension of the OSCE Minsk process. This is because Azerbaijan, distinct from Armenia and Turkey, since the very first day of independence has been an autocracy, where all the decisions, especially after Heidar Aliyev’s return to power, have been taken by the President of the country. Even within the framework of Track 1 negotiations there has always been a problem with Azerbaijan’s

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid

<sup>67</sup> Note: By coincidence both Ambassadors, Armen Smbatyan (Armenia) and Polad Byul-Byul Ogly happened to be musicians by background

Foreign Ministry, which had a very limited decision making authority even on minor issues.

However, several attempts to offer a serious Track 1.5 negotiation format to mediate the Nagorno Karabagh conflict have been made. The same actors, who would later become actively involved in Track 1.5 and Track 2 Armenian-Turkish reconciliation dialogue, had initiated some of those attempts. In other words, the same principle of negotiation team composition and interoperability that we pointed out with regard to Track 1 Turkish-Armenian and Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations was replicated in Track 2 talks.

As far back as in 1994 David L. Philips, the future coordinator of TARC, visited the Armenian Embassy in Washington DC and made an offer to start and mediate Armenian-Azerbaijani Track 2 diplomatic process. This would have been something like Armenian-Azerbaijani Reconciliation Commission (AARC), had the governments in Yerevan and Baku approved the aforementioned initiative. The Armenian Ambassador's counterargument with regard to this project was that the system of governance in Azerbaijan was such that it would have been virtually impossible to find any non-governmental representatives who had any decision making power and authority, or whom President Aliyev would have accepted even as unofficial negotiators on behalf of Azerbaijan. It should also be stressed that this was proposed a year after the signing of the Oslo Accords at the White House, the successful Track 1.5 mediation process, of which David Philips had a first-hand knowledge as the then employee of the Norwegian *Fafo Institute of Applied International Studies*. The Institute played the central mediation role in the confidential talks between Israel and the PLO and in preparing the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (Oslo Accords). The Armenian side mentioned that a Track 2 format was in theory possible for Armenian-Turkish negotiations, where the civil society was much more open than in Azerbaijan.

Such a geographical shift of Track 2 initiatives coincided with the change in the methodology of Track 1 mediation. The latter, having revisited its priority list, tilted from the Nagorno Karabagh talks to the mediation of a Turkish-Armenian rapprochement. In the 90s and early 2000s international efforts and diplomatic resources were primarily consolidated within the framework of the CSCE/OSCE sponsored Nagorno Karabagh negotiations with a view to address the question of Armenian-Turkish relations after the conflict with Azerbaijan had been

at least partially resolved. From 2007-2008 till the signing of the Armenian-Turkish Protocols in Zurich, the approach of international mediators underwent a revolutionary change.

Since the Nagorno Karabagh negotiations were virtually deadlocked in 2003-2008, with the change of administration in Washington and after 2008 presidential elections in Armenia, the prospects of first mediating the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border, appeared to be more realistic. Thus, until the beginning of *football diplomacy* international mediation of Turkish-Armenian relations had mainly been limited to Track 2 initiatives, while the facilitation of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict had been confined to the CSCE/OSCE sponsored talks on Track 1. Turkey's attempts to establish a strict conditionality between the normalization of relations with Armenia and the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh made the bilateral talks doomed before they even started:

"Turkey is trying to make things easier for Azerbaijan by stressing that the normalization of its relations with Armenia will be conditioned by the resolution of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh in a way that suits Azerbaijan. Yet these assurances are what lead the process into a stalemate. The best way to swamp the rapprochement is to tie it to the controversy over Nagorno-Karabakh, a controversy that has a format of its own which has shown its complexity over the years."<sup>68</sup>

According to Aybars Gorgulu, a researcher from Sabancı University:

"The lack of diplomatic ties between Turkey and Armenia jeopardizes Turkey's efforts to become a regional leader and also its attempts at mediation for the region's protracted conflicts. The Nagorno-Karabakh dispute is a good example in that sense. Turkey's involvement in this conflict as a party rather than a mediator and its unconditional support for Azerbaijan motivated by factors both strategic – *oil-rich Azerbaijan's importance for Turkey* – and domestic – *Azerbaijan's status as a "kin-state" to Turkey* – has limited Turkey's potential role as a mediator."<sup>69</sup>

America's position on establishing a link between Turkish-Armenian rapprochement and the Nagorno Karabagh problem has been fluid. While one cannot deny that in the 90s and early 2000s the State Department would cautiously support such conditionality, linking the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border to a symbolic withdrawal of Armenian forces from one or two regions around Nagorno Karabagh, with the onset of *football diplomacy* Washington made an attempt to keep the two negotiation processes on separate tracks. During 25 years of

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<sup>68</sup> Iskandaryan, Alexander, *Armenian-Turkish Rapprochement: Timing Matters*, Insight Turkey, Vol.11/No 3/2009, pp.37-44

<sup>69</sup> Gorgulu, Aybars, *Towards a Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement?*, Insight Turkey, Vol.11/No 2/ 2009, pp. 19-29

independence has always been clear that successive Armenian administrations would not make security concessions in exchange for economic benefits. The Armenian position has always been *loud and clear* - security can only be traded for security and cannot become subject to commercial deals.

However, even after the signing of the protocols there were conflicting views coming from Washington with regard to the de-linking of the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement from the progress in the Nagorno-Karabagh talks. Matthew Bryza, former US Ambassador to Azerbaijan and former US key negotiator on Nagorno Karabagh publicly criticized the US and EU for their initial stance in *football diplomacy*: "The EU and the US made a big mistake when decided to decouple the process of Turkey-Armenia normalization from the process of Nagorno-Karabakh mediation, the former US Ambassador to Azerbaijan Matthew Bryza told journalists on June 7." "It was a big mistake when we separated the two processes," Bryza said. "If there was a progress in one process, there will be in other as well." 'Peace process on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is in stagnation,' he said. 'However, that is not because there is no progress.'"<sup>70</sup>

### ***1.6 Methodological and political mistakes of international mediation of Armenian-Turkish relations - Normalization as a confidence building measure for reconciliation - Two stages of peace building***

To be able to further discuss international mediation strategy of Armenian-Turkish relations we first need to summarize two types of mistakes made in the past: methodological and political. Daniel Bar-Tal describes two levels of peace building by international community, which faces the challenge of sustainable conflict resolution. The first is the process of conflict resolution itself by means of negotiations between the leaders of the parties in question, international mediation and arbitration. To be successful at this level one still needs popular support, without which official talks cannot be effective. The second level relates to "postconflict reconciliation", which involves societal dialogue, permanent contacts between elite groups and

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<sup>70</sup> Azernews, Matthew Bryza: Separating Turkish-Armenian fence-mending from Nagorno-Karabakh mediation 'big mistake', June 7, 2013, available at: <http://www.azernews.az/azerbaijan/55093.html>, consulted August 11, 2013

individuals “that feed the conflict on both sides, in order to evolve a new repertoire that can serve as a foundation for stable and lasting peace.”<sup>71</sup>

As we have already pointed out in the previous chapters, the main methodological mistake made by the international mediators of Armenian-Turkish relations was an unjustified merging of two negotiation formats, - **normalization** and **reconciliation**. The following is our definition of these formats:

- ❑ **Normalization** package should include the opening of the border and establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia without preconditions. Solely the governments of the two countries with international mediation should deal it with.
- ❑ **Reconciliation** - an unprejudiced discussion of the past with a view to build a common dignified future - should be a joint undertaking by the Armenian government, public organizations and the Armenian Diaspora on the one hand, and the Turkish government and society on the other.

**Reconciliation** is a much longer and delicate process. In the case of Turkey and Armenia, it presupposes serious and consistent societal involvements from both countries and of the Armenian Diaspora worldwide.<sup>72</sup> To be able to deliver a comprehensive rapprochement international mediators need to have strong support not only of the governments, but also of the civil societies of both countries and the Diaspora. In Armenia’s case, the very existence of 6-million-strong Diaspora is the direct consequence of the Genocide and deportations.

Internationally mediated **normalization** of Armenian-Turkish relations without any political preconditions should be viewed as a necessary foundation stone for eventual **reconciliation**. However, it is counterproductive to include major elements of **reconciliation** into the texts of protocols on establishment of diplomatic relations between countries in political conflict.

It is beyond doubt that the process of **reconciliation** should include some auxiliary elements of **normalization**, as the potential opening the Turkish-Armenian border and the

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<sup>71</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, *From Resolution to Reconciliation in Postconflict Societies*, World Politics Review, September 25, 2012, available at: <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12360/from-resolution-to-reconciliation-in-postconflict-societies>, visited August 2, 2014

<sup>72</sup> See also: Shougarian, Rouben, *Evolution of American Interests in the Black Sea/South Caucasus Region and Mediation of Armenian-Turkish Relations. Normalization, reconciliation and transitional justice*, SPECTRUM, Regional Security Issues: 2011, Center for Strategic Analysis, Yerevan, 2012

establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries are important confidence building measures on the path to a new regional identity. In other words, **normalization** has to become a confidence building measure for **reconciliation**. However, international mediators and direct parties to negotiations should avoid conceptual mixing of two separate conflict resolution notions.

This kind of argumentation does not necessarily presuppose that the process of **reconciliation** cannot start until the relations between Armenia and Turkey have been **normalized**. In certain geopolitical circumstances it could even precede the process of **normalization**, or ideally, run parallel to it. We still need to underline that from the standpoint of international mediation strategy and methodology **reconciliation** has to be viewed as the final challenge of peace building: “This latter challenge, which lies at the heart of the peace-building process, is of great importance, because it lays the foundations for successful conflict resolution and at the same time prepares the society members to live in a state of peace, which can be defined as mutual recognition and acceptance after the reconciliation process, as well as the jointly accepted goal of maintaining peaceful relations characterized by full normalization and cooperation in all possible domains of collective life.”<sup>73</sup>

Were it not for a 100-year gap between the Armenian Genocide and *football diplomacy*, international mediation would probably have to begin from **reconciliation**. An interesting definition of what Yehudith Auerbach of Bar Ilan University calls material conflicts vs. identity conflicts with regard to **reconciliation** and **normalization** can be found in his research paper on the subject in question: “Between material conflicts, which evolve around material and dividable assets, and identity conflicts, which involve deep-seated hatred originating in the feeling of at least one of the sides that the other has usurped their legitimate rights. While material conflicts can be brought to an end through traditional conflict resolution techniques, identity conflicts need “track two” diplomacy strategies, and particularly forgiveness in order to reach reconciliation.”<sup>74</sup> In international relations there are cases when **reconciliation** is viewed as part and parcel of **normalization** and not vice versa. In this respect, looking into conflict resolution

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid

<sup>74</sup> Auerbach, Yehudith, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: The Religious Dimension*, Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 17, Issue 3, 2005, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09546550590929174#.VdZss0U1InI>, visited June 12, 2015

experiences in the Balkans and South Africa, Mitja Žagar from the University of Ljubljana is of the opinion that **reconciliation** should be viewed as an integral part of the broader notion of **normalization**. This is nothing other but an attempt to return back to square one, not burdened by collective memories. Yet such an approach could be valid only if all conflicting parties are committed to **reconciliation** talks and prepared to accept their outcome without prejudice.<sup>75</sup>

Conflict resolution and peace building are complex processes, which are often unpredictable. There can't be a uniform, textbook mediation technique to approach different standoffs. In this respect, Žagar stresses the need to rethink and re-conceptualize **reconciliation** and develop alternative approaches.<sup>76</sup>

In an article titled *Armenia and Turkey: From Normalisation to Reconciliation* Fiona Hill, Kemal Kirisci and Andrew Moffatt write: "...Given the multidimensional nature of the dispute between Turkey and Armenia and their peoples, reconciliation faces immense challenges. It is a process that must occur at the individual, societal, and state levels. Reconciliation requires time and a reconsideration of identity as well as of history. In contrast, the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations is more limited in scope. In theory, it could proceed more quickly. However, progress has been erratic in recent years. Both Turkey and Armenia have made positive steps forward toward normalizing their relations, only to have the apparent progress met by new setbacks and competing priorities."<sup>77</sup>

The *setbacks* and *competing priorities* the above-mentioned article speaks about include political pre-conditions imposed on the Turkey-Armenia talks by a third party, Azerbaijan. The inability to neutralize pressures on Ankara by the Aliyev Administration constitutes the second political mistake made by the international mediators of *football diplomacy*. The need to make Ankara less susceptible to the growing blackmail from Baku has been tacitly acknowledged not only in the US but also within the academic community in Europe.

Piotr Zalewski has serious doubts about Turkey's ability to implement the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* with regard to the **normalization** of relations with Armenia. While he

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<sup>75</sup> Žagar, Mitja (2010) "Rethinking Reconciliation: The Lessons from the Balkans and South Africa," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 17: No. 1, Article 5.  
Available at: <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol17/iss1/5>, visited June 2, 2015

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>77</sup> Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt, Andrew <http://www.brookings.edu/experts/kiriscik>

never questions Ankara's desire to change things on the ground, in Zalewski's opinion, it is totally unrealistic. This is because the South Caucasus is a geopolitical crossroads, where interests of major players "often intersect and collide".<sup>78</sup>

Therefore, according to Zalewski, Ankara must put together a priority list, because sooner or later it would have to make difficult geopolitical choices, unable to be "everybody's friend" in the South Caucasus region. To do that Turkey "must stop pretending" that the opening of the border with Armenia will not have any negative impact on its relations with Azerbaijan. "A two-thirds discount on Azeri gas" cannot last forever. Ankara had to persuade both the political opposition at home and the Aliyev administration "that it can better serve Azerbaijan's interests by engaging with Armenia than pushing it away."<sup>79</sup> In our opinion, such an approach by a European expert does not take into account whether the Ankara administration has at all planned to convince the domestic opposition and the Azerbaijani authorities that the opening of the common border with Armenia is in the strategic interest of the entire region.

To look at the evolving history of the problem mentioned above from a different angle one needs to analyze the role Russia played vis-à-vis Turkey within the framework of the CSCE/OSCE Minsk Group. Using the Karabagh talks, Russia has always tried to reinstate its influence in the South Caucasus, which was partly lost after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It also spared no effort to minimize "advances by others" thus outlining the framework of the future settlement of the conflict. Ankara had to come to terms with this geopolitical reality. Meanwhile, the Karabagh problem gradually evolved from a local conflict into a regional dispute to eventually become "a token in an international game of power politics, the stakes of which involved millions of barrels of Caspian oil."<sup>80</sup>

To be able to play any logistical role in the Karabagh conflict resolution, Turkey first needs to at least partially disassociate itself from one of the direct parties to the conflict. The only way to do that is through the unconditional **normalization** of relations with Armenia. This

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<sup>78</sup>Zalewski, Piotr, Abnormalisation: The Bumpy Road to Turkey-Armenia Rapprochement, 17 December 2009, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), available at: <http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/2009/12/Turkish-Armenian%20Rapprochement%20e-version.pdf>, last visited September 16, 2014

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Laitin, David D. and Suny, Ronald Grigor, Armenia and Azerbaijan: Thinking a way out of Karabakh, Middle East policy, vol. vii, no. 1, p.162, October 1999



message has to be conveyed by international mediators not only to Ankara, but to Baku as well. If we take into account that the US, one of the main mediators of the Armenian-Turkish **normalization** talks, is simultaneously one of the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, while another co-chair, Russia, played an important role during the signing ceremony in Zurich, the relevance of such message will become all the more obvious.

Irrespective of the fact whether the methodology of *football diplomacy* proved to be a mistake of omission, or of commission, i.e. a *perfect failure*, the following conclusion can be made: whereas Turkey might have reached its short-term goals by signing but not ratifying the Zurich Protocols, it could pay a price for that in the long-term perspective. Going after tactical gains in the **normalization** talks with Armenia, Ankara used up most of its political resource losing the trust of international mediators. The Gül-Erdoğan administration fell short of paving the way for the **normalization** of relations with Armenia. The same goes for the **reconciliation** process and “domestic debate on the genocide issue.”<sup>81</sup> Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code remained intact, while the policy of aggressive denial took new forms. Domestic politics predicated and pre-determined important decisions in the negotiations with Armenia and international mediators. Turkey became a hostage to its own public opinion and political pressure from Azerbaijan. Ankara does not make any attempt to press the re-set button in the relations with Armenia “it will have frustrated its regional ambitions, disappointed its EU backers, and severely undermined its credibility. Finally, if it continues to index its relationship with the US to the issue of genocide recognition, it will have consolidated the risk of a major crisis with Washington.”<sup>82</sup>

It was quite predictable that towards the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide there would have been different academic and political attempts to address the future fate of the Zurich Protocols. In this regard, Vahram Ter-Matevosyan made an interesting proposal, citing the provisions of Part 3 and Part 4 of the 169 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. He suggested that Armenia should have taken a decisive step of inviting to its capital official representatives of all those states and international organizations who had participated

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<sup>81</sup> Zalewski, Piotr, Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

“at the signing ceremony in Zurich on 10 October 2009”<sup>83</sup>. The purpose of such hypothetical gathering would have been the adoption of a joint statement to recall the Zurich Protocols and start a corresponding lawsuit against the Turkish authorities at the international tribunal. Ter-Matevosyan admitted that while such an action could have provided a dignified exit strategy for Armenia, the main purpose of the **normalization** of relations between the two countries and the opening of the common border would not have been achieved.<sup>84</sup>

Analyzing the commitment of the leadership of Armenia and Turkey to the peace process in 2008-2009, Dr. Ter-Matevosyan noted that both countries generally “demonstrated a will to move forward”, each to a different degree. The Armenian authorities not only had to deal with domestic opposition, but also with a very critical reaction from the Diaspora. Against those odds, Yerevan chose “to move forward” with a hope that international mediators would use their influence on Turkey to respect prior commitments and return to the negotiation table. Ankara, however, was not up to the task as, formally remaining in the peace process, it had started to backpedal from its earlier commitments as soon as the Turkish authorities started being criticized by political opposition. Concluding his article, Ter-Matevosyan called on Ankara to make a public statement before the centennial, taking the responsibility for the failure of *football diplomacy*, and “declare the end of the Zurich process and leave the resumption of the process of normalization of relations to much more convenient times and favorable circumstances.”<sup>85</sup>

In conclusion, it should be stressed that to succeed international mediators should first reconsider their methodology and strategy drawing a demarcation line between normalization and reconciliation talks. The political link between the normalisation of Armenia-Turkey relations and the Nagorno Karabagh conflict was quite weak in the early 90s. However, after the unexpected military success of Armenian self-defense forces it transformed into a hard conditionality imposed by Turkey not only on Armenia, but also on international mediators. The fact that one and the same team of US diplomats tried to engage into the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict and simultaneously play a role in the normalization of Armenia-

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<sup>83</sup> Ter-Matevosyan, Vahram, What Political Solutions between Turkey and Armenia? REPAIR, Armeno-Turkish Dialogue Platform, Oct. 22, 2014, available at: <http://repairfuture.net/index.php/en/armenian-genocide-recognition-and-reparations-standpoint-of-armenia/2015-what-political-solutions-between-armenia-and-turkey-armenian>, consulted December 11, 2014

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

Turkey relations, set the new rules of engagement for the future international mediators of the talks between Yerevan and Ankara. While the methodological mistake of merging Armenian-Turkish normalization and reconciliation talks came to the fore in 2006-2008 during the onset of football diplomacy, the root cause of the political mistake made by the international mediators can be found in 1994. This was the time when the success of Armenian self-defense forces was crowned by the durable ceasefire. This was the time when Turkey and international mediators started to become hostage to the political pressures from Azerbaijan.

## Chapter II

### 2.1 *First steps of the US mediation of Armenian-Turkish proximity talks*

The collapse of the bipolar world order has changed the international security situation beyond recognition. This refers not only to global security issues, but also has a considerable impact on regional ones. Today's geopolitical disputes and the need to mediate them originate from various problems among newly independent states, as well as from dormant standoffs, the active phase of which seems to be long passed. The resolution of historical standoffs that have been dormant for decades is no less an arduous task for international mediators: "The sea that he sails is only roughly charted, and its changing contours are not clearly discernible. He has no science of navigation, no fund inherited from the experience of others. He is a solitary artist recognizing at most of few guiding stars, and depending on his personal powers of divination."<sup>86</sup>

In the case of Armenian-Turkish relations, despite the centennial anniversary of the Genocide and 25 years after Armenia regained independence, the active phase is still not completely over. If it were, there would not have been a need to mediate the normalization of relations between the two countries: "Mediators act in a complex setting that reflects an intricate net of political, economic, social, cultural and even psychological dynamics. As conflicts vary in diversity of parameters, so do objectives and strategies of mediation from context to context."<sup>87</sup>

1995 was the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. It was quite natural and logical for the US to become the first country to attempt normalizing the relations between Turkey, Washington's strategic ally in the Middle East, and the Republic of Armenia with its one million-strong Diaspora in America. Newly independent Armenia, which had an image of an island of democracy in the South Caucasus in the early 90s, was considered to be a rare success story in the context of the US policy in the FSU at that time: "Among the former

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<sup>86</sup> Cited Ibid, Meyer, A. S., *Functions of the Mediator in Collective Bargaining*, Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 13, 1960, p. 160

<sup>87</sup> Sargsyan, Irene, *International Mediation in Theory and Practice: Lessons of Nagorno Karabagh*, p. 3, 2003, Armenian Center for National and International Studies

Soviet republics, the tiny Transcaucasian nation of Armenia has stood out as an island of democratic reform”<sup>88</sup>

The US had several reasons predicated by domestic politics to start facilitating the nonexistent relations between Ankara and Yerevan. Washington had to deal with the annual *obligation* to make presidential statements on the events of 1915 on each April 24 in response to the legitimate demands from the Armenian-American community and the Armenian Caucus on the Hill. To contain angry reactions from Turkey and secure Ankara’s uninterrupted support for US policy in the Middle East, the presidential staff had to find legally non-binding, linguistic substitutes for the term *genocide*. Just like in a number of European countries, the prospect of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by legislative authorities in the US became a stimulus for the executive branch to mediate a Turkish-Armenian rapprochement.

Suren Zolyan outlines three possible standpoints to approach the issue of the Genocide: a. Actual recognition of the Genocide; b. diluting or denying the Genocide; c. avoiding actual recognition of the Genocide.<sup>89</sup> The last approach, which rests upon political and legal ambiguity, is typical for all successive American administrations. Dr. Zolyan defines the statements of American presidents on the Armenian Genocide as “evasive discourse”. He points out that in such statements the 1915 events are described in a very ambiguous language, which different parties to the conflict can interpret to their advantage.<sup>90</sup> It was only in the 80s that the Armenian Genocide started to be “sporadically referred to by Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush. After the collapse of the Soviet Union fundamental changes took place in the world, among them – the emergence of the independent Republic of Armenia. Also, the US Armenian community spoke with a stronger voice.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Sneider, Daniel, Democracy Teeters in Three Ex-Soviet States First of Four Articles on the Caucasus Nations: Armenia, Once a Leading Reformer among Post-Soviet States, Struggles with Building and Sustaining a Democracy. Series: THE CAUCASUS NATIONS. First of Four Articles on the Caucasus Nations, The Christian Science Monitor, May 3, 1995, available at: <https://www.questia.com/read/1P2-33404508/democracy-teeters-in-three-ex-soviet-states-first>, consulted August 11, 2013 |

<sup>89</sup> Zolyan, Suren, *American Presidents on the Armenian Genocide. The Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis of the "Evasionist" Discourse*, Limush Publishing House, Yerevan 2015

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

<sup>91</sup> Ibid

Alongside several other reasons the methodology of American mediation of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement was by and large conditioned by this evasionist approach. It has undergone various modifications in line with the evolution of American and European interests in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region to correspond to the letter and spirit of the concept of *transitional justice*.

The changing geopolitics of the Black Sea/ South Caucasus region gradually necessitated mediation efforts to open of the Turkish-Armenian border. America's corporate interest in the gas and oil-rich region started to translate itself into increased diplomatic effort on the part of the State Department in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution. On the other hand, the emerging global security threats were beginning to accumulate in the Middle East and beyond.

The need to normalize Turkish-Armenian relations was put into a broader geopolitical context.

The decision to facilitate the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement was taken in the spring of 1995, when Vice-President Albert Gore came up with the idea to initiate proximity talks between the two countries. It is noteworthy that Tansu Ciler, the then Prime-Minister of Turkey visited Washington a week prior to the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Genocide, when the *danger* of its recognition in a pending statement by President Clinton was imminent.

The Turkish government found effective ways to block the recognition issuing a timely *good-will* statement of opening an air corridor with Armenia, which had been unilaterally closed by Ankara. On the other hand, the time for *seasonal* politics and diplomacy was coming to an end. Hence the White House had to come up with the initiative to mediate Turkish-Armenian dialogue. But the problem was that America's long-term interest in that part of the changing world was only beginning to crystallize. That is why the initiatives and practical steps taken by the US in the mid- 90s towards that end were although constructive, but rather inconsistent.

Such a serious undertaking could not be a day-in day-out process, especially after the problem in question had been shelved for so many years. Until recently it only became sporadically activated each year in the last week of April. The only short-term beneficiary of such inconsistent facilitation was Turkey. It continued to keep the border with Armenia closed in

solidarity with Azerbaijan. Simultaneously Ankara prevented the Genocide recognition by the White House making an impression that Turkey is open to accept international mediation.

Washington continued to experience domestic seasonal (Spring/April 24) problems *caused by* the Armenian-American community and the House of Representatives. However, in 1996-1997 economic interests of the US in the South Caucasus were fully shaped with a captivating prospect of building multiple gas and oil pipelines in the region. In 2001 these interests were matched by America's vital security needs, as after the 9/11 attack it had to secure a coordinated logistical support of the countries, situated in the geographical proximity to *the war against terror*.

## ***2.2 Track 2 and Track 1,5 Diplomacy - Interconnection between Normalization and Reconciliation.***

In academic literature the concept of Track 2 diplomacy is usually defined in line with its goals, methodology and participants. Each definition and every particular case study have one thing in common. All of them try to locate the link to official diplomacy and the modality of interaction between the two tracks. According to a study by the University of Southern California, there is not one, but many ways to define public diplomacy. However, whichever way Track 2 diplomacy is conceptualized it is still based on a government's indirect outreach to a certain foreign public with a view to promote concrete foreign policy interests. That said, it should still be stressed that this additional channel of communication is not established to spread propaganda or misinformation, but is rather set to engage the opposite side in a two-way exchange of information and dialogue.<sup>92</sup>

Since the mid 90s there have been repeated attempts by international mediators "to engage" civil societies in Track 2 Armenian-Turkish talks. The report prepared by the European Parliament after the failure to ratify the Zurich Protocols singles out the importance of Track 2 initiatives and institutionalized contacts between the civil societies of Turkey and Armenia. It also gives an interesting analysis and description of the relations between the state and society in Turkey with regard to its own history and the problem of addressing it without prejudice:

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<sup>92</sup> See Popiolkowski, Joseph J., and Cull, Nicholas J. (eds), *Public Diplomacy, Cultural Interventions & the Peace Process in Northern Ireland: Track Two to Peace?* (Los Angeles: USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School & Figuera Press, 2009). [Available at <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/media/Track%20Two%20to%20Peace%20FINAL.pdf>, consulted June 5, 2013

“Contrary to the state and the bureaucracy, the society is a natural actor of the policies of memory. In order to be perennial, substantial and coherent, policies of memory need societal dynamics, whatever the capacity of the society to influence the lawmaker is. In the Turkish case this assertion is even more tangible.”<sup>93</sup>

The report outlines three main reasons for the aforementioned assertion. First, it concludes that a society will not be able to remember its past without prejudice, since it was the very state of the Republic of Turkey that deprived the public of past memories and virtually “lobotomised it”. Second, the Ottoman and later Turkish successive governments have embarked upon the “dememorisation campaign” disseminating the views and writings by those authors, who never deviated from the “official denialists narrative”. They did that with a view “to justify the massive seizure of property and wealth” and “to excuse” the mass killings and deportation of Armenians for “holy national interests”. Third, to have any chance of success one needs to probe into and address societal sub-consciousness, which “is anchored in the very core of society to bear any value”, and, therefore, cannot be guided by the so called state or national interests.<sup>94</sup> In academic literature the phenomenon of Track 2 diplomacy is considered to have come into existence during the last 30-40 years. It is usually defined and described as an auxiliary mechanism used to support official talks, “particularly where intractable identity-based conflicts have proven resistant to official negotiation efforts. Such initiatives are often described as interventions in which representatives from communities in conflict are brought together by an unofficial third party to consider the underlying roots of the conflict and means for its positive transformation”.<sup>95</sup>

While this “unofficial third party” can be an NGO, a think tank, an academic institution or retired diplomats, the role of the state or even states behind them is still very important. However, Track 2 or Track 1.5 mediators, by and large, are not directly representing the state they are from, but rather the state’s political, security or economic interests. On the one hand, it

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<sup>93</sup> European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, Policy Department, Briefing, Turkey-Armenia Relations, p.10, October, 2013, available at: [http://www.iris-france.org/docs/kfm\\_docs/docs/observatoire-pol-etrangere-europe/1-expo-afetnt-2013-433710en.pdf](http://www.iris-france.org/docs/kfm_docs/docs/observatoire-pol-etrangere-europe/1-expo-afetnt-2013-433710en.pdf), last visited November 21, 2014

<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> Davies, J and E. Kaufman. *Eds, Second Track Citizen’s Diplomacy. Lahman, Boulder, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002*



gives them (the mediators/facilitators) the indirect backing of the state with a higher degree of flexibility in decision-making. On the other hand, conflicting parties often perceive them as unofficial representatives of the state. Meanwhile, the state behind Track 2 and Track 1.5 mediators manages to avoid a very important problem, the one that Track 1 mediators are always in danger of facing, both internationally and domestically. This is the problem of responsibility, which always comes to the fore in the case of diplomatic failures to facilitate the negotiations between conflicting parties.

In the international mediation of Turkey-Armenia Track 1, 1.5 and Track 2 negotiations the sensitivity to failures is very high. Consequently the question of direct responsibility not only for possible failures, but also for being involved in the negotiation process itself is so important for international mediators. According to Esra Çuhadar and Burcu Gültekin Punsman, since 1995 there has been a sustainable rise of Turkish-Armenian civil society initiatives despite some interruptions.<sup>96</sup> It is no accident that the beginning of this rise coincided with the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

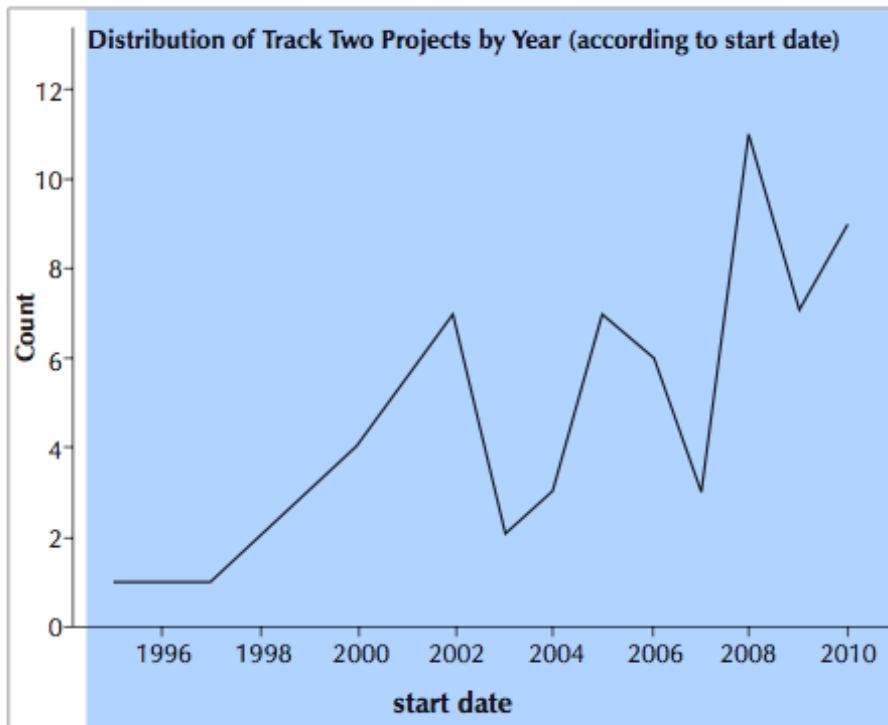
While international mediators, the US in particular, were taking the first steps to broker Armenian-Turkish Track 1 talks, they got simultaneously involved in the facilitation of public diplomacy projects between the two countries through various NGOs and academic institutions. Çuhadar and Punsman present interesting chronological dynamics of the intensification and downturn of these initiatives in the 2000s: “the first upsurge was observed in 2001, the second one in 2005, and the final one in 2008.”<sup>97</sup> In between these active Track 2 negotiation rounds, as if by the law of the pendulum, there were lengthy periods of inactivity, which can be accounted for by several “external factors”. One of them is “the availability of funding”<sup>98</sup> - the other is the progress or the absence of it in official negotiations:

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<sup>96</sup> Çuhadar, Esra, Gültekin, Burcu Punsman, Reflecting on the Two Decades of Bridging the Divide: Taking Stock of Turkish-Armenian Civil Society Activities, pp.14-15, TEPAV Yayınları, No:62, Ocak 2012

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Ibid



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It should be noted that given the recent history of genocide recognition and direct and indirect efforts against it by executive authorities and various NGOs in third countries, Armenian Diaspora organizations have become extremely sensitive and even suspicious about any Track 2 international mediation initiative. Raffi Kalfayan, an international lawyer and Former Secretary General of International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) points to the growing diversification of financial resources behind these initiatives, singling out not only the European Union and the United States, but also Armenian and Turkish private organizations and foundations. These resources were mainly allocated to support intercultural and intercommunity dialogues.<sup>100</sup>

In other words, these joint programs would have been virtually impossible to implement were it not for a consistent, target-oriented support either by third parties (international mediators and facilitators) or by local government or private institutions. While it is hard to assess the immediate and long-term impact of such initiatives, the early reactions to them are quite ambiguous. Whereas on the one hand they are meant as confidence building measures

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p.15

<sup>100</sup> Kalfayan, Raffi, REPAIR, 2015: *Focus on Reparations of the Armenian Genocide*, February 12, 2015, available at: <http://repairfuture.net/index.php/en/armenian-genocide-recognition-and-reparations-standpoint-of-armenian-diaspora/2015-focus-on-reparations-for-the-armenian-genocide>, accessed April 15, 2015

within the general framework of the peace-building process, on the other, they could bring about new suspicions and questions posed to international mediators and sponsors. In this respect the latter should not turn a blind eye to the “revisionist propaganda” and “political-judicial activism of Turkish para-statal groups”, which were launched in France against the supporters of the Armenian cause in the National Assembly.<sup>101</sup>

Track 2 diplomacy is also free and flexible to adopt and implement any methodology and strategy modifying them whenever necessary without having to deal with usual bureaucracy. Esra Çuhadar and Burcu Gültekin Punsmann are of the opinion that public diplomacy may not only vary as far as the mediation methodology is concerned, but also with regard to the participants of the negotiation process.

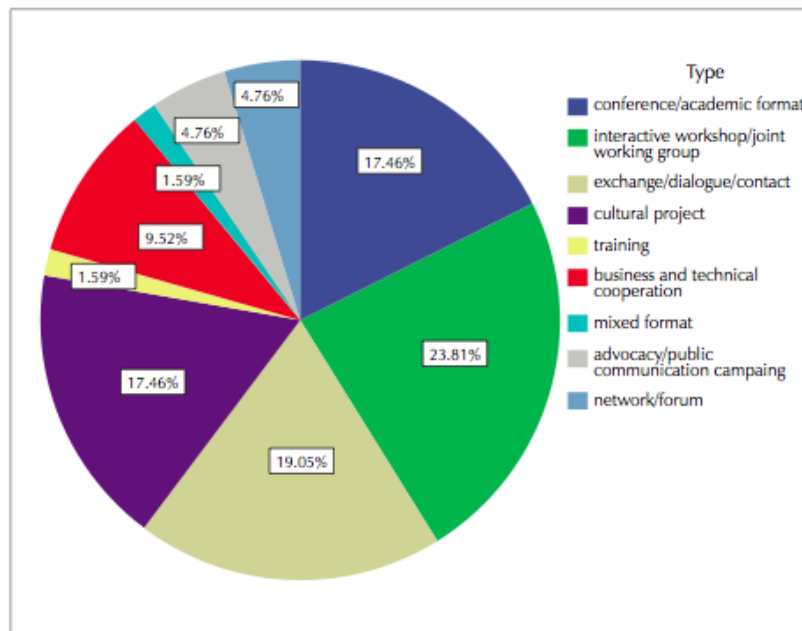
The meetings between societal representatives of the conflicting parties are organized the way that would allow sharing *historical narratives* with a view to come up with different scenarios of reconciliation. The main objective is confidence building, diversification of communication channels paving the way for current or future Track 1 talks to come to formal agreements, or at least, to provide a framework or an umbrella for the normalization of relations between the two countries.

The polarized positions and opinions are being reconciled within the Track 2 format, so that official negotiations would only have to deal with outstanding issues.<sup>102</sup> Çuhadar and Punsmann present an interesting diagram of the distribution of Track 2 initiatives according to the fields of activity and participating actors:

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> Çuhadar, Esra, Gültekin, Burcu Punsmann, Ibid, p. 13-14



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In the late 90s public diplomacy actors started to actively participate in Armenian-Turkish normalization and reconciliation talks. Track 2 level, first in the form of modest academic initiatives and then as regular contacts between Armenian and Turkish businessmen got a jumpstart in 1997. Burcu Gültekin and other Turkish academics go as far as to define the late 90s-early 2000s time period in Turkish –Armenian relations as “*the TABDC years*”. The Turkish- Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC), an organization co-established in Istanbul and Yerevan in May 1997 and also registered in New York, was the first institutionalized public diplomacy initiative to open a Track 2 channel of communication between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>104</sup>

The real increase and diversification of civil society initiatives between Armenia and Turkey started to come to the fore in the early 2000s. This particular timing can be accounted for by several factors. First, this was the period when Track 1 Armenian-Turkish talks were in a mutually and tacitly agreed limbo. While occasional meetings between high-ranking Armenian and Turkish representatives would take place within different multilateral formats, neither Ankara nor Yerevan took any risk to engage into substantive official negotiations. Meanwhile,

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p.29

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p.16

international mediators, the US in particular, taking note of the deadlock on Track 1, began to concentrate their efforts and funding on designing and supporting Track 2 initiatives. According to Turkish academics various grants were allocated, sponsored and launched by international mediators “in the liberal context which developed after the elections of 2002 in Turkey, which was perceived as a harbinger for new prospects for the future of relations between Turkey and Armenia as well. Throughout 2001 and 2003, more than a dozen Track Two diplomacy projects between Armenia and Turkey were implemented, mostly with the support of the US State Department and under the supervision of the Center for Global Peace of the American University in Washington D.C.”<sup>105</sup>

When in a strategically important region the geographical border is closed between neighbors, and when there is an obvious lack of initiative by one of the parties to establish diplomatic relations without preconditions, the mediators begin looking for indirect ways to bring the conflicting sides together. In the economy driven world contacts between businessmen based on mutual anticipation of future benefits often prove to be one of the shortest venues to normalize relations between countries in conflict. When Track II diplomacy is taken up by businessmen the most frequently asked questions usually are: a) whether economic contacts can be established separately from political relations; b) whether the political tensions between the two countries exclude any possibility of business exchanges and c) whether the governments of the two countries would generally agree that their businessmen can be Track 2 negotiators/mediators with a view to assist official talks or pave the way for them in the future.<sup>106</sup>

It is common knowledge that under current political circumstances Track 2 business diplomacy is utterly impossible in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution, because of repeated violations of the ceasefire and Azerbaijan’s belligerent policy. As for the status of the Armenian-Turkish standoff, in the post-independence years there have not been insurmountable obstacles for different initiatives of public diplomacy, contacts between businessmen included. Countries

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, pp. 17-18

<sup>106</sup> Punsmann-Gültekin, Bursu, TABDC European Coordinator, THE STAKES OF THE OPENING OF TURKISH-ARMENIAN BORDER, The cross-border contacts between Armenia and Turkey, pp.8-9, French Institute of Anatolian Studies, Research Program on Turkey- Caucasus – Istanbul October, 2002, available at: <http://www.tabdc.org/wp-content/uploads/THE-STAKES-OF-THE-OPENING-OF-TURKISH-ARMENIAN-BORDER.pdf>, consulted June 21, 2013

that do not have diplomatic relations and are past the stage of active conflict need to institutionalize back-door business channels, subordinating political considerations to mutual economic interests. This is a pragmatic approach that allows discussing and projecting economic benefits without political preconditions. In such cases a roadmap of commercial ties is drawn, which is put on a more solid ground than the existing political negotiations. The position of businessmen, therefore, is, as a rule, much more flexible and, more importantly, could have a potential impact on the future political decision-making. In this regard, in 1997, institutionalization of economic relations between Armenia and Turkey was discussed within the framework the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Summit in Istanbul. It was then that a group of Turkish and Armenian businessmen from transport and shipment sectors, who had worked together in the early 90s to deliver US humanitarian assistance to Armenia before the border was closed, came forward with the idea to establish a Turkish-Armenian Business Council.<sup>107</sup> While we have a classic example of business diplomacy between the two countries here, the backstage facilitation role by a third party is also quite obvious.

TARC was established at a much later stage. It was undoubtedly the dominant public diplomacy initiative in the contemporary history of Armenian-Turkish relations. The role of the third party, distinct from the establishment of TABC was much more visible. This initiative had been conceived within the framework of “the Clinton’s administration’s Track 2 Program on Turkey and the Caucasus”.<sup>108</sup> When the parties met in Geneva in July 2001, the format had already been set. The 10-member Commission included former diplomats and scholars from Turkey and Armenia. David Philips, a Columbia University professor and adviser to the State Department, was the mediator between the parties and coordinator of TARC. Alexander Arzoumanian, David Hovhannissian, Van Z. Krikorian and Andranik Migranian represented the Armenian side. The Turkish side included Gunduz Aktan, Ustun Erguder, Sadi Erguvenç, Ozdem Sanberk, Ilter Turkmen and Vamik D. Volkan. David Philips published two books “Unsilencing the Past” and “Diplomatic History” dedicated to the chronology and substance of the TARC activities,

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid

<sup>108</sup> PICTURE STORY Armenia-Turkey: The Great Debate, p.107, August 2009, available at: [www.esiweb.org](http://www.esiweb.org), consulted April 11, 2013

which help to understand the peculiarities of Armenian-Turkish public diplomacy.<sup>109</sup>

It is not surprising that after years of silence and failure to recognize the Armenian Genocide public diplomacy initiatives offered by the United States would stir up mixed, even conflicting emotions among the Armenian-American community. The Clinton administration tried to mitigate negative reactions to these initiatives by elevating its role as a mediator in the Nagorno Karabagh negotiations. The Bush administration placed the main focus of its policy and Track 1 diplomacy in the South Caucasus on Georgia, which was considered to be a new island of democracy in that region. It continued to keep the mediation of Turkish-Armenian relations within the Track 2 format. The Obama administration synthesized President Clinton's and President Bush's approaches to the region, simultaneously upgrading the level of US mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement.<sup>110</sup>

When TARC was established both negotiating sides were under great pressure domestically. Questions were raised first and foremost with regard to the composition of the commission. In Armenia's case the situation was difficult for two reasons. First, the reactions from the Diaspora, Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and its political advocacy branch the Armenian National Committee (ANC) in particular, were quite negative. Second, while in the Turkish Foreign Service system all former high-ranking diplomats continue to be affiliated with the Foreign Ministry, in Armenia's case, once a diplomat is out, there is no modality or pattern regulating the government's relations with a former official. This point becomes all the more valid, if we take into account that former Foreign Minister Alexander Arzoumanian, one of the TARC members, had been a most outspoken critic of the ruling administration in Armenia. The situation became even more ambiguous by the inclusion into TARC of Ambassador David Hovhannissian, a high-ranking Armenian Foreign Ministry official who had joined the commission not as an acting diplomat but as a university professor. More questions were asked, when he was forced to resign from the Ministry of Foreign Ministry, which tried to distance itself from the initiative it had definitely given a green light to.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> Jos Boonstra, Neil Melvin, *Challenging the South Caucasus Security Deficit*, p. 11, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), 2011

It was obvious that America's Track II mediators needed a guaranteed back channel to Track 1. While on the Turkish side there was no such problem because of the system based on centuries of diplomatic tradition, for Armenia unconventional solutions were offered to establish a communication line with its government.

Dr. Moorad Mooradian gave an interesting account of the establishment of the commission, which threw light upon some aspects of the methodology of American mediation. The American side tried to do early damage control anticipating and preventing potential negative reactions from Russia to the establishment of TARC. The inclusion and active participation in TARC of Andranik Mihranian, an ethnic Armenian from Russia was not coincidental. An adviser to President Yeltzin and President Putin had a mission to accomplish. He was quite vocal about the constraints of reconciliation and the changeable progress of negotiations giving numerous interviews on how TARC coexisted and communicated with Track 1 diplomacy. Mihranian repeatedly emphasized that TARC had been a State Department project, which received tacit support from the governments of both Turkey and Armenia at the "highest levels of leadership". The latter agreed to establish communication channels to hold regular consultations with their sides of the Commission to avoid controversy and issues that could undermine the negotiations. According to Mihranian the governments of both countries backpedalled from their initial commitments.<sup>111</sup> He also mentioned that Ambassador David Hovhannissian, who had been working for the Foreign Ministry of Armenia, "at the time of TARC's formation, was the direct liaison for the RoA, while former RoT officials on the Commission performed a similar function for the RoT."<sup>112</sup> The other Armenian member of the commission Van Krikorian, a U.S. citizen, stated: "There is no question that they [Turkish TARC members] were in constant contact with the government".<sup>113</sup> Taking into account the composition and the modus operandi of the Reconciliation Commission, it would be too simplistic to define TARC as Track II diplomacy. Despite the fact that modality of cooperation between the states and their retired diplomats, academics and public figures was different in Turkey and Armenia, TARC is a classic example of what modern political science describes as Track 1.5.

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<sup>111</sup> Mooradian, Moorad, *Reconciliation: A Case Study of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission*, Working Paper N 24, March 2004, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

<sup>113</sup> Cited in Mooradian, *Washington Times*, July 17, 2001



### ***2.3 The increase of rapprochement initiatives - Evolution of traditional political mind-set in the Diaspora - Reasonable limits of political pragmatism in Armenia***

A significant increase of Track 2 initiatives coincided with the intensification of Track 1 dialogue and international mediation since the preparatory stages of *football diplomacy*. The powerful impulse to Armenian-Turkish public diplomacy was given in 2005, when PM Erdoğan and President Kocharian exchanged letters stating their position on reconciliation and normalization of relations between the two countries. It is not surprising that the most recent increase in Track 2 efforts could be traced back to the year of 2008 as it coincided with the onset of *football diplomacy*. Public diplomacy continued to be on the rise in 2010 and despite the failure to ratify these documents “were still on the historic high” compared with the early and mid 90s.<sup>114</sup> Although such attempts had also been made in the past, PM Erdoğan’s letter to President Kocharian sent on April 10, 2005 to coincide with the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was the first official document that applied the methodology of combining the elements of reconciliation and normalization in one negotiation format. International mediators, Switzerland in particular, would accept it as a *fait accompli* without going into the potential risks of such diplomatic undertaking. The main purpose of the one page letter was not the normalization process between the two neighboring countries, i.e. the opening of the common border or establishment of diplomatic relations, but a proposal to create a joint commission of historians.<sup>115</sup>

According to Vartan Oskanian, Erdoğan’s letter to Kocharian was written with the sole purpose to mislead Europe, sending a message to Brussels that Turkey was ready to engage into

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<sup>114</sup> Boonstra, Ibid, p.18

“I believe that, as leaders of our countries, our primary duty is to leave to our future generations a peaceful and friendly environment in which tolerance and mutual respect shall prevail. These views are also shared by the leader of our main opposition party, Mr. Deniz Baykal, the Chairman of Republican People’s Party (CHP). In this connection, we are extending an invitation to your country to establish a joint group consisting of historians and other experts from our two countries to study the developments and events of 1915 not only in archives of Turkey and Armenia but also in the archives of all relevant third countries and share their findings with the international public. I believe that such an initiative would shed light on a disputed period of history and also constitute a step towards contributing to the normalization of relations between our countries.”<sup>115</sup> Available at: [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/text-of-the-letter-of-h\\_e\\_-prime-minister-recep-tayyip-erdogan-addressed-to-h\\_e\\_-robert-kocharian.pdf](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/text-of-the-letter-of-h_e_-prime-minister-recep-tayyip-erdogan-addressed-to-h_e_-robert-kocharian.pdf), accessed January 11, 2010

constructive dialogue with Armenia on most arduous issues.<sup>116</sup>

In the early and mid 90s, the issue of the international recognition of the Genocide was not on newly independent Armenia's foreign policy agenda. Instead, it continued to be actively pursued and advocated by the Diaspora. The latter, dispossessed of the Homeland, has been the living proof and direct result of mass deportation and killings of Armenians in Turkey during WWI. The fact that the Republic of Armenia was not directly involved in the Genocide recognition by the parliaments of third countries (some call it a Machiavellian distribution of roles, others ascribe it to unpopular pragmatism of President Levon Ter-Petrossian) deprived Turkey of a diplomatic maneuver to approach the Armenian government and demand the establishment of the joint commission of historians to address the events of 1915-1918.

Levon Ter-Petrossian was often criticized, particularly within the Diaspora, for not making the Armenian cause the backbone of his foreign policy. However, during his years in office the Genocide recognition campaign was never turned into a bargaining chip in international negotiations. Nor was this issue of strategic importance used for tactical purposes that could have given Turkey a chance to put forward another precondition for opening the border with Armenia, or to make a diplomatic attempt to re-write history. The Genocide was viewed as an indisputable fact that in due time, after the relations between the two countries have been normalized, must be addressed by politicians, not historians.

The advantage described above was lost when the administration of the second Armenian president decided to change course and make the genocide recognition a prioritized item in Armenia's foreign policy agenda. Moreover, President Kocharian and Foreign Minister Oskanian tried to use this issue for tactical purposes to neutralize the one-sided Turkish support of Azerbaijan within the process of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution. The controversy and conflicting views of different European capitals on Turkey's admission to the EU created "favorable" conditions for this new trend in Armenia's policy. Due to the successful lobbying efforts of the Diaspora, now openly supported by the Armenian government in the early and mid 2000s, the parliaments of several European countries and Canada officially recognized the Genocide of 1915. Although it is true that historical justice was being restored, because of

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, Oskanian, , p.153

Armenian government's high-profile involvement in that process, in 2005 Turkey ventured to do something it had failed to do in the 90s. Having weathered the storm of the Genocide recognition by France, Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, Poland, Canada and a number of other countries, in his letter to President Kocharian, PM Erdoğan offered to establish a joint commission of historians to look into the events of 1915, thus putting into question the very fact of the Genocide. It was not something new, of course, as Turkey always used different versions of this offer as an argument in the talks with the countries, the legislative bodies of which were about to discuss the events of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire. But this was the first time it was done at the highest level as a joint proposal of the Turkish ruling and opposition parties and directly communicated to the President of Armenia. This was also an attempt to create an impression within international community that by establishing such a commission Turkey is prepared to look into its past without prejudice.

In his response letter to the Turkish Prime Minister, published by Wikileaks, Robert Kocharian pointed out that the government officials, not historians were responsible for the normalization of bilateral relations.<sup>117</sup>

Three things about the response of the Armenian President need to be noted. First, a clear separation line is drawn between the processes of reconciliation and normalization of bilateral relations. While Kocharian's argument is strong, this kind of approach would have been more robust, were it not for the changes he had made in Armenia's foreign policy agenda described above. Second, he put the processes of normalization and reconciliation into cause-and-effect sequence. Third, Kocharian's "no" to Erdoğan's offer was *loud*, but not quite *clear*. Stating that politicians should never "delegate responsibility" of normalizing relations between

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"There are neighboring countries, especially on the continent of Europe, that had a hard past on which they have different views. Nevertheless, it didn't prevent them from having open borders, normal and diplomatic relations, representatives in the capitals, even if they still keep on discussing their disputable issues. Your proposal to address the past can't be effective if it does not refer to the present and the future. To start an effective dialog, we should create a favorable political environment. The governments are responsible for the development of bilateral relations, and we have no right to delegate that responsibility to the historians. Thus, we have proposed and we again propose to establish normal relations between our countries without preconditions. In this regard, an inter-governmental commission can be formed to discuss the outstanding issues to resolve them and maintain mutual understanding."<sup>117</sup> Available at: <http://www.yerevanreport.com/83181/wikileaks-publishes-robert-kocharyans-letter-prime-minister-erdogan/>, accessed June 12, 2012

countries to historians, he still leaves the door open by offering to form “an inter-governmental commission... to discuss outstanding issues”.

It is difficult to assess whether the discussion of the Genocide was on Kocharian’s list of “outstanding issues”, but in the long run, the Turkish side was able to interpret this idea to its own advantage.

The support of international mediators for the new Track 1 negotiation format that now combined the elements of both normalization and reconciliation was immediately secured. In 2009, the terms “inter-governmental commission” and “a sub-commission on historical dimension” surfaced up in the text of the Zurich Protocols as a manifestation of transitional justice: “The Bush administration was quick to support Erdogan’s proposal for a joint history commission; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Laura Kennedy endorsed it during a visit to Ankara on May 5, 2005. Switzerland and other countries acted similarly”.<sup>118</sup>

It should be noted that transitional justice implies certain ambiguity, which can stir up negative emotions. Therefore, it has to be adjusted to each and every reconciliation case. In his essay “*The Past as a Prison. The Past as a Different Future*”, Dr. Gerard Libaridian wrote:

“The Turkish side, and especially officials and policy makers must realize that, however the events of 1915-1917 are characterized, there is no doubt that they brought to an end the collective existence of the Armenian people on their ancestral homeland. The violent, abrupt and permanent break in the long history of a nation, the sheer finality of it, was apt to make survivors feel death for generations. The passage of time has only deepened the sense of a collective death ”<sup>119</sup>

The thing is that in the present circumstances, particularly in the context of *football diplomacy*, the Armenian perception of “the denial of the genocide” extends to the very concept of transitional justice advocated by international mediators, which is seen as a refined method of hiding the historical truth.

It is quite natural that the negative perception described above was more wide spread in the Diaspora than in Armenia proper. This is because the international mediators, by commission or omission, fell into the Turkish trap of including the basic component of reconciliation into Track 1 normalization talks. This was a serious methodological mistake. By

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<sup>118</sup> Phillips, David, *Diplomatic History: The Turkey-Armenia Protocols*, p.23, 2012

<sup>119</sup> Libaridian, Gerard, “*The Past as a Prison. The Past as a Different Future*”, posted at [http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi\\_turkey\\_tpq\\_id\\_45.pdf](http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_id_45.pdf). last consulted December 12, 2011

that time the Diaspora had already become oversensitive to the unexpected twists of public diplomacy, when TARC applied to the International Center for Transitional Justice in New York to decide the applicability of the term genocide to the 1915-1918 events in the Ottoman Empire.

Dr. Safrastyan singles out the importance of a third party factor in Armenia-Turkey relations:

“The factor of a third party plays rather significant role in the Armenian-Turkish relations. Among the main actors are the USA, Russia and the Armenian Diaspora. The last one is more significant, in our opinion. The Armenian community in the USA has powerful levers to influence the process of the Armenian-Turkish interstate relations, first and foremost, the strong ethnic lobby in Washington, and second, financial resources”.<sup>120</sup>

For the Diaspora the memory of *collective death* and the question of the restoration of historical justice became a means of self-preservation and nation building in exile.

In the early 1990s, after Armenia had regained independence, it was natural that the Diaspora would aspire to assume a role in nation building in the homeland. According to Rethink Institute in Washington DC, Diaspora organizations in the United States and Europe, pursuing various interests play an important role in international politics and public diplomacy. At times they even tend to compete with each other trying to exert maximum influence on the political decision-making in their historical homelands.<sup>121</sup> To reach their goals they spent a lot of financial and political resources. Armenian organizations across Europe and very influential Armenian-American advocacy groups have spared neither effort nor expense to have their say in the difficult relationship between Yerevan and Ankara.<sup>122</sup>

Although incomparably less influential, the Turkish Diaspora was also trying to become a factor within the framework of Armenian-Turkish relations and international mediation. Turkish advocacy groups in the US and Europe became much more active on the eve of the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. In Western capitals they tried to make their efforts more visible, capitalizing on the new image of Turkey, which in the last decade aspired to emerge as

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<sup>120</sup> Safrastyan, *Ibid*, p. 7

<sup>121</sup> Osipova, Yelena, Bilgin, Fevzi, REVISITING THE ARMENIAN-TURKISH RECONCILIATION, January 2013, available at: <http://www.rethinkinstitute.org/files/Armenian%20Turkish%20Reconciliation.pdf>, consulted February 11, 2014

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*

political and economic power in the Black Sea region and beyond. The Turkish Diaspora was also aided by Azerbaijani advocacy groups,<sup>123</sup> which apart from pursuing their own national interests in the US and Europe, allocated additional resources to promote Ankara's interests.

Transition from bipolarity to a unipolar system and the changing architecture of the European institutions created new conditions to look into the dark pages in the common history of the Old World in the XX century. The Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire was among them. It surfaced up first and foremost in the context of political discussions on the issue of Turkey's admission to the EU. The rest of the world was also beginning to address the issue of the forgotten Genocide. The spell of the long decades of international silence was finally lifted due to the accumulated effort of well-organized Armenian communities around the world, and the very fact of the establishment of the new Armenian state after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. But the inherited memories of "collective death" suffered individually, remained an inalienable part of national identity in the Diaspora and to a lesser extent in the homeland.

However, the situation with regard to ambiguous, at times negative perceptions of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement without any preconditions (the mandatory recognition of the 1915 Genocide by Turkey included) is changing in the Diaspora as well. This change is slower and psychologically more difficult than in Armenia proper. Yet, evolution of traditional mind-set in Armenian communities around the world 25 years after independence is tangible. In this respect, French-Armenian scholars, M. Marian and C. Makarian wrote:

"Two new realities are emerging. First, Armenia has acceded not only to independence, but is also developing its own diplomacy. Second, Turkey is increasingly complex, split between its official politics, which is still reluctant to admit the realities of the past, and an increasing public arena in which more and more voices are expressing their apologies to Armenians. The Diaspora is starting to take note of these changes, by showing more active solidarity with Turkish Armenians (as shown, for example, by the intervention of Armenian lawyers from France during the trial of the assassins of DjnK). Also, part of the Diaspora is letting Yerevan lead the increasingly complex relations with Ankara."<sup>124</sup>

On the other hand, continuous denial of the Genocide by successive Turkish governments make

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Marian, M. and Makarian, S., A Historical Perspective: The French Armenian Diaspora and Turkey, p. 14, Note Franco-Turque, N 5, January 2011, Institut français des relations internationales (Ifri), Programme Turquie Contemporaine

the perception of modern Turkey in the Armenian Diaspora still very much associated the events of 1915. This is why initial reactions to mediation by third countries, especially the ones where Armenian communities currently reside, despite the obvious psychological changes mentioned above, are predominantly negative. This is where the new realities come into discord with collective memory. In this regard, the example of the French-Armenian community is also very interesting:

“Paradoxically, when the Armenian genocide was finally, officially recognized by France in 2001, a surge in identity occurred. It arose in parallel to the need for justice, reinforcing the case for indictment. It is this painful context that today weighs on the perceptions which every citizen of Armenian origin may have of modern Turkey: if it is understood that the latter cannot be directly held responsible for what happened nearly a century ago, then it may be asked why the Turkish authorities are not able to condemn the genocide categorically.”<sup>125</sup>

For understandable reasons the situation was somewhat different in Soviet Armenia. First, with the suppressed freedom of speech imposed by the totalitarian regime, it was virtually impossible to address the past history and conduct any independent public activity without Moscow’s consent. However, even in Armenia proper, the collective memory was so strong that in 1965 the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Genocide was commemorated by a mass public demonstration of thousands of people, who came to the streets of Yerevan to demand historical justice.

Second, distinct from the Diaspora, Soviet Armenians continued to live on their land and did not have the problem of preserving their national identity. Awareness of the tragic past was intertwined with the Soviet destiny shared with other nations and amended by a rare opportunity to finally live in relatively peaceful conditions, building some semblance of independent statehood within the administrative borders of the Soviet Union. All this seemed to be a God-given grace after centuries of persecution, man-made disasters and stateless existence.

When in 1991 Armenia declared independence the idea of statehood became palpable. The tragic past began to be viewed in the context of the present and future.

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid

This was also the time of regional identity changes. Unipolar geopolitics transfigured the Soviet era Trans-Caucasus into the South Caucasus. This was not a mere change of a geographical name, but a result of the global security reconfiguration.<sup>126</sup>

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, along with other neighbors Turkey became an active regional player, to the extent that in the late 90s another geopolitical name - Black Sea/South Caucasus was tossed into circulation. However, it makes little sense before the Turkish border with Armenia has been opened.

While for the Armenian Diaspora the international recognition of the Genocide has by and large remained an issue of restoration of historical justice, for Armenia proper, since the first day of independence the eventual acceptance of the past by the government of Turkey has primarily been viewed as a national security guarantee of “never again”.

The new twist of the Armenian Genocide denial by present-day Turkey should be considered in the general context of geopolitical changes in the unipolar world. On the one hand, it is the consequence of the 100 years of silence, interrupted by occasional international recognitions of the crime in question. On the other hand, it seems to be the result of a primal fear of not being seen *civilized enough* at the threshold of the EU membership.

Having survived the brief post-WWII scare of being held accountable for the first genocide of the 20th century, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union Turkey was suddenly alerted by the unpredictability of Armenia’s return to the international community. The nature of future relations of the newly independent country with its multi-million Diaspora was also a cause of concern for Ankara. To crown it all, the unexpected military victory of the Karabagh self-defense forces against Azerbaijan, made the Turkish government even more uncomfortable.

The aggressive negation of the past eventually became a new political theology. It was no longer a matter of indoctrination and propaganda used for domestic or external consumption. The new sectarian form of denial is protected by Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which

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<sup>126</sup> Note: See also Shougarian, Rouben, *From Near Abroad to the New Neighborhood...Less is More*, German Marshall Fund of the US, A New Transatlantic Strategy for the Black Sea region, 2004



envisages criminal persecution for any attempt to deviate from Ankara's official line with regard to the events of 1915-1918.

The policy of denial does not only radicalize the current Turkish stance towards Armenia, keeping the border between the two neighbors unilaterally closed, but also affects the societal mind-set, making the question of reconciliation between the two nations all the more difficult.

The traditional mind-set of perceiving Turkey as a permanent enemy was replaced by the policy of pragmatism in newly independent Armenia. Since the first days of independence, Yerevan has repeatedly stated that it is ready to normalize bilateral relations with Ankara without any preconditions, including the immediate recognition of the genocide by the latter. The short-lived independence of the first Armenian Republic in 1918-1920 followed by the 70 years of semi-statehood under Soviet Russia created the necessary conditions for the second republic to transcend the doom of "collective death" and focus on building a new future.

The much longer process of reconciliation between the two nations was subordinated to the priority of normalizing the bilateral relations between the two countries. To release "the past" from "prison" a dignified present had to be secured first. This kind of approach seemed to have made Armenia's position more flexible.

The problem was that modern Turkey did very little to de-link itself from the crimes of the Ottoman Empire. Just the contrary, its unilateral support of Azerbaijan in the war against Nagorno Karabagh and the blockade of Armenia were a clear indication of the fact that the psychological link with the past was still strong. The familiar hostility took new forms as Turkey itself remained in the prison of the old mind-set. It also compromised the position of those Armenian politicians who had the courage to graduate beyond the traditional perception of Ankara as a permanent enemy.

The new Armenian policy of pragmatism would have proved realistic were it not for the continuous Genocide denial in Turkey. The absence of positive response from Ankara to Yerevan's offer to establish relations without preconditions in the early 90s marginalized the validity of Armenia's pragmatism. Turkey was not only reckless to miss such a chance, but further radicalized its negotiating position conditioning the rapprochement with Armenia by the

resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict. It became obvious that Turkey would never open the border with Armenia until the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict had been resolved.

Hence, today, each and every new initiative supported by Turkey regarding the normalization of relations with Armenia is nothing but an imitation of political dialogue. This imitation pursues two concrete goals. First, it is a desperate attempt to stop the international recognition of the Genocide by sending a clear message to the rest of the world that a delicate reconciliation process is underway between the two neighbors, which must not be jeopardized by third countries. Second, Turkey's pretense of positive engagement in the dialogue with Armenia is a well-calculated attempt to play a more influential role in the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict and the Black Sea/ South Caucasus region at large.

In the midst of the *football diplomacy*, the AKP was preparing for national elections. Carol Migdalowitz drew legitimate parallels between the logic of the Turkish policy in Cyprus and Ankara's approach to the normalization of relations with Armenia. She analyzed the reasons behind the AKP's refusal to withdraw Turkey's troops from the island. Such a hardline policy was accounted for by the fact the AKP feared the internal opposition from the right wing, which could exploit any deal reached on the Cyprus issue. As a result, the AKP sacrificed its long-term interests of joining the EU putting a premium on domestic politics.<sup>127</sup>

The same logic was put to work within the framework of *football diplomacy* with Armenia. The sincerity of Turkey's intentions there became as questionable as its recent policy in Cyprus. Ankara's pro-active diplomacy in 2008 turned out to pursue tactical goals. In this respect it becomes clear why immediately after the signing of the Zurich Protocols Prime Minister Erdoğan conditioned the opening of the border with Armenia by the Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution. Just like with regard to the Cyprus issue, the AKP's position was predicated by domestic politics, and distinct from it, was also conditioned by pressures from Azerbaijan. Therefore, it would be logical to conclude the normalization of relations with Armenia had not been on Turkey's agenda when it engaged in *football diplomacy*, but it was an attempt to mislead the international community.<sup>128</sup>

The settlement of the Cyprus issue and rapprochement with Armenia were of secondary

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<sup>127</sup> Migdalowitz, Ibid

<sup>128</sup> Ibid

importance for Turkey's domestic politics. Furthermore, they could potentially jeopardize the AKP's drive for power. Deals between conflicting parties presuppose compromises, which political rivals like the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) might have used to their advantage during national elections.<sup>129</sup>

Similarly, Armenia's *proactive* foreign policy was also driven by external and internal factors. While its main goal was to put Armenia on the geopolitical map, the need to overcome domestic turmoil after 2008 was also important. Normalizing relations with Turkey appeared to be the right venue to pursue these goals. However, when the pragmatic arguments of the 90s are re-included into Armenia's policy of the present without being adjusted to the new geopolitical realities, what once used to be pragmatism might become outdated.<sup>130</sup>

Thus any international mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations had to take into account three factors: the Turkish policy of denial, Diasporan memory of collective death and Republic of Armenia's policy of pragmatism. The strategy of international mediators synthesized these three different standpoints, which later manifested in the concept of transitional justice.

#### ***2.4 False Parity and Transitional Justice - Evolution of US Interests in the Black Sea/South Caucasus Region - Failure of Mediation Initiatives***

"All of us believed that when you signed those protocols with Armenia in October 2009, the ninety-five years of lies surrounding 1915 were coming to an end, just as they had on the Kurdish issue. Could it be that when you signed those protocols you believed that you were going to come to a resolution while you continued the ninety-five year old policies of denial?"<sup>131</sup> The very concept of transitional justice is a perfect fit for Track 2 diplomacy. It has certain merits and might even have some positive effect on the Track 1 negotiations. Yet, it should never be incorporated into the government-to-government agenda of establishing

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid

<sup>130</sup> See also Shougarian, Rouben, *The Politics of Immaculate Misconception. The Ides of the Post-Secular World*, Gomidas Institute, London, 2013

<sup>131</sup> Akçam, Taner, Open letter to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Vice-Prime Minister Bülent Arınç. Posted at <http://www.hnn.us/articles/124474.html> , last consulted January 4, 2013

diplomatic relations between neighboring countries, as it happened during the proximity talks on the Turkish- Armenian protocols.

In the unipolar world political concepts like transitional justice create an intellectual framework for an endless debate on indisputable historical facts relegating them to the category of open-ended assumptions. On the one hand, this new mediation methodology seems to be an attempt to bypass insurmountable obstacles and find short-term solutions for formidable problems, on the other, neglecting the root-causes of those problems could become a destabilizing factor, endangering the existing security balance between the countries in question.

Transitional justice can make sense and become effective only if the notion of transitional accountability is simultaneously introduced for the crimes of the past. Normalization of relations between the negotiating countries should not be a hostage to a much longer-term reconciliation process. Nor must it become a bargaining chip in an attempt to rewrite history.

Meanwhile, if we look beyond the suggested mediation terminology, it will become clear that it is not the noun “justice” that is being censored by the adjective “transitional”, but “truth”. The problem is that historical truth is a transcendental category. Therefore, it is immune to any form or modality of transition and change.

The operational tool of international mediation based upon the concept of transitional justice is the parity principle. In the unipolar world political categories have a tendency of acquiring new connotations and, at times, might change their meaning completely. The concepts of reconciliation and normalization of relations between countries in political conflict are mixed up in different negotiation formats. The notion of parity in modern mediation mistakes neutrality for objectivity. In our day and age, parity is not only a legitimate starting position in negotiations, but also the ultimate objective of the talks in question. When neutrality is a self-seeking goal, the starting position of mediators becomes prejudiced. We deal here with yet another re-shuffling of political notions as international facilitation is mistaken for mediation. In reality it is the former that has to stay neutral providing logistical and technical support to negotiating parties, while the latter must try to probe into the root causes of the conflict and aspire to be objective.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> See also: Shougarian, Rouben, *The Politics of Immaculate Misconception. The Ides of the Post-Secular World*, Gomidas Institute, London, 2013

Artificial parity is not a new phenomenon in international mediation. Yet, this negotiating principle has been on a considerable rise since the gradual transition from the bipolar world order to unipolarity. This, first and foremost, referred to historical conflicts, where there was no imminent threat that dormant standoffs might transgress into military confrontation. In such cases international mediators made an intellectual attempt to put everything on equal footing. The responsibility of former perpetrators and the claims of the survivors, the collective memories of victors and victims- everything was brought to a common denominator. Thus, in the present day, parity is no longer a legitimate starting negotiating position, but a preconceived outcome of future talks, which is bound to materialize as *transitional justice*. Such a position is usually driven by the vested interests of one of the conflicting parties. Therefore, this mediation methodology violates the parity principle itself. The inclusion of the provision on the establishment of a sub-commission of historians into the text of the Zurich Protocols is a demonstrative example of the false parity principle.

Among other reasons, the past failures of international mediation efforts around the world were usually accounted for by the double standard approach to conflicting parties, i.e. by inability or unwillingness to be objective. Presently, concurrent with the premium on parity double standards are coupled with a tendency of holding conflicting parties to lower standards.

Lower standards often lead to a compromised quality of international mediation, simplification of serious issues, superficiality and inadequate terminology of hastily drafted proposals. This is why the other side effect of transitional justice is a devaluation of legal notions and inadequate use of professional terminology. In this regard Ruben Safrastyan wrote:

“ Genocide is one of the most atrocious and shameful phenomena in the history of mankind, a condensed manifestation of absolute evil. In everyday life, any remembrance of a concrete case of inevitably stirs up emotional outbreak with moral assessments to follow. The word *genocide* by itself carries a mighty emotional charge. This must be the reason why, during the last decades, it has taken its niche in the lexicon of social and political figures, who, however, often use it groundlessly, as a grave accusation against the opponent-just to achieve political or propagandistic goals”.<sup>133</sup>

According to Safrastyan the judicial shortcoming of the definition of Genocide given by the UN Convention is that it fails to single out the role of the state responsible for the crime against

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<sup>133</sup> Safrastyan, Rouben, *Ottoman Empire. The Genesis of the Program of Genocide (1876-1920)*, Chapter I, p.16, National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies, Zangak-97, 2011

humanity. To crown it all, the notion of mass deportation, despite its grave consequences, is not encompassed in the general notion of Genocide.<sup>134</sup>

Legal ambiguity and selective implementation of the concept of transitional justice in connection with the Armenian Genocide by international mediators within the framework of Track I and II Armenian-Turkish diplomacy, are predicated by the desire to dilute the responsibility of the state of Turkey in 1915-1920 events. The false parity principle, which with the regard to Armenian-Turkish relations first manifested itself in the annual substitution of the word Genocide by legally non-binding terms in the April 24 statements made by different American presidents, was in 2008 taken up by the international mediators of *football diplomacy*. The latter did so by agreeing to promote Turkey's idea of establishing a joint sub-commission to address *historical dimension*, which was included in the text of the Zurich Protocols. This has been part and parcel of seasonal diplomacy, very much practiced not only by Turkey, but also by international mediators, especially before the onset of negotiations on the Armenian-Turkish Protocols.

### ***2.5 Transitional justice and Armenian exit strategy***

Adopted by the Supreme Council of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic on 23 August 1990, the Declaration of Independence says: "Aware of its historic responsibility for the destiny of the Armenian people engaged in the realization of the aspirations of all Armenians and the restoration of historical justice" [...] "The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia". "This Declaration, according to RA Constitution, recognizes as a basis the fundamental principles of the Armenian statehood and national aspirations".<sup>135</sup>

This approach was time and again voiced by the administration of the second Armenian president. On April 24, 1998 in a message to the Armenian people Kocharyan said: "We don't want to be the slaves of the past, but the way out will be when the world gives a right assessment of the past. Genocide recognition as an implementation of our claim will serve for the establishment of tranquility and peace in the region. Therefore, our priority issue today is, by

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid, p. 22

<sup>135</sup> Gasparyan, Lilit, Justice Seen from Armenia, REPAIR, October 17, 2014. Available at: <http://repairfuture.net/index.php/en/armenian-genocide-recognition-and-reparations-standpoint-of-armenia/genocide-justice-seen-from-armenia>, consulted December 2, 2014

consolidating all humanitarian efforts of all Armenians and the world, to establish victory of the historical justice and ensure our country's quiet development and strengthening".<sup>136</sup>

The point made by the Declaration of Independence on the Armenian Genocide was further developed and reiterated by the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia: "Armenia aspires for the universal recognition and condemnation, including by Turkey, of the Armenian Genocide, and sees it both as a restoration of an historical justice and as a way to improve the overall situation in the region, while also preventing similar crimes in the future."<sup>137</sup>

The third Armenian administration continued to build on what the Declaration of Independence defined as "the fundamental principles of the Armenian statehood and national aspirations". This was Armenia's perception and interpretation of the concept of transitional justice, reflected in President Sargsyan's remarks at an academic conference in 2010: "We are confident that the road from recognition to forgiveness, from justice to peace, as well as tolerance and coexistence have no alternative...The conference is also important in the context of developing defined approaches and conceptual documents on the elimination of the consequences of genocides..."<sup>138</sup>

The above-described point reflected the Declaration of Independence served as a legal basis for the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia on January 12, 2010. In fact, the entire exit strategy was built around the reference made to the Declaration of Independence and the preamble of Armenian Constitution: "The RA Constitutional Court also finds that the provisions of the Protocol on Development of Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey cannot be interpreted or applied in the legislative process and application practice of the Republic of Armenia as well as in the interstate relations in a way that would contradict the provisions of the Preamble to the RA Constitution and the requirements of Paragraph 11 of the Declaration of Independence of Armenia."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid

<sup>137</sup> Ibid

<sup>138</sup> Ibid

<sup>139</sup> The decision of the constitutional court of the republic of Armenia on the case on determining the issue of conformity with the constitution of the republic of Armenia of the obligations stipulated by the protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the republic of Armenia and the republic of turkey and by the protocol on development of relations between the republic of Armenia and the republic of turkey signed in Zurich on 10 October 2009, non-official translation, available at: <http://concourt.am/english/decisions/common/pdf/850.pdf>

The ruling of the Constitutional Court did not contradict the spirit of transitional justice. In reality, it did what the diplomats failed to do. By making the reference cited above, it separated the notions of normalization and reconciliation between the two countries. It is not surprising that despite the demonstrably negative, hysteric reaction from Turkey, the key mediator, the US State Department had little choice but to praise Armenia's position: "We view the court decision as a positive step forward in the ratification process of the normalization protocols between Turkey and Armenia," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon said in written comments sent to RFE/RL. "The court decision permits the protocols, as they were negotiated and signed, to move forward towards parliamentary ratification, and does not appear to limit or qualify them in any way."<sup>140</sup>

While Turkey tried to send a message to the international community that it was determined to normalize the relations with Armenia, one could still conclude that it was rather an imitation diplomatic activity and constructivism. Erdoğan's letter to Kocharian was written in 2005, when Turkey's negotiations with the EU were still on the rise. Ankara was also in need of a new image several years before the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The main mediators, the US and Switzerland also tried to use the momentum combining the elements of normalization and reconciliation in one negotiation package. Transitional justice was erroneously presumed to become a short-term solution for both Armenia and Turkey. It was never going to work. Eventually, paradoxical as it may sound, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia provided exit strategy from the *football diplomacy* not only for Armenia, but also for Turkey and international mediators.

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<sup>140</sup> US Embassy in the Republic of Armenia, The US Welcomes Court Ruling on Turkey, January 25, 2010, available at <https://armenia.usembassy.gov/news012510.html>, last visited October 11, 2014



## Chapter III

### ***3.1 Turkey's motivation to invite Switzerland as a mediator - The reasons behind Armenia's acceptance of the new mediation format***

Despite the eventual failure and negative side effects the Swiss mediation has been the most consistent and target-oriented diplomatic initiative to normalize the relations between Armenia and Turkey. It is also justified to define it as the Swiss-American mediation, taking into account the level of involvement, the amount of time and effort the Obama administration invested into the promotion of Armenia-Turkey Track 1 negotiations. While technically the process of the mediation/facilitation appeared to be flawless, the methodological and political shortcomings had predetermined the ambiguous, zero-sum outcome of the talks long before the signing ceremony in Zurich. This is why it is important to analyze the entire process of *football diplomacy* drawing parallels with the mediation of other international conflicts.

While Turkey was involved in international mediation activities working in close cooperation with Switzerland and Finland under the UN auspices, it also invited Switzerland to mediate a rapprochement with Armenia.

Before 2004, Ankara would only accept a limited EU role in brokering Turkish-Kurdish and Greek-Turkish issues. With regard to Ankara's decision to invite Switzerland as a mediator of proximity talks with Yerevan there were commentaries in Turkish media, which emphasized that Ankara invited the Swiss Foreign Ministry to mediate a difficult dialogue with Armenia, despite Turkey's traditional unwillingness to accept third-party brokers in its relations with neighbors. This was also an interesting step due to the fact that the Swiss Parliament not only recognized the Armenian Genocide, but also passed a special law penalizing the denial of the crime in question. Ankara's new approach to invite third parties to settle the conflict with one of its neighbors was concurrent with the AKP's own political ambitions to play a pivotal role of a "mediator" or "facilitator" worldwide.<sup>141</sup>

Why would Turkey choose Switzerland as a mediator? First, it was Switzerland's traditional neutrality and a reputation of an experienced facilitator in the last two centuries that

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<sup>141</sup> Hurriyet Daily News, Regional Mediator Turns to Swiss for Mediation, by Fulya Özerkan, 09/08/2009, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=regional-mediator-turns-to-swiss-for-mediation-2009-09-08>, last visited, December 14, 2014

predicated Turkey's choice. Second, it made Ankara look open-minded and ready to objectively address its past, sending a *timely* message to the international community several years before the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Third, the Swiss Parliament had already recognized the Armenian Genocide. The Swiss Foreign Ministry that had been opposed to that recognition by the legislative authority, felt obliged to do Turkey a favor agreeing to promote Erdoğan's idea of establishing the joint commission of historians.<sup>142</sup>

Armenia in its turn decided to accept the Swiss mediation for the following reasons. First, the opening of the border with Turkey, brokered by the Swiss and supported by the United States appeared to be a more or less realistic possibility compared with previous years. Second, conditionality and direct linkage with the progress in the Nagorno Karabagh negotiations was not as strong as it used to be in the mid 2000s. Third, after the presidential election of 2008, *pro-active* foreign policy that came to replace the over-cautious *complementarity* was seen as a means to put Armenia back on the international map, giving the authorities full credit for making hard geopolitical choices.

In fact, Yerevan's *pro-active* foreign policy turned out to be a good regional match with Ankara's *zero problems with neighbors*, especially in the context and timeframe of the Swiss/American mediation. The acceptance of the new negotiation format by Armenia was a tactical move to yield the initiative to Turkey. This also meant that Ankara had secured an initial advantage in influencing the agenda and setting up some of the rules of the upcoming negotiations.

In Armenia's recent history it was not the first time that its foreign policy tried to be all-inclusive and open to international mediation in the South Caucasus region. With regard to a completely different case, it's worth drawing a parallel with 1992, when Turkey became a member of the CSCE Minsk Group to negotiate the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh problem. Armenia, which then conducted the *policy of balance*, made no objection and accepted Turkey's participation in that mediation format. In doing so, it was guided by two important considerations. First, it was much safer to include Turkey into a clearly defined international

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<sup>142</sup> See also: Shougarian, Rouben, *Armenian-Turkish Diplomacy: Track I Failures and Track II Prospects*. Armenian Review 54, no. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2013)

mediation format with strict rules and responsibilities, than to leave it out of negotiations on Nagorno Karabagh, which could have made Ankara's policy towards Armenia and the South Caucasus at large less predictable. Second, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia needed to establish normal bilateral relations with all its neighbors, Turkey included. Direct contacts with Ankara within the framework of the CSCE/OSCE Minsk Group provided a good auxiliary venue for the diplomats of both countries to explore the prospects of future relations.

### **3.2 Swiss Mediation - Organic connection to TARC - Parallels between the mediation of the Oslo Accords and the Zurich Protocols**

Thomas de Waal singles out three main incentives for Turkey for normalizing relations with Armenia:

"The first is the most nebulous, but also perhaps the most fundamental one. This is an identity issue for Turkey. The Armenian issue is the most painful one in modern Turkey history and it is simply not healthy to pretend it does not exist. Put plainly, there were around 2 million Armenians in eastern Anatolia in 1914 and a few years later there were none. Around two million people had been either killed, deported or assimilated...The second motivation is the one that the Armenian diaspora is keenest to talk about. A successful rapprochement with Yerevan would more or less kill off the campaign to have international parliaments call the 1915 Armenian "Great catastrophe" a genocide...The fact that the normalization process was led by Swiss and not Americans underlines that the third motivation driving the Turkish side was probably the most important one. This was that Turkey was seeking a role in the South Caucasus."<sup>143</sup>

Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey was scheduled to visit Ankara in October 2003. The Turkish MFA, however, cancelled her visit following a decision of the Canton Vaud Swiss Regional Parliament to recognize the Armenian Genocide. Relations deteriorated further when the Lower House of the Swiss Parliament recognized the genocide on December 16, 2003.<sup>144</sup>

The Swiss initiative to facilitate a Turkish-Armenian dialogue can be traced back to September 16, 2007, when during the UNGA, the foreign ministers of Armenia and Turkey had an informal meeting in New York. In the course of that meeting they agreed to invite Switzerland as a mediator of the future Turkish-Armenian Track 1 talks. Shortly after the UNGA Michael Ambuhl, an experienced diplomat who was then the State Secretary and Head of the Directorate of Political Affairs in Switzerland's Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, was appointed as

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<sup>143</sup> de Waal, Thomas, Carnegie Endowment, *Turkey and Armenia: A Second Chance?* Turkish Policy Quarterly, March 2011

<sup>144</sup> Philips, p.27

coordinator of the Turkish-Armenian proximity talks. After Ambuhl discussed this initiative with Minister Calmy-Remy, it was agreed that Switzerland should assume the role of the mediator in the Turkish-Armenian talks. The only instruction Ambuhl had allegedly received from Minister Calmy-Remy was to try to make a positive difference.<sup>145</sup>

The Swiss mediators proposed to assist the establishment of a commission of historians to jointly examine the shared history of Turkey and Armenia in the summer of 2007. This was done when the Swiss ambassador to Ankara handed the formal offer to the Turkish Foreign Ministry. Two months later Michael Ambuhl met with Minister Oskanian in Yerevan to discuss the roadmap of the normalization of the relations with Turkey. Oskanian suggested that the negotiations on the normalization of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia and the dialogue on the establishment of the joint commission of historians should proceed in conformity with each other.<sup>146</sup>

After Ambuhl attended President Sargsyan's swearing-in ceremony, he presented both sides with a revised paper on Armenian-Turkish normalization and invited deputy foreign ministers Apakan and Kirakossian for their first trilateral meeting on May 21, 2008.<sup>147</sup>

Thus Turkey managed to toss in its own long-time idea of establishing a joint commission of historians, which was willingly picked up by Switzerland only to be presented to the conflicting parties as a impartial mediator's initiative.

Interestingly enough, TARC that made the first attempt to combine the two separate processes of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation and normalization of the relations between the two countries, had never endorsed the idea of establishing a joint commission of historians even within the framework of Track II diplomacy:

"While TARC sponsored academic cooperation between universities and their faculties, it did not support activities bringing historians together...TARC decided that a joint commission of historians would take a long time to do its work and its efforts would be undermined by inadequate access to credible archival materials. Scholars would reference documents justifying their well-known positions. The process would be polarizing, and the result inconclusive."<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p.28

<sup>146</sup> Ibid

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, p. 29

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, p.19

As a result of the first trilateral meeting Ambuhl issued the “Swiss Non-Paper Outline of the Discussion.” It indicated that the process sought to achieve the “normalization and development of bilateral relations, resolving differences and diverging interpretations regarding the historical past.” It also called for the creation of a “working group to elaborate the modalities for the establishment of an historical commission.”<sup>149</sup>

The second meeting in Gertzenzee was held in July 2008. According to Philips, the parties agreed that their work would focus on the establishment of diplomatic relations, mutual recognition and opening of the common border, and creation of a trilateral commission of experts dealing with the historical dimension. Ankara was prepared to implement the first two items of the agenda, as long as the third item was implemented. Therefore, the establishment of historical commission was a precondition by Ankara. Turkish officials sent Ambuhl a paper titled “Elements of a Tripartite Commission of Experts and Historians” on July 23. On July 26, the Swiss finalized their proposal for the tripartite commission and presented it to both sides.<sup>150</sup>

Meetings now focused on the timetable and sequence of steps by the parties. In this respected Ambuhl noted: “The text was always drafted by us, the Swiss.” The third meeting at Gertzenzee was held on September 15. Three Protocols became two, with the Protocol on historical dimension integrated into the Protocol on the Development of Relations. The text was further edited during ministerial and expert trilateral meetings in New York (September 22–24, 2008), Gertzenzee (October 25, 2008), Bern (January 21, 2009), Davos (January 27, 2009), and on the margins of the Munich Security Conference (February 7, 2009).<sup>151</sup>

According to Philips, U.S. officials were not informed during the early stages of negotiations. Washington was only brought on board after a chance meeting between Apakan and Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel P. Fried in the Lufthansa business lounge at the Munich airport in December 2007. Apakan told Fried about the Swiss facilitation. Fried in his turn informed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who briefed National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley.<sup>152</sup>

In total there were seven meetings between the Armenian and Turkish delegations headed

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p.29

<sup>150</sup> Ibid

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, pp.29-30

<sup>152</sup> Ibid

by deputy foreign ministers and mediated Michael Ambuhl. It is quiet natural that the first meeting in May 2008 was introductory. The intensity and productivity of consecutive six meetings was extremely high, which again allows drawing a parallel to the 14 confidential meetings between the Israeli and Arab delegations mediated by the Norwegians, which had preceded the signing of the Oslo Accords.

While the negotiation process and mediation strategy of the meetings described above were of a different caliber, they still had some similarities with the Oslo process. During that historic time, the situation was the following: Distinct from the United States and Russia that carried the main burden of international mediation between the conflicting parties, Norway assumed a role of a low-key facilitator. In 1991-1992 the Track I Madrid and Moscow negotiations between Israel and Palestine were a complete failure. The results of the twelve rounds of bilateral talks subsequently hosted by the U.S. State Department in Washington were not encouraging either.

The Oslo process was unique and might not fit the classical definition of Track 2 diplomacy, as, unlike the separate formats of TARC and seven confidential meetings of Armenian, Turkish and Swiss diplomats in 2007-2008, it was definitely *a two in one* undertaking, with the elements of both negotiation tracks. The Oslo process could be described as Track 1.5.

For any conflict resolution talks to proceed with success, a so-called “motivational ripeness” has to be in place first. It can also gradually develop in the course of negotiations themselves. The motivation, which urged Turkey to invite Swiss mediators and Armenia to accept the terms of *football diplomacy*, has been described in the previous chapters.

The motivation behind the Track 1.5 confidential talks that eventually led to the signing of the Oslo Accords originated from the failures of all previous initiatives within the framework of Track 1 format. This motivation ripened gradually during the first rounds of the negotiations in Oslo, during which mutual trust and confidence were built with the help of the new mediators. Norway, which was not suspected to pursue any hidden political agenda, proved to be an ideal broker. The trustworthy representation of the conflicting parties also helped to successfully implement this initiative. Norway was able to guarantee absolute confidentiality and to provide the necessary logistical support that helped the individual members of both negotiation teams to

develop a good synergy. Thus, “motivation ripeness” was in place at the right moment, when the parties became ready for the diplomatic breakthrough.<sup>153</sup>

The fourteen confidential rounds of proximity talks, between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Norway not only “broke the ice”, but challenged the dangerous belief that some international conflicts are beyond resolution. The talks that had lasted for about a year, eventually led to the historic public hand shake ceremony between Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat brokered by President Bill Clinton, and the signing of a Declaration of Principles for Peace between the Arabs and Israelis at the White House Green Lawn on September 13, 1993. This important document also known as the Oslo Accords was signed by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (Israel), Mahmud Abbas (PLO), Secretary Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.<sup>154</sup>

Not only the effective role, but also the very choice of the mediator was quite interesting. It should be stressed that when the UN General Assembly granted a special stature to the PLO, Norway was one of the eight countries, which voted against that decision. This was probably accounted for by the fact that in the early 1970s 87 of 157 members of the Norwegian Parliament were on board of the Friends of Israel Foundation. The ruling Labour Party in Norway had a special relationship with the Israeli Labor Party. Despite these seemingly obvious obstacles, the PLO did not have any reservations to accept Norway as an honest broker.<sup>155</sup> Both parties were extremely satisfied with the way Norway mediated the confidential meetings.

Another parallel to Turkish-Armenian *football diplomacy* can be drawn here: Whereas Turkey’s decision to invite Switzerland as a mediator, a country that recognized the Armenian Genocide, was prompted by an expectation that the Swiss Foreign Ministry would try to *compensate* for it, the same logic was probably at work, when the PLO accepted Norway’s

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<sup>153</sup> Pruitt, Dean G., *Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks*, International Negotiation Journal, Lessons Learned from the Middle East Peace Process, guest editor Dean G. Pruitt Abstracts, Vol. 2 No. 2, 1997

<sup>154</sup> Note: The author of this dissertation had the privilege to be in attendance of the historic signing ceremony.

<sup>155</sup> Al Jazeera, The Price of Oslo, September 18, 2013, available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraworld/2013/09/2013910121456318891.html>, consulted July 11, 2014

facilitation- a country that voted against granting the organization a special stature at the UN in 1974.

A legitimate question might arise: why Norway? In 1979, the Islamic revolution in Iran, which at the time of the Shah had been an important ally and oil supplier to Israel, changed the entire geo-political and economic configuration of the Middle East. The US and Israel had to find a new country that would not only supply oil at reasonable price, but could also be counted upon to play a political/diplomatic role in the region. Norway with its newly discovered huge oil resources made a perfect fit.

The backstory to Norway's involvement as a mediator of the Arab-Israeli talks is quite interesting. In the early 80s the Norwegian Foreign Ministry had growing concerns about the safety of Norwegian troops participating in the UNIFIL force stationed in Southern Lebanon since 1978. The Ministry sent a special envoy, Hans Longva, to meet with Yasser Arafat. They discussed those concerns as well as Oslo's plans to provide safe passage for oil to Israel. Arafat's response was unexpectedly positive. Surprisingly, at the end of the conversation he asked the Norwegian government to provide a back channel for confidential talks with Israel.<sup>156</sup>

It took the Norwegians almost a decade to grant Yasser Arafat's request. Jan Egeland, Norway's deputy foreign minister during the early 1990s, made it clear that for some time they had not had Israel's consent and, therefore, Norway could not have started their backchannel mediation earlier. This had been the case until 1989, when the Palestinian Intifada had a serious impact on Israel's security situation. This is what made Yitzhak Shamir, the then Prime Minister of Israel take several damage control steps "to ease international pressure" and reach a temporary compromise. The Norwegian mediation was eventually accepted and Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg put together a team of six diplomats and public servants, whose task was to pave the way for the new Arab-Israeli dialogue and mediate the future talks.<sup>157</sup>

We should always keep in mind that distinct from Turkey-Armenia confidential talks both within the framework of TARC and *football diplomacy*, the Oslo process was based on negotiations between an established state, Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization representing unrecognized ethno-territorial unit. While the only element of active hostility in the current

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid

<sup>157</sup> Ibid



standoff between Ankara and Yerevan was the Turkish land blockade of Armenia, at the time of the Oslo negotiations Israel was in a state of war with the PLO.

While Track 1.5 in Oslo started after the major failure of intensive talks on Track 1 mediated on the one hand by the US and on the other, by Russia, Track 1 Armenian-Turkish diplomacy had been virtually non-existent for almost four years before the TARC meetings. Therefore, distinct from the Oslo initiative, TARC was not a feasible, comprehensive alternative for the failed Track 1 diplomacy, but rather a compensation for the absence of it. While Track 1.5 in Oslo turned out to be a substitute for Track 1, TARC had paved way for official Turkish-Armenian talks.

If one looks into the dynamics of international mediation strategy the similarities described above do come to the fore. Even the opposition's reaction to the process and the outcome of the Oslo Accords in Israel and the Arab countries was not dissimilar to the emotional response first to the TARC and later to the Zurich Protocols in Turkey, Armenia and the Diaspora. Angry reactions to the outcome of the secret talks in Norway came from various religious and secular circles. Everything was subjected to vigorous criticism, be it provisions of the Accords or the composition of the negotiating teams. Some of the radical criticism came from influential, well-known people. Among them was Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO's foreign minister, as well as prominent public figures like poet Mahmoud Darwish and Professor Edward Said, who maintained that there were better candidates to represent the Palestinian side. According to Avi Shlaim, the role of Yasser Arafat himself stirred up a lot of controversy and mistrust. His autocratic management was also questioned. So was the absolute secrecy of the talks. Kaddoumi was quite vocal about his disagreement with the deal, which in his opinion compromised Palestine's right to self-determination. The intellectuals criticized Arafat for a unilateral compromise on *intifada*, as well as failing to consult with other Arab states.<sup>158</sup> The response of the Arab countries to the Oslo talks was not unequivocal. The Arab League with its 19 foreign ministers, who met in Cairo a week after the signing of the Oslo Accords, gave Yasser Arafat a lukewarm

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<sup>158</sup> Shlaim, Avi, Chapter 11: The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process, *International Relations of the Middle East*, in Louise Fawcett ed, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, 241-61

reception. Syria, Lebanon and Jordan were not shy to criticise the Chairman of the PLO for *a one-man show* during the negotiations with Israel. This was in discord with a pledge to coordinate all diplomatic activities with other Arab states. Arafat tried to justify his decision to sign the Oslo Accords by playing down the importance of the deal. He claimed that it should only be considered as a first step on the road to a comprehensive peace agreement.<sup>159</sup>

Another important detail that should be taken into consideration is that whereas it took almost no time for the outcome of the Oslo process to smoothly grow into Track 1 diplomacy, TARC's recommendations had been shelved for several years not only by the Governments of Turkey and Armenia, but also by the State Department. They were revitalized by the confidential talks between Turkish and Armenian Deputy Foreign Ministers sponsored by the Swiss in 2008-2009 and found their way to the roadmap of 2009. Based on an interview with Dr. David Hovhannissian, a founding member of TARC, *Hürriyet Daily News* made interesting comments on the background of the roadmap and the developments within the Turkish-Armenian Track 1 format. Ambassador Hovhannissian stated that there was an organic connection between *the football diplomacy* and the year of 2001, when TARC was established. During that time the members of the Reconciliation Commission drafted a "road map", which was submitted to be signed by the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers. The text of the document, which Hovhannissian described as "a backbone of the roadmap" signed in 2008, contained concrete provisions. They were bound to lead to the normalization of relations between the two countries. He added that it had never materialized because of the Turkish side. The latter would always put forward different political preconditions.<sup>160</sup>

With this in mind, drawing a parallel between the international mediation behind the Oslo Accords and Turkish-Armenian roadmap becomes even more justified. It is quite symbolic that in the mid 90s David Phillips, the future Coordinator of TARC, was a Project Director and Senior Associate at the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Norway.

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid

<sup>160</sup> *Hürriyet Daily News* 5/26/2010 *Armenian Diplomat Reflects on Protocol Failure*, by VERCIHAN ZİFLİOĞLU. Posted at <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/default.aspx>, consulted March 3, 2013

Why did the international mediation of the Oslo process fail? Avi Shlaim suggests that the eventual failure of the Norwegian initiative makes it necessary to re-address the nature of international relations in the Middle East, putting a special emphasis on a third-party mediation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Shlaim makes an allusion to an “apocryphal story”, according to which Pope John Paul II once said that there could be only two ways to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict – “the realistic and miraculous”. Paradoxically, in his interpretation the “realistic” solution would presuppose “divine intervention”, whereas a “voluntary” deal between the parties to the conflict would be “miraculous”.<sup>161</sup>

While Norway’s facilitation role was crucial, Israel and the PLO managed to negotiate a “miraculous” deal on their own. To conclude the talks they needed another powerful mediator that had been experienced in managing the entire peace process in the Middle East. This is where the US came to the fore. This was the only country that had the ability to put a pressure on Israel “to withdraw from the occupied territories”. The failure to do it led to the failure of the Oslo Accords.<sup>162</sup>

Similarly, the US surfaced up as the backstage mediator of the Armenian-Turkish talks, when the Swiss, like the Norwegians during the Oslo process, brought the negotiations to the final stage. The US was the only country that in theory could exert influence on Turkey to ratify the Zurich Protocols and open the land border with Armenia. The failure to do that led to the eventual failure of *football diplomacy*. And just like with the Oslo Accords, there was neither “realistic” nor “miraculous” solution within the framework of the Armenian-Turkish normalization talks.

In his testimony to the U.S. House Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Europe on May 14, 2009, David Phillips presented a comprehensive analytical report on TARC activities, and gave the outline of the final recommendations that had been sent to the governments of Turkey and Armenia, as well as the State Department. TARC launched multifarious activities to achieve reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey. The Commission established communication channels and cooperation between the civil societies of both countries. It created a context for mutual understanding within the framework of public diplomacy with a view to

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<sup>161</sup> Shlaim, Avi, Ibid

<sup>162</sup> Ibid

transfer the results of the negotiations to Track 1 “decision-makers” and to shape public opinion in Armenia and Turkey. Track 2 serves as a backup for official talks and can “propel” success if an agreement is reached on Track 1. It could also become a “safety net” if official talks reach a deadlock.<sup>163</sup> Thus, TARC was seven years ahead of *football diplomacy*. Its list of final recommendations to the governments of Turkey and Armenia, as well as international mediators of Track 1 talks was the following:

- “Accelerating diplomatic contacts, devising new frameworks for consultation, and consolidating relations through additional treaty arrangements.
- Opening of the Turkish-Armenian border to enable unhampered transportation and trade aimed at improving the economic condition of people living on both sides of the border.
- Enhancing security/anti-terrorism and confidence building measures between Turkey and Armenia.
- Issuing official statements supporting civil society programs focused on education, science, culture, and tourism.
- Establishing standing mechanisms for cooperation on humanitarian disaster assistance and health care.
- Fostering religious understanding via the restoration of religious sites and supporting the rights and functioning of religious foundations.
- Taking steps to show the Turkish and Armenian people that their governments are working to surmount difficulties related to the past.”<sup>164</sup>

David Phillips’s advice to the US government was very straightforward. He stated that the United States should remain consistently engaged in the Turkish-Armenian normalization process, which would require “skilled and focused diplomacy.” Phillips also suggested that the European Bureau of the State Department should appoint a full-time representative to deal with the problem in question, while a Coordinator of the Armenian-Turkish normalization talks could alert different government agencies to the importance of this issue.<sup>165</sup>

As mentioned above, it was within the framework of TARC that for the first time in the history of international mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement an attempt was made to

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<sup>163</sup> Phillips, David L. Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council of the United States Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University, Testimony to the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe May 14, 2009 Posted at <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/111/phi051409.pdf>, consulted February 11, 2013

<sup>164</sup> Ibid

<sup>165</sup> Ibid

establish a link between reconciliation and normalization processes. This methodology was not altogether irrelevant for Track 2 diplomatic format, especially because it also included Diaspora representatives on the Armenian side. While normalization was not directly conditioned by the progress in discussing the historical past of the two nations, a more or less acceptable formula of transitional justice offered by the Center in New York, allowed TARC to pass the ball to the court of Track 1 diplomacy.

Although often criticized, the series of confidential meetings of TARC could become a classic example of the Track 2 /1.5 reconciliation diplomacy providing a necessary bridge to the process of normalization. It definitely would have been the case by the mid 2000s were it not for the virtual fruitlessness of Track 1, and for Yerevan's and Ankara's decision to disassociate themselves from that initiative, despite the obvious fact that both had previously given their consent for the establishment of such a commission. In reality, Track 2 can never be a success if there is no genuine desire of government officials to settle the existing problems.

Transitional reconciliation/normalization formula that appeared to work more or less effectively in the confidential meetings of former diplomats, scholars and Armenian Diaspora representatives within the framework of TARC, was taken up by Track 1 in a distorted form and gradually marginalized. Moreover, the decision to include a sub-commission of historians into the inter-governmental commission was not only an attempt to put the undeniable past into question, but also to undo what had been done by the Center for Transitional Justice in New York in 2003.

Before moving forward on Track 1 the international mediators should have done an inventory of the past mistakes and answered the following questions:

- a) Did TARC fail?
- b) Was TARC a classic example of Track II or Track 1,5 diplomacy?
- c) What was the real degree of support of TARC activities by the Turkish and Armenian governments?
- d) What were the real reasons for the stoppage of activities and dissolution of TARC?
- e) Which methodological aspects of mediating TARC activities could be helpful for Track I diplomacy?

- f) Which aspects of TARC mediation could only prove appropriate for Track 1,5/ Track II negotiation format and should never be used within the framework of Track I diplomacy?
- g) Did TARC pave the way for *football diplomacy*?

In addition, a meticulous comparative analysis of the methodology of international mediation of the Oslo Accords and its link to Track I Arab-Israeli talks should have been carried out. The questions asked above are still valid and legitimate, although after the failure of the Zurich Protocols there is another long list of unanswered questions that need to be addressed. One such question can be formulated as follows: Should the failure to ratify the Zurich Protocols be followed by another Track 1 mediation initiative, or would the establishment of another TARC within the Track 1.5 negotiation format be a more productive way to move forward?

### **3.3 Perfect Diplomatic Failure**

The failure of the Zurich Protocols was inevitable. As noted above, since the unexpected military success of the Armenian side in the Karabagh war crowned by the ceasefire of 1994, Turkey has become prone to the pressures from Azerbaijan. It is difficult to assess how much of this susceptibility was real and whether yielding to pressures from a newly independent republic was a deliberate tactical move by Ankara. Yet, Turkey gradually turned into a hostage of its own policy, unwilling or, maybe, even unable to normalize the relations with Armenia until the Nagorno Karabagh problem had been resolved.

Therefore, the failure must not have been unexpected. Svante Cornell questioned the competence of the Obama administration's decision to start mediating Turkish-Armenian relations prior to making any progress in the Nagorno Karabagh talks:

“Unfortunately, a major initiative launched by the Barack Obama administration in the region did more to worsen the situation than to improve it. For rather than focusing on Armenia-Azerbaijan, Obama in 2009 threw his personal weight behind an effort to mend ties between Armenia and Turkey. The administration claimed that normalizing Turkish-Armenian ties had the most potential to build a positive dynamic in the region. If Armenia could be made to feel more secure, it might be more amenable to a compromise with Azerbaijan, thus improving the chances of resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict as well.”<sup>166</sup>

The high-profile ceremony in Zurich attended by the US Secretary of State, Russian and Swiss foreign ministers and the EU's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, was

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<sup>166</sup> Cornell, Svante, *The Caucasus in Limbo*, Current History 110, no. 738 (October 2011), p. 287

a miniature replica of the signing of a Declaration of Principles for Peace at the White House on September 13, 1993.

In fact, it was a *perfect failure*, as every country directly or indirectly supporting the process of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement or even openly opposed to it benefited from *football diplomacy*. In the short-term, *signed, but not ratified* was a win-win formula for all parties involved.

In the international arena, despite that it became obvious that the protocols would not be ratified, America, the key mediator of the Turkish-Armenian talks registered a tangible diplomatic achievement. Obama's foreign policy team needed a quick success story, and it was granted a perfect one during the first year in office. Against the backdrop of the George W. Bush administration's mishaps in Iraq and Afghanistan, which had done considerable harm to America's reputation overseas, this short-term diplomatic victory appeared to be a light at the end of the tunnel. Together with the pressing of the *re-set button* in the relations with Russia and the *new beginning* in the Middle East set by Obama's speech at the University of Cairo in 2010, the quick success in the mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement was a sign of the new mind-set in Washington and a positive message to the international community. The Nobel Prize for Peace received by the US President less than a year after the election was both a recognition of his achievements in international politics and a generous credit line for the coming years in office. Whereas the main geopolitical goal of obtaining direct access to the Black Sea/South Caucasus region through opening the Turkish-Armenian border had not been reached, the short-term success of American policy was indisputable.

Switzerland tried to become the Norway of the Turkish-Armenian confidential talks. The Oslo Accords were sought to be re-formatted into the Zurich Protocols. Just like the US, Switzerland, based on its long-standing neutrality and in line with one of its five most important foreign policy objectives-*further the peaceful coexistence of nations*, needed "to do something good". The short-term success story of October 2009 was more than anyone could expect. The honest broker *par excellence* lived up to its reputation again. The Swiss Government was also able to significantly improve political and economic relations with Turkey, putting them *back on track*. Together with the Obama administration, the Swiss Government benefited from the

*historic* signing of the Zurich Protocols. Thus both the key mediator and facilitator registered a tangible diplomatic success despite the failure to have the Protocols ratified.

The EU was also pleased with an ambiguous outcome of *football diplomacy*. It formally joined the growing list of mediators and facilitators only after the joint statement of the Swiss, Turkish and Armenian foreign ministries had been made on the pending roadmap in April 2009. Before that, the EU's approach to the problem had been somewhat laid-back as it even fell short of including the facilitation of the Turkish-Armenian relations into the portfolio of its Special Representative to the South Caucasus. This was partly accounted for by conflicting views on Turkey's admission to the EU. The *qualified yes* of the European Commission allowed postponing the process indefinitely. Ankara's unresolved problems with its neighbors slowed down the process of Turkey's European integration.

While Brussels was quite pleased to become a part of some positive dynamics in the relations between Turkey, the EU membership candidate country, and Armenia, the ENP and EaP participant, it felt comfortable that the process of normalization did not go faster than what it deemed necessary. *Signed, but not ratified* was as conditional as the *qualified yes* of the European Commission. Javier Solana's participation at the signing ceremony in Zurich made a positive impression within international community that the EU stayed involved in the Turkish-Armenian *football diplomacy*. Yet, even that participation in Zurich was somewhat cautious:

"The official reactions of the EU and its member states towards the rapprochement process between Turkey and Armenia amount to no more than a cautious welcome. Whereas it is true that three leading EU politicians were present in Zurich on 10 October—French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner, Javier Solana, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Slovenian foreign minister Samuel Zbogar, neither the Swedish Presidency of the Council nor the European Commission were represented at the ceremony."<sup>167</sup>

Schmidt pointed to a number of reasons behind the EU's laid-back role in the mediation of Armenian-Turkish relations. He argued that EU's cautious neutrality and "benevolent inactivity" in the mediation of the Armenian-Turkish dialogue could be accounted for by two political factors. First, EU's attitude toward Turkey's membership in the organization was still uncertain. The second factor was the EU's failure to clarify relations with the members of the ENP and

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<sup>167</sup> Mustafa Aydin, Armando Garcia Schmidt, Tabib Huseynov, Alexander Iskandaryan, Andrei Zagorski, *After Soccer Diplomacy: The Turkish-Armenian Relations*, Spotlight Europe, October 2009.



Eastern Partnership, as well as to adequately address ethnic conflicts in the region in question.<sup>168</sup> Schmidt concluded: “In the South Caucasus the way the EU deals with the latent conflicts is often considered to be unfocused and ambivalent.”<sup>169</sup>

Therefore, under the current circumstances, the ambiguity of the *signed but not ratified* outcome, i.e. *perfect diplomatic failure*, is an ideal situation for Brussels as well.

Georgia became another country that benefited from the *perfect failure* of the Zurich Protocols. It was wary of a possible rapprochement between its neighbors, if not tacitly opposed to any diplomatic endeavor that could lead to the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border. Part of Georgia’s geopolitical value and monopoly on the access to the Black Sea/ South Caucasus region were at stake. According to David Davidian, a technical intelligence analyst from Belmont “Georgia’s war with Russia changed the balance of power in the Caucasus and in doing so became a catalyst in advancing Armenian Turkish talks and accelerating by perhaps a year or so the establishment of the Protocols. Georgia became one of the two front- line states, along with Ukraine, that became a battleground for influence between the US and Russia.”<sup>170</sup>

The perceived threat to Georgia appeared all the more real in the aftermath of the war in South Ossetia. The signing of the US-Georgian Security Charter in January 2009, the continuing financial assistance and Vice President Biden’s visit to Tbilisi in June 2009 put some of the local fears to rest. Still the diplomatic limbo in the Turkish-Armenian negotiations was an outcome Georgia should not have been unhappy about.

Iran had a number of reasons not to be too thrilled about the new phase of the Turkish-Armenian dialogue. First, although Switzerland had been the principal mediator of the proximity talks, Iran could not help but see Washington as the main architect of the Zurich process and behind-the scenes designer of the roadmap. This meant that Tehran had concerns that the US had a hidden agenda to strengthen its influence next door to Iran. This agenda could materialize should the Turkish-Armenian border be opened.

Second, the existing problems in Iranian-Turkish relations could further deteriorate. Dina

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid

<sup>169</sup> Ibid

<sup>170</sup> The Armenian Weekly, *Turkish-Armenian Protocols: Reality and Irrationality*, Oct. 1, 2009, by David Davidian, available at: <http://armenianweekly.com/2009/10/01/davidian-turkish-armenian-protocols-reality-and-irrationality/>, visited June 5, 2013

Malysheva points to the increasing regional rivalry between Turkey and Iran in political, economic and security fields. It includes “claims” to natural “resources”, control of political power centers, gas and oil pipelines and transport routes. Both countries understand that eventually they would have to adjust their geopolitical interests to “those of the major states—either Russia or the USA.”<sup>171</sup>

Third, Iran’s political and economic relations with landlocked Armenia might become rivaled by the alternative trade and energy routes, to which that country would gain access after the opening of the border with Turkey.

Strangely enough, after the breaking news about the roadmap Iran did not seem to be too alert. The unexpected absence of urgency in Iran’s reaction to the Turkish-Armenian Track 1 dialogue could only be explained by a bold assumption that Tehran never doubted the eventual failure of the Zurich Protocols, perfect or not perfect. This kind of a laid-back attitude toward potentially crucial developments next door could have been easily mistaken for positive neutrality.

With regard to Armenia, it was relatively easy to get official Yerevan on board. The new administration was in a desperate need to take demonstrable steps of *proactive foreign policy*. This was the price paid for a decade of eventful, yet often substance-lacking *policy of complementarity* conducted by the previous administration.

Therefore *football diplomacy* and President Sargsyan’s *sensational* invitation to President Abdullah Gul to be present at the football game between the two national teams in Yerevan on September 6, 2008, should be viewed as the first demonstrable step of his *proactive foreign policy*.

International mediation through sports quite often expands beyond the format of official negotiations and encompasses the “whole range of international contacts that have implications for the overall relations between the nations concerned”.<sup>172</sup> This is where Track 1 and Track 2 mediations are naturally coordinated.

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<sup>171</sup> Malysheva, Dina, *The Conflict in Nagorno Karabagh: Its impact on security in the Caspian region*, pp. 257-279, published in *The Security of the Caspian Region* edited by Gennady Chufirin, SIPRI, Oxford University Press, 2001

<sup>172</sup> Peppard, V. and J. Riordan (1993) *Playing Politics: Soviet Sports Diplomacy to 1992*, London: JAI Press, p.2, cited in *Easing Mental Barriers in Turkey-Armenia Relations: the Role of Civil Society*, by Memisoglu, Fulya, TESEV Foreign Policy Programme, July 2012

With regard to President Gül's visit to Armenia in September 2008 according to various sources in Turkey and the US, he accepted President Sargsyan's invitation notwithstanding repeated calls by the political opposition not to go to Yerevan. It became clear that PM Erdoğan was not in favor of Gül's visit to Armenia either. The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the Republican People's Party (CHP) openly opposed the visit, with members of the Parliament from both (MHP) and (CHP) criticizing Gül for compromising national interests.<sup>173</sup>

Gül answered the criticism by stating that in his opinion the upcoming football match presented an opportunity to normalize Turkish-Armenian relations:

*"I hope today's match will help to lift the barriers to closer relations between two nations that share a common history, and contribute to the establishment of regional friendship and peace,"* he stated at a news conference before his departure for Yerevan. Ali Babacan, the minister of foreign affairs, and Ahmet Davutoglu, the chief foreign policy adviser of the prime minister, accompanied Gül on the visit.<sup>174</sup>

President Serge Sargsyan's visit to Turkey to attend the second leg of the World Cup qualifying match took place four days after the Zurich Protocols had been signed. From the point of view of the Swiss-American mediation it couldn't have happened at a more opportune moment. Despite anticipated angry protests in the Diaspora and some domestic criticism, this seemed to be a perfect way to complete the full cycle of *football diplomacy*.

Against all odds, in the international arena President Sargsyan's administration obviously benefited from the signing of the Zurich Protocols. Not only was a post-election crisis successfully overcome, but also for the first time since independence, Armenia had been put on the map of world affairs. The signing ceremony was called "historic" and made front-page news in leading international newspapers and electronic media for about a week. Thus, despite the failure to get the protocols ratified, Armenia registered certain diplomatic success. While the border with Turkey remained closed, the Armenian authorities felt comfortable enough about the perception of their *proactive foreign policy* and a new international image.

By submitting the text of the protocols to the Constitutional Court to check their conformity with the Armenian Constitution, Yerevan secured a possible exit strategy not only for itself, but for Ankara as well.

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<sup>173</sup> Çuhadar, Gültekin-Punsmann, Ibid

<sup>174</sup> Ibid

Turkey's gains from the entire process of Track I talks with Armenia were the most significant ones. The outcome of the negotiations on bilateral protocols—*signed, but not ratified* could not have been better. Not only did Ankara manage to look positive and constructive in the international arena but it was also able to reach some of its short term geopolitical goals in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region. In this respect, the following points should be underlined:

- By having Armenia sign a document, which had a provision on the establishment of the joint sub-commission of historians, Ankara sent a misleading message to the parliaments of third countries that the delicate talks on the restoration of historical justice were underway. It helped Turkey to weaken the campaign for the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.
- It takes two sides to play *football diplomacy*. Just like Armenia's *proactive foreign policy*, Turkey's policy of *zero problems with neighbors* was in need of demonstrable steps and tangible results. Ankara got them in full.
- The decision to start a comprehensive dialogue with Armenia helped Turkey to address what Thomas de Waal rightly described as "identity issue".<sup>175</sup>
- Turkey was able to increase its role in the South Caucasus. Parallel to *football diplomacy*, it authored and introduced a new Security Platform for the Black Sea/South Caucasus region. This was done shortly after the Georgian-Russian war
- The border with Armenia remained closed, which, on the one hand temporarily limited Turkey's ability to further increase its influence in the region, on the other, continued to provide an important bargaining chip at the negotiation table.
- The second part of the *signed, but not ratified* formula helped to contain Azerbaijan's severe criticism of Turkey's involvement in the talks with Armenia.
- By including the provision on the sub-commission of historians into the protocols, Turkey managed to partly undo what had been done by TARC and the Center for Transitional Justice in New York.

Thomas de Waal highlighted the psychological aspect of Azerbaijan's vigorous opposition to the Turkish-Armenian normalization process. He wrote that Azerbaijan looked at the Armenian-Turkish talks through its own prism. It feared that a possible deal, which had been set to include the opening of the land border with Armenia, would limit Baku's economic leverage

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<sup>175</sup> See p. 83

over Yerevan. By the same logic, Armenia's position in the negotiations on Nagorno-Karabagh would become more hardline. De Waal expressed his disappointment with Turkey and the mediators that "not enough effort" was made to make Ilham Aliyev understand that the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border was only a "symbolic defeat" for Azerbaijan, and the country could benefit from such a deal in the long run. He also criticized President Obama for not inviting Ilham Aliyev to the Nuclear Summit in Washington, where the Turkish and Armenian presidents were in attendance, "giving the Azerbaijanis the impression that a deal was being done behind their backs."<sup>176</sup>

While Azerbaijan was concerned about Russia's role in the Turkish-Armenian normalization process, the main target of Baku's criticism was Washington. Zaur Shiriyev, a foreign policy analyst based in Azerbaijan, and Celia Davies, an associate editor at *Caucasus International* wrote: "Azerbaijan saw Obama's visit to Turkey and his statements on rapprochement as evidence that Turkey was realising a US-sponsored initiative. Tensions continued to increase, with, as mentioned above, President Aliyev announcing that he was boycotting the April 2009 Istanbul Summit of the Alliance of Civilisations in reaction to the possible Turkish- Armenian reconciliation being discussed in the absence of a breakthrough on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict."<sup>177</sup>

Azerbaijani newspapers raised a wave of furious criticism aimed not only at international mediators, but also at political leadership in Ankara. Titles like "Turkish Government's Betrayal of the People of Azerbaijan"<sup>178</sup> and the rhetorical "Would Turkey Betray?" testify to that end.<sup>179</sup> Explaining the demonstrable boycott of the Summit in Istanbul and trying to influence public opinion in Turkey, President Aliyev publicly condemned the international mediation of *football diplomacy* calling it a "mistake".<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> de Waal, Thomas, *Turkey and Armenia: Bridging the Gap*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief, 87, October 2010, posted at [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/armenia\\_turkey.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/armenia_turkey.pdf)

<sup>177</sup> Shiriyev, Zaur, Davies, Celia, *The Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan Triangle: The Unexpected Outcome of the Zurich Protocols*, PERCEPTIONS, Volume XVIII, Spring 2013, Number 1, pp. 185-206

<sup>178</sup> Olaylar Daily, *Turkish Government's Betrayal of the People of Azerbaijan*, 8 April 2009

<sup>179</sup>Yeni Azerbaijan, *Would Turkey Betray?* 9 April 2009

<sup>180</sup> RFE/RL, *Azerbaijan Seeks to Thwart Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement*, available at [http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijan\\_Seeks\\_To\\_Thwart\\_TurkishArmenian\\_Rapprochement/1603256.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijan_Seeks_To_Thwart_TurkishArmenian_Rapprochement/1603256.html), visited

In another interview with Reuters, Ilham Aliyev's foreign policy aide threatened to reconsider Azerbaijan's relations with the United States in case it continued to promote the Turkish-Armenian dialogue. He saw the potential opening of the Turkish-Armenian border facilitated by Washington prior to the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict as a betrayal of Azerbaijan's national interests, which could undermine the role of the US as the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair.<sup>181</sup>

Azerbaijan's reaction was not limited to angry statements and accusations of "betrayal". President Aliyev's rhetoric gave a green light for quite concrete economic steps and bargains with Russia's Gazprom: "At the height of Azerbaijani-Turkish tensions, Baku made another strong move. On October 14th when Turkish President Gul met with his Armenian counterpart Sargsyan during the soccer match, the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic signed an agreement to sell 500 million cubic meters of gas a year to Russia's Gazprom, starting from 2010, at a price of 350 USD per cubic meter. Furthermore, Aliyev stressed that this was not the limit for Azerbaijani gas sales to Russia."<sup>182</sup>

Thus, in the light of the aforesaid, Azerbaijan was another beneficiary of the *perfect failure* of the Zurich Protocols. Blackmailing the parties and international mediators, it was the only country that did not look positive with regard to the diplomatic process supported by the world's most influential leaders. However, Azerbaijan did not need to build a positive image. Instead, it aspired to appear strong. The main *talk of the town* was that it was because of President Ilham Aliyev that the Turkish-Armenian protocols were not ratified. Being an *enfant terrible* was not an easy role to play, yet at times it was probably gratifying, as Vice President Biden, the Secretary of State as well as the Swiss and Russian foreign ministers had to call Baku to do the damage control. This also created a comfortable excuse for Turkey to be less flexible in its talks with international mediators.

President Aliyev's *spoiler* policy proved to be quite successful, because two years after the Zurich Protocols had been locked in a signed-but-not-ratified limbo, Azerbaijan was invited to

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January 14, 2013

<sup>181</sup> Reuters, Azerbaijan Threatens to "Re-consider" the U.S. Relations, by Margarita Antidze, April 16, 2010, available at: <http://in.reuters.com/article/2010/04/16/idINIndia-47760820100416>, visited March 18, 2014

<sup>182</sup> Valiyev, Anar, *The Turkish-Armenian Protocols: Implications for Azerbaijan*, Caucasus Analytical Digest, 11/09, pp. 4-8, available at: <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/CAD-11-5-8.pdf>

participate in a conference on Turkish-Armenian rapprochement held in Istanbul. By securing a tripartite academic format, Baku sought to re-establish a third-party conditionality of the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border. Zaur Shiriyev stressed the significance of this fact while giving a brief account of the conference mentioned above. He pointed out that the conference held in Istanbul on October 29-30, 2011 and titled “The Normalization Process between Turkey and Armenia: Prospects for Revitalization” was the first academic discussion on an Armenian-Turkish rapprochement where Azerbaijani experts were given a chance to have their input.”<sup>183</sup>

Thus, although the Track I Turkish-Armenian dialogue was eventually a failure, a diplomatic victory could be claimed by each and every mediator and actor involved, including those who played insignificant, invisible or even destructive roles. This is why the diplomatic failure that was inevitable was also *perfect*.

However, the price being paid for a tactical diplomatic breakthrough could increase exponentially as Turkish-Armenian relations continue to remain unsettled. In our day and age the unilaterally closed Turkish-Armenian border bears much more geopolitical semantics than it is generally deemed. Therefore, the failure to open it should be viewed in the context of not only regional, but also global geopolitics.

In the *Turkey Analyst* Dr. Svante Cornell gives a very one-sided, bias argument outlining the following implications of the failure of the Turkish-Armenian normalization process:

“Time has thus come to evaluate why this process went wrong, and what implications are likely to emerge from this failure...One key reason, however, was that the process was allowed to proceed on the basis of divergent and erroneous assumptions. First, the tragedy of 1915 was a main cause of the discord between the two countries, and intimately connected with the normalization process. Ankara, rejecting the label of genocide, interpreted the Protocols as having moved that issue to a commission of historians to be created following ratification.”<sup>184</sup>

Cornell blames Turkey for being naïve to expect the Armenian Diaspora to compromise on Genocide recognition after the diplomatic relations between the two countries have been

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<sup>183</sup> Caspian Weekly, Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement: Time to re-consider?, by Zaur Shiriyev, November 14, 2011, available at: <http://www.en.caspianweekly.org/main-subjects/turkish-foreign-policy/4120-turkish-armenian-rapprochement-time-to-re-consider-by-sam-expert-zaur-shiriyev.html>, visited March 11, 2014

<sup>184</sup> Cornell, Svante, Implications of the Failed Turkish-Armenian Normalization Process, Vol. 3, N. 5 of the Turkey Analyst, available at <http://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/204-implications-of-the-failed-turkish-armenian-normalization-process.html>, consulted March 11, 2013

established and the common border opened. He points to the limited influence of the Armenian government in the Diaspora that does not appreciate the real value of the Zurich Protocols.<sup>185</sup>

To come out of the limbo of the un-ratified protocols the mediators need to do an all-around inventory and analysis of the 25 years of Turkish-Armenian talks, and build a new negotiation strategy based on rich international experience in conflict resolution. Normalization and reconciliation formats must be separated again.

The situation with the un-ratified protocols had been aggravated by another outburst of the Turkish policy of denial several months before the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide: “Armenian distrust in Turkey’s intentions was exacerbated by the April 24th Gallipoli commemoration rescheduling and invitation. This will inhibit progress in the near future. Once April 24th has passed the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will continue to plague Turkish-Armenian relations.”<sup>186</sup>

The article then pointed to the Azerbaijani factor, which was underestimated not only by the mediators but also by the parties to the negotiations: “As analysts in both Ankara and Yerevan admitted in the authors’ meetings, underestimating Azerbaijan’s fierce objections to the 2009 Protocols was a “strategic mistake” for both sides.”<sup>187</sup>

While the arguments of the Brookings Institution experts appear to be generally sound, they fail to probe into the question of whether the “strategic mistake” of underestimating Azerbaijan was a mistake of commission or omission. The argumentation becomes more convincing when the above-mentioned article focuses on individual players and initiatives both within Track 1 and Track 2 negotiation formats. Some of them run counter to Ankara’s mainstream policy coming from former high-ranking Turkish diplomats who had been involved in confidential proximity talks with Armenia even before the onset of *football diplomacy*: “A unilateral act of statesmanship could also advance normalization as well as reconciliation. One

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid

<sup>186</sup> Fiona Hill, Kemal Kirişci and Andrew Moffatt, *Turkey and Armenia: from normalization to reconciliation*, The Brookings Institution, Winter 2015, originally published in Turkish Policy Quarterly, available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2015/02/armenia-turkey-normalization-reconciliation>, consulted April 11, 2015

<sup>187</sup> Ibid



proposal is for the Turkish government to quietly open its side of the land border with Armenia. Former Turkish Ambassador to London, Ünal Çeviköz recently suggested a game-changing step along these lines in an article published in late 2014. A move like this would be akin to the Turkish Cypriot decision in April 2003 to lift their long-standing restrictions on crossing to the Greek Cypriot side of the island.”<sup>188</sup>

The “game-changer” Ambassador Çeviköz spoke about could be sought for both within the framework of Track 1.5 and Track 2 negotiation formats. Business projects could turn out to be such a game changer. Armenian-Turkish regional cooperation seems to be the right starting point. It can include environmental and soft security programs, opening of the railroad link, electricity swaps, cross border trade and establishment of free economic zones.

New Track 2 has to be more institutionalized than the US-mediated business and cultural programs of the late 90s and early 2000s. They would also need a credible political umbrella:

“An institutionalization of economic contacts between the two countries which do not maintain diplomatic relations necessitates a pragmatic approach that places economic logic under political logic. Merchants and private entrepreneurs have to have the possibility of “talking about trade without talking about politics.” The margin of maneuver from which businessmen profit, as well as its capacity to influence the decision making processes are all relatives: the influence of businessmen is quite important in a context where the acts and the perceptions are modeled not on rhetoric but on facts; and where the priority is given to the establishment of a network of commercial ties, which is considered as more solid than a political dialogue.”<sup>189</sup>

As for the reconciliation format, those who were responsible for setting it up should have kept in mind that the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1915 Genocide was around the corner. And since the bilateral relations had not been even partly, normalized by that time and the border remained unilaterally closed, any talk of reconciliation or even *transitional justice* turned out to be completely irrelevant.

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid, citing Ünal Çeviköz, “Turkish-Armenian relations need a new game-changer,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, 13 November 2014.

<sup>189</sup> French Institute of Anatolian Studies, Research Program on Turkey Caucasus, *The Stakes of the Opening of Turkish- Armenian Border; The Cross-Border Contacts between Armenia and Turkey*, pp. 8-9, October 2002

### ***3.4 Evolution of the link between the NK issue and the mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement - EU's mediating role, OSCE, BSEC, NATO***

In addition to one historical conflict with Armenia and the need to address and overcome the consequences of the 1915 Genocide, Ankara became an indirect (some might even see it as direct) party to another conflict with Yerevan by unilaterally supporting Azerbaijan in the Nagorno Karabagh war. While the first conflict was frozen in time awaiting a long process of mediated or unmediated reconciliation between the two nations after Armenia regained independence, the second one has been waged *here and now*.

This is the reason why in this particular case international mediators, before speaking about comprehensive reconciliation between the Armenians and the Turks, have to first address the question of normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries, i.e. opening of the unilaterally closed border and establishment of diplomatic relations. Instead of trying to disassociate itself from the crimes committed by its predecessors at the dawn of the past century, modern Turkey established a direct link with those tragic times. By engaging in another conflict with Yerevan, which resulted in the economic blockade of Armenia, Ankara started to be increasingly perceived as a returning threat by Armenians all around the world:

“The Karabakh problem occupies rather an important place in the list of contradictions between Armenia and Turkey. Several researchers even advance it to the first place. One can say that in this issue, the sides' positions are contrary. Turkey fully supports Azerbaijan, which is ethnically close to it and comes out for restoration of its territorial integrity i.e. for maintenance of Karabakh settled with Armenians as part of Azerbaijan. In contrast to Turkey, Armenia supports the Karabakh population's right of national self-determination.”<sup>190</sup>

Corey Welt is right when he points to a subtle change in the Turkish policy towards its relations with Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh at the onset of the Swiss-American mediation: “Turkey had not dropped conditionality; it had just sought to make it more respectable. The Turkish government appears to have believed that participating in negotiations would enable it to demonstrate a sincere desire to normalize relations, chart a clear vision for the future of Turkish-Armenian relations, and, possibly, ease the way for Armenia to adopt a more pliable position on

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<sup>190</sup> Safrastyan, Rouben, *Armenian-Turkish Relations: From Interstate Dispute to Neighborliness*, CPS International Policy Fellowship Program, 2003-2004, p.6

the Karabakh conflict.”<sup>191</sup>

Both prior to and after the signing of the Turkish-Armenian Protocols the Turkish authorities would repeatedly release public statements establishing a link between the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution and normalization of relations with Armenia. This was a message to Azerbaijan, which became increasingly suspicious about any positive development in the Swiss-American mediation of *football diplomacy*. While President Gul’s remarks towards that end were always more or less reserved, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s statements and interviews were much more straightforward and negative: “We will not sign a final deal with Armenia unless there is agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia on Nagorno Karabakh.”<sup>192</sup>

On a different occasion speaking to an Azerbaijani TV channel Prime Minister Erdoğan stated: “Our borders were closed after the occupation of Nagorno Karabakh. We will not open borders as long as the occupation continues. Who says this? The prime minister of the Turkish Republic says this. Can there be any guarantee here apart from this?”<sup>193</sup> It should be stressed that the border with Armenia was never open. This is just another attempt to mislead the international community, as it was only the border checkpoints that were closed in 1993.

Since 2009 the US Government has tried to cautiously de-link the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution from the Armenian-Turkish normalization process: “The United States welcomes the statement made by Armenia and Turkey on normalization of their bilateral relations. It has long been and remains the position of the United States that normalization should take place without preconditions and within a reasonable timeframe.”<sup>194</sup>

Secretary Clinton also stressed the importance of establishing bilateral diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey without any political preconditions. She reiterated America’s strong support for normalization roadmap “within a reasonable timeframe” and without political “preconditions”.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup>Welt, Cory, Turkish-Armenian Normalisation and the Karabakh Conflict, p. 211, <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CoryWelt.pdf>

<sup>192</sup> Agence France Presse, *Turkish PM Sets Conditions to Armenia Reconciliation: Report*, 10 April 2009

<sup>193</sup> ANS TV (Baku), 13 May 2009

<sup>194</sup> US Department of State, “Press Statement: Turkey and Armenia: Normalization of Relations”, April 22, 2009, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/04/122065.htm>, consulted 22 January 2013

<sup>195</sup> US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, 28 September, 2009, U.S. Department of State, “Remarks With

When asked about their expectations from Turkish foreign policy in 2014, high-level representatives of both the US and Switzerland singled out normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations as one of the top five priorities. They emphasized that the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border “ is in Western interests”. Yet, simultaneously, they claimed that the Karabagh issue had to be resolved to maintain regional balance, taking into account the special relationship and ethnic kinship between Azerbaijan and Turkey. These representatives also stressed the need to provide “new inroads for Moscow”<sup>196</sup> respecting Russia’s regional security interests that might not always coincide with those of the US and Europe.

Senior analyst of the International Crisis Group and editor-in-chief of Turkish Policy Quarterly Nigar Goksel Diba predicted additional domestic complications in Turkey with regard to a potential rapprochement with Armenia in the wake of presidential and parliamentary elections in spring 2015. Goksel pointed to hypersensitivity of the public opinion in Turkey to any hypothetical deterioration of relations with Azerbaijan and also spoke about a perceived threat of the international recognition of the 1915 genocide during the centennial anniversary. Spring 2015 was feared to be the time, when “Armenian leverage” in the international arena and “over Turkey”<sup>197</sup> would increase exponentially.

Meanwhile, Yerevan, in Goksel’s opinion, might have had an impression that the growing international pressure on Turkey to open the border with Armenia during the centennial anniversary of the Genocide would enable the Sargsyan administration to be more hardline in the Karabagh negotiations. Azerbaijan in its turn, after a continuous military build-up would feel that “time is on its side”. Goksel came to a conclusion that all interested parties “can be seen holding their breaths. Seen from this perspective, at this time of regional geopolitical flux, for Western capitals to expect Ankara, Yerevan, or Baku to act against their perceived self-interests

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Armenian Foreign Minister H.E. Edward Nalbandian After Their Meeting”, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/09/129687.htm>, consulted February 11, 2012, from Cory Welt, Ibid

<sup>196</sup> Goksel, Diba Nigar, Crimea, Nagorno-Karabakh and the Gordian Knot Is this an opportune moment for Eurasian powers to tackle the festering Nagorno-Karabakh conflict? Al Jazeera, April 22, 2014, available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/04/crimea-nagorno-karabakh-gordian--20144227732506984.html>, Diba Nigar Goksel is the editor in chief of the Turkish Quarterly, consulted June 3, 2014

<sup>197</sup> Ibid

could backfire in ways that play into Moscow's hand."<sup>198</sup>

The low degree of EU's involvement in the Karabagh conflict resolution, as well as in Turkish-Armenian normalization process was discussed within the framework of a roundtable on the South Caucasus, organized by the RFE in 2008 and in the Second Report of the Independent Commission on Turkey in 2009. The roundtable discussion focused on the EU's inability "to use its institutional links to Turkey and Armenia and prevent the failure of the process". Such a "limited and cautious engagement" also had a negative impact on the EU's role in the Karabagh talks. According to the RFE, the EU's engagement in the South Caucasus has mainly been limited to the support of pro-Western Georgia and the pursuance of oil and gas interests in the Caspian basin.<sup>199</sup>

The Second Report of the Independent Commission on Turkey highlighted the important interconnection among three different problems: "the events of 1915, Turkey-Armenia normalization and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict."<sup>200</sup> It is obvious that a breakthrough in negotiations on one of these issues "would have a positive impact on the others." However, in our opinion, making the resolution of one of the above-mentioned problems a precondition for a progress in the negotiations on the other two issues would be nothing but a zero sum game. The report emphasizes: "keeping the Turkey- Armenia border closed for 16 years has not helped Azerbaijan win back any territory... An Armenia made to feel more secure by a normalized relationship with Turkey, on the contrary, could start the ball rolling for progress in settling this conflict..."<sup>201</sup>

Similarly a progress in Turkish-Armenian normalization talks would have a positive impact on the reconciliation prospects over the events of 1915 and "vice-versa."<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid

<sup>199</sup> RFE/RL, 2008, *Roundtable: Is EU Choosing Stability Over Democracy In The South Caucasus?* Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 28 November. Available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1354244.html> (accessed 10 July 2013)

<sup>200</sup> Second Report of the Independent Commission on Turkey September 2009, *Turkey in Europe: Breaking the Vicious Circle*, p.32, Available at: [http://www.independentcommissiononturkey.org/pdfs/2009\\_english.pdf](http://www.independentcommissiononturkey.org/pdfs/2009_english.pdf), accessed May 27, 2013

<sup>201</sup> Ibid

<sup>202</sup> Ibid

A number of legitimate questions arise in the context of the EU's policy and mediation activities in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region:

- Why wasn't the EU more proactive in mediating the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement?
- Why did it not include Turkish-Armenian relations in the portfolio of the Special Representative to the South Caucasus first appointed in 2002?
- Why would it limit its role to several polite statements welcoming the progress in Armenian-Turkish dialogue and Javier Solana's presence at the signing ceremony in Zurich?

Before addressing the reasons behind the EU's passive stance in the Turkish-Armenian normalization process one general observation has to be made:

"In analysing the role of the EU in conflict resolution, the ES and CR literatures stand to benefit from a closer engagement with each other. Insights from the CR literature would enable European Studies scholars to put the conflict-resolution activities of the EU in a broader context with other possible third-party roles. More specifically, there is not much of a discussion among European Studies scholars on how the EU may engage in direct interventions to the conflict process, which lead the conflict parties to a negotiated solution of their disputes. In fact, what are referred to as 'direct' interventions in the ES literature are considered to be structural interventions in the CR literature, precisely because they leave the actual resolution of the conflicts to the conflict parties."<sup>203</sup>

On the one hand, with uncertainty and absence of a unanimous position about Turkey's membership plans and accession to the organization, the perfect diplomatic failure of *signed but not ratified* protocols in Zurich was very much in line with the EU's current position and interest. On the other hand, since "the major driving force of EU engagement in the South Caucasus is EU interest in Caspian energy", Brussels, just like Ankara, did not want to alienate Azerbaijan by brokering the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border before the Nagorno Karabagh conflict had been resolved:

"Early EU engagement in the security of the South Caucasus was practically inexistent. Russia took the lead in the management of these conflicts, which posed a direct challenge to its own internal security. In a sense, both the EU and Russia proved status-quo powers as regards regional security. This, however, began to

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<sup>203</sup>Celik, Ayse Betul and Rumelli, Bahar, Ibid, p.214

change due to the revisionist stances evidenced by all the sides and to a new regional and international context.”<sup>204</sup>

The division of labor and the spheres of influence with Russia is still very much in progress. This is another reason why the mediation of Turkish-Armenian talks and the facilitation of NK negotiation process have not, as yet, been viewed as political priority by the EU. Hence, the international mediation of the former is comfortably left for the US and Switzerland, the second is yielded primarily to Russia, to a lesser extent, to the US and France, which together with Russia are the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs. It should be noted here that France’s role in the Karabagh mediation is rather that of an individual country, acting under the auspices of the OSCE, while in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict President Sarkozy mediated on behalf of the EU.

A new distribution of mediation roles in the South Caucasus came to the fore after the August 2008 war in South Ossetia. While Russia remained actively engaged in the mediation of the Karabagh talks, simultaneously assuming a supporting role in the facilitation of *football diplomacy*, the EU made an attempt to become a security guarantor for Georgia, brokering Tbilisi’s talks with Moscow.

Dr. Licínia Simão maintained that one of the reasons why a closer EU-Russia cooperation in the South Caucasus proved to be impossible was “the EU’s lack of direct mediation role and poor involvement, both at the high political level of the official peace process and inside Nagorno-Karabakh”<sup>205</sup> The same can be said about EU’s engagement in the mediation of Armenian-Turkish relations.

The evolution of EU’s role in the mediation of Turkish-Armenian relations could have been expected in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership Program (EaP). In this respect it is quite interesting to read through some of the provisions of a doctrinal article by Štefan Füle, the Commissioner responsible for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy. It is not surprising the article first focuses on Turkey’s accession plans to the European Union. In Füle’s opinion, Turkey-an important regional player and the EU can successfully cooperate in the shared geographical neighborhood to transform and

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<sup>204</sup> Simão, Licínia EU-Russia Security Relations: Lessons from the South Caucasus, p.15, WISC, Third Global International Studies Conference, University of Porto, 17-20 August 2011, available at: [http://www.wiscnetwork.org/porto2011/papers/WISC\\_2011-783.pdf](http://www.wiscnetwork.org/porto2011/papers/WISC_2011-783.pdf), accessed November 1, 2014

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, p.18

bring it closer to European economic and political standards. The EU and Turkey have a common goal of promoting stability in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region, which will help to secure uninterrupted “supply of energy resources”.<sup>206</sup>

Füle views Turkey as “a natural bridge between the EU and Turkey’s Eastern and Southern neighbors.” He makes a very important conclusion that to provide prosperous future for the entire region all borders need to be opened, which “should be our common endeavour...”<sup>207</sup> This is actually the first time, the EU’s high-ranking official made a *clear* statement about “common endeavour”, i.e. the organization’s potential mediation efforts within the framework of Turkish-Armenian normalization talks.

In the remarks made with regard to Armenia negotiations with the EaP, Štefan Füle, spoke about the normalization of the relations with Turkey putting it into the wider context of European integration:

“Regional stability is key to the country, to the region and to Europe as a whole. As Commissioner for Enlargement and the Neighbourhood Policy, I strongly support the efforts made by Armenia and Turkey to turn a page in their history and build a new future. Clearly, the ratification and implementation of the protocols establishing diplomatic relations and developing bilateral relations would be a significant step towards peace and stability across the wider region. The EU will also step up its efforts in support of a settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.”<sup>208</sup>

While the EU is obviously starting to see a greater role for itself in the Armenian-Turkish normalization process within the framework of the EaP, it simultaneously continues to link it to the Karabagh talks.

The initial draft of the Eastern Partnership program referred to the 27 EU states plus Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as “European countries”. The initiative has been described as the “boldest outreach of the EU since the accessions of 2004 and 2007.”<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Füle, Štefan, *Turkey and the European Neighborhood Policy*, Turkish Policy Quarterly, Volume 10, Number 2, 2011, available at: [http://turkishpolicy.com/pdf/vol\\_10-no\\_2-fule.pdf](http://turkishpolicy.com/pdf/vol_10-no_2-fule.pdf), consulted April 10, 2014

<sup>207</sup> Ibid

<sup>208</sup> Füle, Štefan, *The EU and Armenia: Fully exploiting the potential for closer relationship*, March 24, 2010, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission\\_2010-2014/fule/headlines/articles/index\\_en.htm#top](http://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission_2010-2014/fule/headlines/articles/index_en.htm#top), consulted June 14, 2013

<sup>209</sup> Wodka, Jakub, *Union for the Mediterranean and Eastern partnership geopolitical interests or complementary*



There were different attempts to establish a working synergy between the Caucasus Security and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) and the EaP/ENP. In 2008-2009, before the Crimean crisis, Russia was also seen both by Brussels and Ankara as a key actor in safeguarding viable interconnection between the programs offered by regional players and those originating from supra-regional power centers.

Deniz Devrim and Evelina Schulz suggest that to achieve the strategic goal of sustainable peace and stability in Europe and its neighborhood the EU should foster a closer working relationship with Russia and Turkey. The cooperation with both countries is interconnected. Whereas Russia is traditionally much more influential in “the eastern European neighborhood and is a key player for energy supply”, Turkey has a powerful foothold in the southeast. The latter being “EU membership candidate country and sharing an overlapping eastern neighborhood with the EU in the Balkans and the South Caucasus” should be viewed as Brussels’s most important strategic ally. Devrim and Schultz describe Turkey’s role in the European neighborhood as “Russia’s soft power mirror image.”<sup>210</sup> Since Brussels itself prefers to exercise a soft power approach in the South Caucasus and Balkans, Ankara’s *zero problems with neighbors* is “very much in line with the EU foreign policy.” This is why, according to Devrim and Schultz, “Turkey has also started to use the EU’s example of soft security in dealing with its neighbors. Therefore, their policies should be understood as complementary.”<sup>211</sup>

While such an inference is not without merit, the authors fail to note that Turkey’s blockade of Armenia has nothing to do with the *soft power approach*.

The dynamics of EU-Russia relations is changing rapidly. This became particularly palpable in the context of the current standoff with Russia in Ukraine. What was once perceived as the division of labor has gradually transformed into very much antagonized regional rivalry:

“Moscow also acquiesced to the process of normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey. Although Russia remains dissatisfied with the increasing external presence in Eurasia, it has adjusted to the

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concepts? Turkish Quarterly, Volume 9, Number 3, pp. 154-155

<sup>210</sup> Devrim, Devrim and Schultz, Evelina, The Caucasus: Which Role for Turkey in the European Neighborhood?, Insight Turkey, Vol. 11, N 3, 2009, pp. 177-193

<sup>211</sup> Ibid

new realities. Russia has retained a veto power over the protracted conflicts and is now better positioned to control the region, after having lost its military presence in Georgia in 2007.”<sup>212</sup>

Margarita Antidze presented her views on Russia’s regional advantages in the context of the partial failure of the Swiss-American mediation of the *football diplomacy*: “In the meantime, the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement did not reach fruition, stalling the Nagorno-Karabakh peace talks and straining Azerbaijani-Turkish relations, granting Russia short-term advantages.”<sup>213</sup>

Should Brussels decide to engage in the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations it can put it into the context of a dialogue between an ENP/EaP participant (Armenia) and a membership candidate country (Turkey). The EU might assume a framework role, rather than that of a mediator between the conflicting parties.

Leading European experts Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci suggest that Turkey’s accession to the EU would strengthen Brussels’s in the “Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Mediterranean regions.”<sup>214</sup> The EU’s virtual borders could now extend as far as the South Caucasus and even “Iraq and Iran”.<sup>215</sup>

This is an incomparably less antagonistic engagement venue for the EU, as Russia, is not a party to the Armenian-Turkish standoff. Taking into account positive shifts in the nature of its recent relations with Ankara, Moscow could even welcome international mediation that would have the potential to promote the Armenian-Turkish normalization process. Many international experts are of the opinion that the current situation around Ukraine brings about the need to re-think the EU’s policy in Eastern Europe. It is necessary to take into account the interconnectedness of political processes in the Black Sea region. It is in this context that Diba Nigar Goksel, despite recent domestic turmoil in Turkey, offers to give new support to Ankara’s EU accession plans, which “can significantly tip regional balances, reduce the range of unpredictability in the region and empower pro-European forces, not only in Turkey, but also in the Caucasus.”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Antidze, Margarita, “Russia Closes Last Military Base in Georgia”, *Reuters*, 13 November, 2007, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/11/13/us-georgia->), consulted June 12, 2013

<sup>213</sup> Ibid, p.7

<sup>214</sup> Emerson, Michael and Tocci, Nathalie, *Turkey as a Bridgehead and Spearhead Integrating EU and Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 8, Center for European Policy Studies, August, N 4, EU-Turkey Working Papers

<sup>215</sup> Ibid

<sup>216</sup> Goksel, Diba Nigar, Ibid

Since the introduction of the EaP the EU has viewed the outreach to Russia and Turkey - two important regional power centers, in one package:

“An essential change introduced as part of the Eastern Partnership is the development of mechanisms of multilateral co-operation between the EU and its neighbours and between the neighbours themselves. Up to now, the activities within the ENP consisted only in maintaining bilateral relations between the EU and a country covered by the neighbourhood policy but it has not involved stimulating multilateral co-operation. What is new in the Eastern Partnership is that it focuses on the development of multilateral cooperation because it helps solve many problems of the partner states regarding trade, transport or energy. In this respect, the European Commission also names Russia and Turkey as prospective partners in shaping the co-operation between the EU and its neighbours.”<sup>217</sup>

As described above, during the mid 90s and early 2000s the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border evolved from a bilateral issue to a question of regional importance within the framework of the European neighbourhood. In recent years, against the backdrop of geopolitical changes in the Middle East, it has started to be viewed in the global context of Eurasian and Euro-Atlantic security. Taking into account new geopolitical circumstances it is logical to expect that not only the EU, but also the OSCE might soon become involved in the mediation of Armenian-Turkish relations. Whereas the EU can focus both on reconciliation and normalization, the OSCE's role as an organization dealing primarily with global and regional security, should only be limited to mediating the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border. As a possible counter-argument against the OSCE involvement it can be stressed that “the institutional set-up of the OSCE - such as its decision-making procedures, the annual rotation of the Chairman-in-Office and its make-up as an intergovernmental body - unavoidably impedes some of the swiftness and effectiveness of its conflict resolution capabilities.”<sup>218</sup>

However, this point would have been more valid with regard to active military conflicts that have originated after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. As for the Turkey-Armenia standoff, it belongs to a different category of regional conflicts and should be viewed in two different dimensions: “Armenian-Turkish conflict is different from other intractable conflicts. There is no violence at the moment, although the past is a violent one. Dealing with the past and

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<sup>217</sup> Adamczyk, Artur, *The Role of Poland in the Creation Process of the Eastern Partnership*, *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*, 13/2010, p. 200,

<sup>218</sup> See S. Neil MacFarlane, *The UN, the OSCE, and the Southern Caucasus*, in: *Caspian Crossroads* 1/1997, pp. 18-23

its legacy weighs heavily. Unlike in other peace-building contexts, preventing or ending violence is not an issue. It is more about healing a broken relationship, rebuilding trust, and coming to terms with the past while also building positive and constructive relations between the two neighboring states. It also has a present dimension with the closed border.”<sup>219</sup>

The process of normalization primarily relates not to the historical roots, but to the contemporary history, during which Turkey unilaterally closed the border and imposed economic blockade on Armenia.

The EU does have a longer-term mediation role to play in the reconciliation between the two nations, because the Armenian Genocide is a part of the common European history. It is noteworthy that since 2014, a year before the centennial anniversary of the Genocide and five years after the signing ceremony in Zurich, the EU has become more actively involved in the funding and facilitation of cross-border reconciliation projects within the framework of Track II diplomacy: “The Support of the Turkey-Armenia Normalization Process has brought together eight civil society organizations – four Turkish, four Armenian – to work towards the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia. Beginning in January 2014, the EU-funded project will run for 18 months. The civil society groups consortium seeks to establish harmonious relations by promoting people-to-people contact, economic and business links, and cultural and educational activities, while facilitating access to more balanced information in Armenia and Turkey.”<sup>220</sup>

As for the BSEC, the organization can continue increasing its role as facilitator, providing logistical support for Armenian-Turkish negotiations. The Armenian diplomatic representation in Istanbul should by no means be viewed as a substitute for an embassy. On the other hand, with the help of international mediators, the US in particular, it can increase its role and importance as a back channel for Armenian-Turkish dialogue.

It would have been quite natural if NATO’s role as a mediator between Turkey - a member of NATO, and Armenia - an active participant of the Partnership for Peace, PARP and IPAP, was much more active. However, so far NATO limited its engagement to occasional welcoming

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<sup>219</sup> Çuhadar , Gültekin-Punsmann, Ibid

<sup>220</sup> Pittman, Mariah, *Civil Society Creates Dialogue between Turkey and Armenia*, Peace Direct, July 25, 2014, available at: <http://www.insightonconflict.org/2014/07/civil-society-dialogue-turkey-armenia/>, consulted May 15, 2015

statements and encouragement of participation of Turkish and Armenian officials in joint inspections and exercises.

Once NATO made its involvement more tangible, it also addressed the issue of establishing the link between Turkish-Armenian rapprochement and the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, making the interconnection between these two different problems a point of academic discussions. Five months after the signing of the Zurich Protocols a regional conference was convened in Armenia under the auspices of NATO's Parliamentary Assembly, One of its panels was on Turkey-Armenia relations. Sabine Freizer, Europe Program Director of the International Crisis Group gave the following perspective of the Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement: "if progress on Nagorno-Karabakh is achieved, protocol ratification will become virtually automatic. But in the absence of this, Turkey and Armenia need to be encouraged to demonstrate the political will and seize the historical opportunity to move forward. The two countries have a mounting number of bilateral issues that need to be resolved, including establishing effective counsellor services to assist their citizens living or travelling on the other side of the Turkish-Armenian border."<sup>221</sup>

Another participant, Alexander Iskandaryan was quite sceptical about the prospects of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, because of "unacceptable preconditions" put forward by Ankara. Yerevan, in its turn, had to deal with emotional reactions by some "opposition forces, intellectuals, journalists and non-governmental actors" to the outcome of *football diplomacy*. The difference between the two capitals was that "in Turkey, opposition to the normalisation also comes from within the administration itself."<sup>222</sup>

The remarks of official representatives of Armenia and Turkey, Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian and Suat Kiniklioglu, member of the Turkish delegation to the NATO PA, are also noteworthy. Kirakossian made it clear that having signed the two protocols in Zurich, Yerevan embarked upon a ratification process that was on course to be completed "within a

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<sup>221</sup> NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Regional Developments in the South Caucasus: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects (Report), Yerevan March 11-13, 2010, available at: <http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=2183>, consulted February 11, 2013

<sup>222</sup> Ibid

reasonable time frame.” This was when Turkey returned to square one, linking the rapprochement with Armenia with the Karabagh conflict resolution.<sup>223</sup>

Kiniklioglu tried to put Ankara’s position on a rapprochement with Armenia into a common context of European integration. He traced back the roots of *football diplomacy* to 2002, when Turkey first launched the policy of *zero problems with neighbours*, which was partly synchronized with European Neighbourhood policy. It was based on an argument that “Turkey was a country on the edge of Europe, but rather at the centre of intersection of 5 regions – the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Black Sea, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean.” In Kiniklioglu’s opinion, the link between Turkish-Armenian talks and the Karabagh conflict resolution “should not be seen as a precondition”, but as “two parallel processes that are mutually reinforcing.”<sup>224</sup>

In September 2010, NATO conducted a weeklong exercise in the Kotayk region of Armenia, where around 25 member countries and partners, Turkey included, were invited to participate. Initially Turkey decided to send a delegation to Armenia: “A senior Turkish diplomat said on condition of anonymity that the current state of relations between Turkey and Armenia did not mean NATO member Turkey should abstain from a NATO exercise.”<sup>225</sup>

“Armenia 2010” was NATO’s first annual exercise to be held in the South Caucasus. It was also “the first field exercise open to countries participating in NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).”<sup>226</sup> With NATO’s facilitation a temporary opening of the Turkish-Armenian border had been planned, through which the Turkish delegates were going to arrive in Armenia. Given the significance of the NATO umbrella, this could have been an important step in the normalization of relations between the two countries. The plan was leaked to the press and the temporary opening of the border never happened. The last minute change was as always accounted for by angry reactions from the Azerbaijani government.

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid

<sup>224</sup> Ibid

<sup>225</sup> DefenseNews, Turkey to Take Part in NATO Exercises in Armenia, by Burak Ege Bekdil and Umit Enginsoy, July 19, 2010, available at: <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20100719/DEFSECT04/7190311/Turkey-Take-Part-NATO-Exercises-Armenia>, accessed June 19, 2011

<sup>226</sup> Armenia Hosts NATO’s Annual Disaster Response Exercise, September 16, 2010, available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_66198.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_66198.htm), accessed June 19, 2011

Speaking to reporters in the Doğanşehir district of the central Anatolian province of Konya, Davutoglu said that while Turkey would definitely send a delegation to Yerevan, even a temporary opening of the border with Armenia during the NATO exercise was “out of the question”. This comment was addressed to the Azerbaijani administration that had already started to voice its discontent. Davutoglu also appeared on Azerbaijani ANS television channel to state that Turkey’s “approach [with regard to the exercise] is humanistic. But there is nothing on the agenda with respect to opening of borders, this is not an issue of debate...”<sup>227</sup>

To conclude, in the light of the lack of the previous engagement and political limitations described above, the EU, BSEC, OSCE and NATO can only provide a framework or a necessary umbrella for international mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement. Individual countries have always played the key role. There was a substantive link between TARC and the Swiss-American mediation. The recommendations made by the coordinator of TARC to the House Foreign Affairs Committee in May 2009 coincided with the rise of football diplomacy. This allows drawing parallels between the mediation strategy of the Oslo Accords and the Zurich Protocols. In the first case it was Track 1.5 diplomacy that immediately transformed into the official signing ceremony at the White House, in the second case public and official diplomacy were separated by seven years. Both diplomatic initiatives eventually failed. The Swiss-American mediation turned out to be a *perfect failure*, as each direct and indirect participant of the talks benefited from the ambiguous outcome of *football diplomacy*. However, signed, but not ratified Zurich Protocols was a solution acceptable only in the short-term perspective.

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<sup>227</sup> Today’s Zaman, Turkey says Armenia border won’t open during NATO exercise, August 27, 2010, available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy\\_turkey-says-armenia-border-wont-open-during-nato-exercise\\_220187.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-says-armenia-border-wont-open-during-nato-exercise_220187.html), consulted October 11, 2012

## Chapter IV

### ***4.1 Minor mediation and facilitation initiatives by foreign states -A link to the Genocide recognition issue***

While the Swiss-American mediation and TARC can be defined as most significant and continuous initiatives within the framework of Armenia-Turkey official and public diplomacy, there were other short-lived international facilitation offers in the early and mid 2000s that are listed in this chapter. This is important to do not only from the historiographical point of view, but to probe into the political motivation behind the efforts of third countries and non-state actors to normalize Armenia-Turkey relations and to reconcile the two nations. No less interesting are the reasons why some of the third countries, Germany included, preferred not to engage in Track 1 mediation of Armenian-Turkish negotiation, but instead opted to facilitate different academic, cultural and societal initiatives within the framework of Track 2 diplomacy. Some of the European countries, the UK in particular, for a long time chose to avoid engaging in any official or public diplomacy projects with regard to the mediation/facilitation of Armenia-Turkey relations. Among other reasons, this kind of a laid-back attitude was accounted for by the fact that the candidacy of the mediator has to be equally acceptable for each of the conflicting parties. France had its own considerations to stay low-key with regard to brokering proximity talks between Yerevan and Ankara. Political and historical factors that conditioned different approaches by third countries to the question of the mediation/facilitation of Armenia-Turkey relations are discussed in this chapter.

Minor, almost unknown initiatives by third countries to mediate the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations within Track 1 diplomatic format are the following:

- Canadian Foreign Ministry initiative (2003)
- Lebanese Prime-Minister's initiative (2002-2003)
- Italian Prime- Minister's initiative (2005)

Italian and Lebanese initiatives to mediate Turkish-Armenian dialogue were very short-lived and can be clustered together. Both were based on the factor of personal relationships and both were proposed at high-ranking level. The late Prime Minister Rafic Hariri offered to use his friendly relations with both Turkish and Armenian presidents to facilitate a political dialogue



between the two. The initiative was communicated to the Armenian side at Hariri's meeting with Kocharian during his official visit to Yerevan in 2003. The idea of it had also been voiced during Kocharian's visit to Lebanon in 2002. There was little follow-up in the next two years, while the offer itself vaporized with the assassination of Rafic Hariri in February 2005.

Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian Prime Minister offered to facilitate Track I talks between Yerevan and Ankara during President Kocharian's official visit to Rome in January 2005. He tried to capitalize on his personal friendship and even some family ties with the then Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Erdoğan. Kocharian's reaction to this initiative was lukewarm, but generally positive, while Ankara's consent seemed to have already been secured. However, the resignation of Silvio Berlusconi in the next couple of months rendered the Italian offer void. When he returned to power in May 2008, President Kocharian was no longer in office.<sup>228</sup>

Syrian President Bashar al Assad also voiced a desire to mediate Armenian-Turkish talks during his official visit to Yerevan in 2009. He made a statement welcoming Armenia's *football diplomacy* with Turkey and "offered to mediate more fence-mending negotiations between the two neighbors". Speaking to reporters after the meeting with President Serge Sargsyan, al-Assad said: "I told the president of Armenia that we are ready to help move forward those relations."<sup>229</sup> There was no follow-up at all, as for understandable reasons and because of regional developments in the following years this offer was never materialized.

By an interesting coincidence Canada, Lebanon and Italy are among those countries whose parliaments did officially recognize the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. This throws light upon the motivation of their governments to come with offers to mediate the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations. The legislative authorities of these countries passed the corresponding resolutions despite certain resistance from their executive branches that did not want to jeopardize their political and economic relations with Turkey. Consecutive Canadian governments, for example, had resisted all attempts of the legislative authorities to recognize the events of 1915 as Genocide for decades, up until April 2004, when the Parliament passed the Armenian Genocide resolution. On April 25, 2004 the House of Commons had broken the long

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<sup>228</sup> The author of this dissertation was appointed Armenia's Ambassador to Italy two weeks after Kocharian's visit to Rome and was briefed about this offer by the foreign ministries of both countries.

<sup>229</sup> Asbarez.com, Syria offers to mediate Turkish-Armenian talks, June 17, 2009, Available at: <http://asbarez.com/64751/syria-offers-to-mediate-turkish-armenian-talks/>, consulted January 16, 2013

years of silence and passed a resolution holding Turkey responsible for the Genocide against Armenians in 1915. The resolution was put on vote and passed by overwhelming majority of 153-68. The House recognized the Armenian genocide and condemned it as “a crime against humanity.”<sup>230</sup> It is noteworthy that several days before the vote, Bill Graham, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada issued a cautious statement saying that “Canada has had friendly and co-operative relations with Turkey and Armenia for many years. The Canadian government is committed to make these relationships even stronger in the future.”<sup>231</sup>

Canada was among the first countries to welcome the official results of *football diplomacy*: “Canada is strongly in favor of Armenian-Turkish reconciliation, and welcomes the two governments’ efforts to normalize relations,” said Minister Cannon. “These protocols represent a vital step toward that goal and to opening the border between Armenia and Turkey. They also make an important contribution to enhancing regional peace and security.”<sup>232</sup>

In 2004 the Canadian Foreign Ministry had sent official letters to Ankara and Yerevan offering to mediate a Turkish-Armenian dialogue. Both countries cautiously welcomed the initiative, but were skeptical about the prospects of the Canadian mediation. This is why Canada tried to play a more modest role, time and again facilitating Track 2 Turkey-Armenia projects with the help of local NGOs: “The Mosaic Institute invited to Toronto, Kaan Soyak, the Co-Chair of The Turkish Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC) to address a group of Canadians of Turkish and Armenian origin at a dinner reception...The Embassies of both Turkey and Armenia in Ottawa sent senior representatives to the Toronto meeting convened by the Mosaic Institute. In addition, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada sent a senior diplomat to be present at the Mosaic Institute event.”<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> CBC News, *Canadian Parliament Recognizes Armenian Genocide*. posted on April 25, 2004, available at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canadian-parliament-recognizes-armenian-genocide-1.509866>, consulted February 19, 2013

<sup>231</sup> Ibid

<sup>232</sup> No. 304 - October 10, 2009 - 3:45 p.m. EDT, The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today welcomed the signing of protocols on diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey. Available at: [www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communiqués/2009/304.aspx?lang=eng](http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communiqués/2009/304.aspx?lang=eng), accessed January 14, 2013

<sup>233</sup> Mosaic institute hosts Turkish Armenian business development council in Toronto), available at <http://www.tabdc.org/mosaic-institute-hosts-turkish-armenian-business-development-council-in-toronto>, accessed January 14, 2013

The same attitude of “dodging the sensitive issue” by refraining from calling the events of 1915 a Genocide had been typical for the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs for many years. According to *Hurriet Daily News*, Swiss Foreign Minister Joseph Deiss, trying to disassociate himself and the Government from the pending resolution by the National Council mentioned that he “did not expect the recognition of so-called Armenian genocide by the Swiss Parliament to effect the relations between Turkey and Switzerland, the state-run Anatolia news agency reported. Responding to questions on the motion, which has been signed by 113 Swiss lawmakers and asks Parliament to recognize the so-called Armenian genocide, Deiss stressed that the government was not willing to be a party to the issue.”<sup>234</sup>

As described above, Switzerland emerged as an active facilitator of the negotiations on the Turkish-Armenian protocols shortly after the National Council of Switzerland had adopted a bill classifying the mass killings of the Armenians in Turkey in 1915-1918 as Genocide.

One can suggest that the unexpected outburst of new diplomatic initiatives by the executive authorities of the above-mentioned countries can, along with other reasons, be accounted for by their desire to take demonstrable steps to *restore* artificial *parity* in their approach to the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation and normalization processes. Some of the international proposals to facilitate a dialogue between Ankara and Yerevan might be considered as a message sent primarily to Turkey as a reassurance of friendship after the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the parliaments of the countries in question. While on the one hand, no one can doubt the genuine desire of the potential mediators to help the two nations overcome the tragic past, on the other hand, the new *realpolitik* manifests itself as a tactical attempt to backpedal from the recognition of the historical truth.

Swiss mediation, facilitation and protective power diplomacy have a long and successful tradition. In the XXI century this tradition continues to play an important role in Swiss foreign policy, despite the fact that the number of protective power mandates has been gradually reduced. Having been as high as 219 mandates for 35 countries during WWII and 24 during the

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<sup>234</sup> Hurriet Daily News, *Swiss Foreign Minister Hopes Recognition of Armenian Genocide Will not Affect Bilateral Ties*, March 29, 2002. Available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=swiss-foreign-minister-hopes-recognition-of-armenian-genocide-will-not-affect-bilateral-ties-2002-03-29>, accessed January 16, 2013

Cold War<sup>235</sup>, it is presently limited to six. Switzerland has represented the US in Cuba since 1961; Cuba in the US since 1991; Iran in Egypt May 9, 1979; the US in Iran, April 24, 1980; Russia in Georgia, December 13, Georgia in Russia, January 12, 2009. Therefore, distinct from other diplomatic initiatives described above, Switzerland's mediation of the Armenian-Turkish normalization talks in 2006-2009 should be viewed in the general context of the long-standing foreign policy traditions of this country.

In 2005, on the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the German Bundestag passed a resolution calling upon the German government to facilitate a process of Armenian-Turkish understanding and reconciliation. As for the methodology of the mediation, German Track 2 initiatives stand out as quite different from those proposed by other countries, the United States in particular. First, they are focused on reconciliation between the two nations, and are not erroneously merged with the elements of normalization of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia. Second, reconciliation itself is based not on the concept of transitional justice, but on the need to overcome the psychological consequences of the Genocide, the fact of which is not questioned.

Germany's participation in Track 2 mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement is a special case. While the governments of Canada, Lebanon, Italy and Switzerland offered to mediate the relations between Yerevan and Ankara with a view to first and foremost *make it up* to Turkey after the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by their respective parliaments; the increasing involvement of German think tanks into Armenian-Turkish reconciliation projects can be accounted for by the "German responsibility"<sup>236</sup> in the events of 1915 and, therefore, by a desire to somehow *make it up* to Armenia. "German responsibility", based on the reports by Ambassador Vangenheim and Consul Shoibner, German diplomats accredited to Turkey in 1915, is well documented in Dr. Nikolay Hovhannisyan's book *The Armenian Genocide. Armenocide*.<sup>237</sup> In the light of the aforesaid, it is also logical to suggest that the intensification of Germany's facilitation efforts to promote Armenian-Turkish reconciliation can be accounted for by the fact

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<sup>235</sup> Stephens, Thomas *Adjusting to the Changing Face of Conflict*, January 25, 2013 available at: <http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/adjusting-to-the-changing-face-of-conflicts/34761468>, consulted February 20, 2013

<sup>236</sup> See Dadrian, Vahakn, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide, Evidence of German Complicity*, Watertown 1996: Blue Crane Books

<sup>237</sup> Hovhannisyan, Nikolay, *The Armenian Genocide. Armenocide - The Most Genocidal Genocide*, pp. 81-82, 2015, a collection of monographic studies of Dr. Hovhannisyan, previously published in 2002-2009

that it bears the heavy burden of full responsibility for the Holocaust, and, therefore, tries to avoid being associated with another crime against humanity.

The Serge Sargsyan administration never viewed the establishment of diplomatic relations with Turkey and the possible opening of the common border as a final deal cancelling the collective memory of the tragic past. In his interview to the BBC Russian Service, President Sargsyan tried to make the above-mentioned point clear, which caught the eye of international media. *Huffington Post* wrote: "Armenian President Serge Sarkisian indicated the dispute would not be a deal-breaker between the two neighbors. "It's important that historical justice be restored. It's important that our nations are able to establish normal relations... But we do not regard a recognition of genocide as a preliminary condition for establishing relations."<sup>238</sup> The article drew an important parallel with the German-Israeli rapprochement: "Illustrating just how intractable the Armenia-Turkey dispute has been, Israel and Germany managed to establish diplomatic relations in 1965, just 20 years after the end of the Holocaust, in which German Nazis and their collaborators murdered 6 million Jews. Today, the two nations enjoy close ties. In contrast to Turkey, however, Germany accepted responsibility for the genocide immediately after the war and began paying reparations to Jewish survivors."<sup>239</sup>

While Germany was quite active mediating Track 2 Turkish-Armenian initiatives, several months before the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide it also offered to share its experience with regard to Track 1 talks. The initiative came from the German foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier during his visit to Yerevan in 2014. He offered Germany's assistance in post-conflict reconciliation to Armenia and Turkey "to help them forge peace a century after a World War I –era massacre".<sup>240</sup> Steinmeier mentioned that Germany's "long road to peace and partnership with France could serve as an example for Ankara and Yerevan."<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Huffington Post, Turkey, Armenia Agree to Establish Relations for First Time, by Avet Demourian, October 16, 2009, available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/08/31/turkey-armenia-agree-to-e\\_n\\_273059.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/08/31/turkey-armenia-agree-to-e_n_273059.html), consulted December 18, 2012

<sup>239</sup> Ibid

<sup>240</sup> The Daily Star, Lebanon, Germany Offers Guidance to Reconcile Armenia, Turkey, October 24, 2014, available at: <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Oct-24/275146-germany-offers-guidance-to-reconcile-armenia-turkey.ashx>, consulted December 23, 2014

<sup>241</sup> Ibid

During an official visit to Armenia, Cem Ozdemir a member of the German Bundestag with Turkish roots spoke about the German experience of facing its own history without prejudice and consequently the value of Germany's potential role in mediating Armenian-Turkish relations:

“There are so many sources that prove that we, the Germans, unfortunately have been involved in the Genocide as an ally of Ottoman Empire in that time. I think that Germany should obviously refer to the Armenian Genocide issue. As a friend of two countries, we should help to open the Armenian-Turkish border. As a friend of both countries, we should exert effort, so that the Armenian-Turkish relations become like the French-German or Polish-German relations. Surely, one of the preconditions to achieve it is that each country must face the dark pages of its history, and this is also true for Turkey.”<sup>242</sup>

After visiting the Genocide Museum in Yerevan Ozdemir spoke about Germany's own experience to come to terms with its past. Ozdemir stressed that the Turks who resided in Germany, enjoying all the freedoms of democratic society witnessed that it chose to deal with its history without prejudice. While it was a difficult process, Germany emerged from it not weakened, but stronger. It achieved this because “it was able to resolve its dark pages of history.”<sup>243</sup>

In his article titled “Can Germany Mediate Armenian-Turkish Reconciliation”, Muriel Mirak-Weissbach brings several examples of such mediation. He first speaks about a project, based on the initiative of a member of the Bundestag, Heinz Böke. Böke conducted comprehensive research of the court records of the trial held in Germany on June 2-3, 1921. This was the trial of Soghomon Tehlerjan (Tehlirian) who assassinated “Talaat Pasha on a Berlin street in broad daylight on March 15, 1921.” Heinz Böke considered this historical event to be of great “educational potential” and in 2010, together with his colleagues wrote a play titled “The Talaat Pasha Trial – A Theatre Project for Intercultural Studies,” which was performed in several German cities to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the Genocide.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Asbarez, Turkish-German Lawmaker Calls on Turkey to “Face History”, March 13, 2015, available at: <http://asbarez.com/132961/turkish-german-lawmaker-calls-on-turkey-to-%E2%80%98face-history%E2%80%99/>, last visited March 16, 2015

<sup>243</sup> Ibid

<sup>244</sup> Weissbach-Mirak, Muriel, “Can Germany Mediate Armenian-Turkish Reconciliation?”, October 31, 2011, Global Research, available at: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/can-germany-mediate-armenian-turkish-reconciliation/27388>, last consulted January 11, 2015

The other initiative, described by Mirak-Weissbach was the one introduced by Matthias Klingenberg of the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association. It was a research project titled “Adult Education and Oral History Contributing to Armenian-Turkish Reconciliation.” The German Foreign Ministry sponsored this initiative, which “brought together 10 students from Turkey and 10 from Armenia who received training in October 2009 in conducting oral history interviews” from the best academic experts in the field. These two groups of students were given the opportunity to research the oral history of the 1915 Genocide. The main objective of this reconciliation project “was to facilitate a dialogue among members of the Armenian, Turkish, and Kurdish communities about their common past”.<sup>245</sup> More than a hundred interviews were held with the descendants of the survivors of the Genocide in the Armenian Diaspora, Turkey and the Republic of Armenia, based on which a comprehensive discourse, entitled “Speaking to One Another” was published in three languages –Armenian, Turkish and English.<sup>246</sup>

In December 2014 two German organizations, Lepsiushaus and the International Literature Festival Berlin, launched an initiative for worldwide readings of Armenian literary works to mark the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. <sup>247</sup>

On Nov. 20, at the Bundespressekonferenz in Berlin, Dr. Rolf Hosfeld, director of the Lepsiushaus, and Ulrich Schreiber of the International Literature Festival Berlin, presented the initiative to representatives of the international press. The call issued by the organizers, read as follows: “The International Literature Festival Berlin (ilb) and the Lepsiushaus Potsdam are calling for a worldwide reading on April 24, 2015, the day that marks 100 years since the beginning of the Armenian Genocide.”<sup>248</sup>

Some of such initiatives originate within the progressive circles of the Europeanized Turkish community in Germany. In this regard, an interesting development connected with the fate of a monument symbolizing the tragic past of Turkish-Armenian relations erected and then dismantled in Kars is worth mentioning here:

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid

<sup>246</sup> Ibid

<sup>247</sup> Armenian Mirror- Spectator, German Groups Plan Worldwide Reading Event for Genocide Centennial, December 17, 2014, available at: <http://asbarez.com/129984/german-groups-plan-worldwide-reading-event-for-genocide-centennial/>, consulted January 12, 2015

<sup>248</sup> Weissbach-Mirak, Ibid

“...Artist Mehmet Aksoy created the work as a monument to peace between Turks and Armenians. But on a visit to Kars in January, Erdoğan criticized the monument and lamented its location not far from the tomb of an Islamic scholar. The local municipality, led by Erdogan's party, took him at his word and began dismantling the statue in late April. ...Artist Aksoy... vowed to re-construct the statue. But where? Adnan Oral, a restaurant owner in Berlin, thinks he has a solution. Why not rebuild the statue in the heart of Berlin? SPIEGEL spoke with Oral about his plan.”<sup>249</sup>

The UK's approach to the question of Armenian-Turkish relations is not only different from that of Italy, Canada, Lebanon and Switzerland, but also from Germany's position. First, the British Parliament has never recognized the events of 1915 as Genocide. Second, the Foreign Office has never come forward with any initiative to facilitate the establishment of Armenian-Turkish diplomatic relations.

This, however, does not mean that the British government thought of this issue as a low priority. To understand that the current status of Turkish-Armenian relations is important for the UK, one can look at the recent recommendations and position points with regard to the Armenian Genocide that can be found on the official website of the Foreign Office. Prior to the change mentioned above, the British government had always been consistent in its reluctance to recognize the events of 1915 as Genocide. Suffice it to remember the debates on this issue in the House of Lords on January 22, 2007. In response to the question about the Armenian Genocide asked by Lord Bishop of Manchester, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Parliamentary Affairs, Lord Triesman answered:

“...For this Government, recognition of the so-called Armenian Genocide is not a condition of Turkey's membership of the EU. I wish to be straightforward and clear about that. Neither this Government nor previous British Governments have judged that the evidence is sufficiently unequivocal to persuade us that these events should be characterised as genocide under the 1948 UN convention on genocide”<sup>250</sup>

On March 4, 2008, during another debate on the issue of recognition of the Armenian Genocide, in response to the question asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff the Minister of State Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lord Malloch-Brown answered:

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<sup>249</sup> SPIEGELONLINE, The Art of Turkish-Armenian Relations: Controversial Kars Monument Could Come to Berlin, May 5, 2011, available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/the-art-of-turkish-armenian-relations-controversial-kars-monument-could-come-to-berlin-a-760384.html>, consulted February 21, 2013

<sup>250</sup> Source: the Official Page of the Foreign Ministry of Turkey, Official Position of the British Government on Armenian Allegations, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/official-position-of-the-british-government-on-armenian-allegations.en.mfa>, last consulted January 23, 2015



“The position of the Government on this issue is long-standing. The Government acknowledges the strength of feeling about this terrible episode of history and recognise the massacres of 1915-16 as a tragedy. However neither this Government nor previous Governments have judged that the evidence is sufficiently unequivocal to persuade us that these events should be categorised as genocide as defined by the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide.”<sup>251</sup>

In fact, the general press guidance of the British Government regarding the events of 1915 summarizes the responses given by various representatives of executive authorities to members of the British Parliament:

“What is the UK’s view on the events of 1915? Did Turkey commit “genocide” against the Armenians? Our view is that it is not for governments to decide whether genocide has been committed as this is a complex legal question. Where an international legal body finds a crime to have been genocide, this will often play an important part in whether we will recognise one as such. The massacres that were committed on Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century were rightly and robustly condemned by the British government of the time. Since then, successive British governments, including the current government, have repeatedly acknowledged the massacres and terrible suffering of Armenians..”<sup>252</sup>

Similar debates took place in 2010 and 2012, but the internal documents that unveil the premeditated bias of the British Government with regard to the Armenian Genocide were only released on the eve of the centennial anniversary. In October 2014, a well-respected English lawyer, Geoffrey Robertson published a book titled “An Inconvenient Genocide: Who Now Remembers the Armenians?” The book is based on his 40-page investigative report “Was there an Armenian Genocide?” –an analytical study of internal British documents on the issue in question, obtained through the Freedom Support Act and released in 2009.<sup>253</sup>

In a related article Harut Sassounian pointed to the fact that the recently declassified Foreign Office documents threw light upon the UK’s deliberate attempt to mislead the public with regard to the events of 1915. He cited the memorandum, which the FCO addressed to Minister of State Joyce Quin and other members of the cabinet in 1999. It stated that the British government had no obligation “to decide what constitutes a genocide”, and that it should be the

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid

<sup>252</sup> Available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/359547/FOI\\_ref\\_0298-14\\_Attachment\\_26.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/359547/FOI_ref_0298-14_Attachment_26.pdf), consulted October 3, 2014

<sup>253</sup> Robertson, Geoffrey, *An Inconvenient Genocide: Who Now Remembers the Armenians?* Biteback, October 9, 2014

responsibility of historians to interpret and investigate historical events.<sup>254</sup> This argument reads exactly like the proposal to establish a joint commission of historians made by Prime Minister Erdoğan to President Kocharian in his letter of April 2005. In this respect Geoffrey Robertson is quite right to expose the British government's conceptual mistake of shifting the responsibility to "historians to decide a legal issue." He made it clear that "deciding what amounts to genocide is a matter for judgment according to international law, and not at all is a matter for historians. Historians establish facts: lawyers must judge whether those facts amount to a breach of international law."<sup>255</sup>

The British government has never offered to mediate a Turkish-Armenian rapprochement after the disintegration of the Soviet Union for two reasons. First, the openly prejudiced position on the Armenian Genocide of both executive and legislative authorities legislative authorities of the UK would have made Armenia reluctant to accept any mediation initiative coming from London. Second, for the UK, it was probably more rational and convenient to remain backstage, in the shadow of the US/Swiss mediation.

One can follow an interesting three-fold change in America's approach towards the 1915-1920 events - from President's Wilson's famous fourteen points and a proposal to take a mandate for Armenia to eight decades of annual avoidance of the Genocide recognition, and, eventually, to the Obama administration's commitment to mediate Armenian-Turkish rapprochement six years before the centennial anniversary of the tragedy. The dynamics of the British position is slightly different, as it started with Prime Minister Lloyd George's objective, yet *non-binding* assessment of the Turkish atrocities followed by eight decades of the Genocide denial. Finally, a year before the centennial anniversary the Foreign Office's decided to return to Lloyd George's *non-binding* objectivity: "In the mind of the British Prime Minister detestation of Turkish atrocities mingled with the political tradition associated with the great name of Gladstone. "Our policy," he proclaimed (June 23, 1920), "is a policy of releasing all non-Turkish

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<sup>254</sup> The Armenian Weekly, Internal Documents Reveal UK Officials Misled Parliament on Armenian Genocide, by Harut Sassounian, November 3, 2009 available at: <http://armenianweekly.com/2009/11/03/sassounian-internal-documents-reveal-uk-officials-misled-parliament-on-armenian-genocide/>, last visited October 4, 2014

<sup>255</sup> Ibid

populations from Turkish sway. That has been accepted by everyone in the House and outside."<sup>256</sup>

Herbert Fisher revealed the grand plan for the new political order in the Middle East and the crossroads with Europe, where Armenia should have been given the opportunity to establish a strong independent state. Simultaneously steps were to be taken to emancipate the Arab world. European nations were beginning to get actively engaged in the region, with “the Italians brought to Asia Minor, the French to Cilicia and Syria, while Eastern and Western Thrace as well as the Vilayet of Smyrna were allotted to Greece.” All this, in Fisher’s opinion, seemed to be logical and manageable. He spoke about the unique opportunity “to rescue Asia Minor and the Balkans from the blighting dominion of a nomad race, which however attractive in its qualities of hardihood, sobriety and endurance has throughout history conspicuously failed in all its relations to non-Turkish peoples!”<sup>257</sup> However, this plan failed before it could make a difference on the ground. The international mediators of that time turned out to be very inconsistent. The US, which had made a promise to take a mandate for Armenia, backpedalled from its previous commitments. European countries unable to withstand regional pressures re-adjusted their policies beyond recognition. France opted to sign a separate treaty with Turkey, while Italy also decided not to get heavily engaged in Asia Minor.<sup>258</sup>

In 1918-1920 the British policy towards Armenia had not been as one-sided as it became in the decades following the Armenian Genocide. This was the case, both when the British position was aligned with US policy with regard to the issues in question, and when the diplomatic representatives of the UK and allies took initiatives within the framework of the League of Nations. In November of 1920, the Armenian Delegation sent an appeal for immediate assistance and interference to the League Council. The letter described that in addition to the Kemalist army offensive, Armenia had now been invaded by Azerbaijan and was on the brink of humanitarian catastrophe.

The recent change of the UK’s approach with regard to the facilitation of a rapprochement with Turkey manifested within the framework of Track II academic initiatives. Sheffield Hallam

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<sup>256</sup> Fisher, Herbert A.L., Mr. Lloyd George’s Foreign Policy 1918-1922, Foreign Affairs, March 1923 issue

<sup>257</sup> Ibid

<sup>258</sup> Ibid

University came forward with an initiative to organize an Armenian-Turkish Studies workshop in June 2014. The discussion focused on the long-term consequences of the Genocide. The ways to transcend the shared past and find a *modus Vivendi* for reconciliation between the two peoples were also discussed. The workshop applied for funding to establish a “UK Armenian-Turkish Studies Association”.<sup>259</sup> However, the general perception of the UK’s traditional bias remained unchanged in Armenia’s political circles and the academic community. It is most likely that London will continue to prefer staying backstage, in Washington’s shadow, as far the mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement is concerned.

From psychological point of view, France’s possible role of a mediator/facilitator in Armenian-Turkish rapprochement is as unacceptable for Turkey, as the UK’s participation for Armenia. From Ankara’s standpoint, France is not only responsible for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, but also for turning it into an obstacle for Turkey’s accession into the European Union:

“Influenced by French-Armenians numbering about 500,000, France was Turkey’s primary antagonist. France proposed “special status” and Germany floated the idea of “privileged partnership.” Erdoğan objected, demanding equal treatment with other candidate countries. French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier proposed including the Armenian genocide in negotiations with Turkey, while Chirac publicly called on Turkey to face its history. On October 12, 2006, France made it a crime to deny that Armenians were victims of genocide.”<sup>260</sup>

It is true that Switzerland had first recognized the Armenian Genocide, but was then invited by Turkey as a facilitator of proximity talks with Armenia. Yet, as described above, it was rather a *showcase* of Ankara’s *objectivity*, the sole purpose of which was to make the international community accept Erdoğan’s idea of establishing a joint commission of historians.

It should also be mentioned that two years after the Armenian-Turkish Protocols had been signed in Zurich, the French government made an unexpected attempt to facilitate Turkish-Armenian dialogue. Prime Minister Juppé’s initiative did not refer to the normalization format, but to the field of reconciliation. Thus, France, like several other European countries, which had

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<sup>259</sup>Available at:

[http://oxbridgepartners.com/hratch/images/lectures\\_conference\\_papers/Sheffield\\_Workshop\\_Programme\\_9June2014.pdf](http://oxbridgepartners.com/hratch/images/lectures_conference_papers/Sheffield_Workshop_Programme_9June2014.pdf), consulted February 11, 2015

<sup>260</sup> Phillips, David L., *Diplomatic History, The Turkey-Armenia Protocols*, p. 10, Columbia University, Institute for the Study of Human Rights in collaboration with the Future of Diplomacy Project, Harvard Kennedy School, 2012

recognized the Armenian Genocide, tried to backpedal from the earlier resolution of its National Assembly. Juppé's offer to host meetings of a joint commission of historians should be considered in the light of the aforesaid. While on a visit to Turkey in November 2011, he described the issue of the Armenian Genocide as a "challenge". This was where Juppé voiced his initiative to host the roundtable of Armenian and Turkish historians.<sup>261</sup>

Thus, all mediation initiatives by the above-mentioned countries have been predicated by their position with regard to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. We can speak about three sub-groups of international mediators:

1. Countries, the parliaments of which recognized the Armenian Genocide (Italy, Lebanon, Canada and Switzerland). From this sub-group Switzerland has been the only consistent and relatively successful facilitator. One of the basic motives for the mediation initiatives coming from these countries was the desire of their executive authorities to *compensate* Turkey for the recognition of the Genocide by the respective legislative authorities.
2. Countries that have not yet recognized the Armenian Genocide on federal level and use legally non-binding synonyms of the term Genocide to describe the events of 1915, but are actively involved as mediators both in Track I and Track II talks (United States). The recognition of the Genocide by 44 states should also be mentioned here as important factor that can have a potential impact on US mediation tactics and strategy in the future.
3. Countries that despite political considerations and above-mentioned psychological constraints have recently recognized the genocide on federal level and feel partly responsible, or share responsibility for the events of 1915 (Germany).

With regard to Track 1.5 and Track 2 formats the following classification is possible:

1. Track 1.5 that has been dealing both with reconciliation and normalization mediation between Armenia and Turkey. (TARC)
2. Track II initiatives that have been focused on reconciliation. (The Workshop of Turkish-Armenian Historians)

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<sup>261</sup> News.am, French PM admits idea of establishing Turkish-Armenian Commission of historians, November 18, 2011, available at: <http://news.am/eng/news/82463.html>

3. Track II initiatives that have been focused mainly on normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, i.e. opening of the common border with a longer-term goal of a comprehensive rapprochement. (TABDC)
4. Track II civil society initiatives, as well as establishment of various groups of interest, organization of academic round-table meetings, cultural exchanges not directly associated with the discussion on the opening of the common border and rapprochement, but creating the right environment both for reconciliation and normalization. (German project “Adult Education and Oral History Contributing to Armenian-Turkish Reconciliation”; Turkey-Armenia Cinema Platform co-funded by the US Embassy in Yerevan and EU’s Eastern Partnership Program)

There are two other countries that can emerge as potential mediators of Turkish-Armenian dialogue. Israel and Jordan can become active in Track II format, should the Kars-Gyumri project of establishing Turkish-Armenian Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) be realized. We will give a detailed account of this promising mediation initiative in the next chapter.

Israel might continue to surface up within the Track II format, doing so indirectly through American Jewish organizations, American Jewish Committee (AJC) in particular, which already has some accumulated experience in facilitating Turkish-Armenian contacts in cooperation with the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA). As for Track I, Israel is likely to remain formally unengaged. Just like the UK, it will stay in the shadow of American mediation efforts.

In 2016-2017, this approach, depending on the dynamics of the relations with Ankara, could be accompanied by an accelerated Genocide recognition process within the Knesset, backed by individual statements by some members of the cabinet of ministers. This will be in line with the logic of exploiting the limits of *transitional justice* not by international institutions called to facilitate the conflict in question, but by a country that experienced the horrors of the Holocaust. In the past this logic was compromised for the sake of Israel’s geopolitical interests in the Middle East to foster necessary alliances. In April 2013 the new dynamics in Israel’s approach to the question of Turkish-Armenian relations became more tangible. It is not surprising that not executive, but legislative authorities were the first to respond to the changing geopolitics in the Middle East:

"MKs (Members of the Knesset) will have to decide between the benefits of the strategic relationship with Turkey and the moral duty not to ignore the Armenian genocide that occurred in the last century," MK Reuven Rivlin, a former Knesset speaker, told a delegation from Turkey at the Knesset Monday. "I think that as human beings and as Jews we must not ignore the tragedies of other nations and must continue making this point, regardless of our friendly relationship with Turkey."<sup>262</sup>

Turkish academics and diplomats could not hide their growing concern about the palpable change in the official position of the Israeli authorities as well Jewish-American organizations with regard to the issue of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Ambassador Ömer Engin Lütem, Director of the Center for Eurasian Studies, gives the following explanation of this change:

"After it was accepted within Israel public opinion that other incidents could also be called genocide, some writers under the influence of Armenians in the country have started using this term for the 1915 events and then have strived for a resolution to be adopted in the Israel Parliament (Knesset) regarding this issue. With the support of the majority in the Knesset, the Israel governments, which attach great importance to relations with Turkey, have not found it difficult to prevent the adoption of these kinds of resolutions. ... However, some events that have been experienced between the two countries (such as the dispute in Davos between Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Perez, attempts of Deputy Foreign Minister to humiliate the Turkish Ambassador to Israel, and the Mavi Marmara event) have highly changed Knesset's approach towards the Armenian genocide allegations and the same change has been observed in the approaches of the Jewish Community and organizations in the US towards Turkey."<sup>263</sup>

In this respect, it is worth mentioning that Greece, which has significant experience of proximity talks with Turkey and excellent relations with Armenia, has never volunteered to facilitate a dialogue between Ankara and Yerevan. One cannot help but presume that Greece, not being on the long list of actual and potential mediators of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, is quite content with the current status quo. Instead Greece was considered as a serious candidate for mediating Israeli-Turkish relations that have been deteriorating during the recent years: "1- Turkey's foreign policy centers on the idea of having zero problems with neighbors, 2- Greece is a neighbor, 3- Turkey will therefore have zero problems with Greece, 4- (meanwhile) Greece is excelling in improving its relations with Israel, 5- In this part of the world, the enemy of your enemy is your friend, 6- Hence the opposite is also true: the friend of your friend is your friend,

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<sup>262</sup>Lis, Jonathan, Knesset to discuss Armenian genocide while Israelis negotiate in Turkey, Haaretz, April 22, 2013 available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/knesset-to-discuss-armenian-genocide-while-israelis-negotiate-in-turkey.premium-1.516921>, consulted June 10, 2014

<sup>263</sup> Lütem, Ömer Engin, Facts and Comments, Review of Armenian Studies, N 26, 2012

and 7- Turkey and Israel can rediscover the virtues of peace and friendship thanks to a common friend.”<sup>264</sup>

#### **4.2 The Changing dynamics of Russia’s position on Armenian-Turkish rapprochement**

Before assessing the change of Russia’s role in the Swiss-mediated Turkish-Armenian negotiations and its unexpectedly positive reaction to the signing of the Zurich Protocols, it would be prudent to analyze the dynamics of bilateral relations between Ankara and Moscow in the aftermath of the Russo-Georgian war. These relations have to be put in the broader context of major geopolitical changes in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region and beyond. Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar describe the increased cooperation between Ankara and Moscow in recent years as an “axis of the excluded”.<sup>265</sup> James Warhola and Egemen Bezci outline the factors that have contained traditional Russian-Turkish rivalry, and made these countries build their relations on the basis of common regional and supra-regional interests:

“Four general characteristics of the bilateral relation have emerged, and recognizing them enables a deeper understanding of the opportunities and limits likely to be afforded, for Russia, Turkey, and the region: (a) pragmatism, (b) a multivector approach to the bilateral relation, (c) commonalities despite contradictions, and (d) durability even despite episodic antagonism. The Russian–Turkish *rapprochement* has become a defining feature of the Eurasian landscape, but remains an unequal one, on several counts: energy resources, geopolitical strength, military capability, and underlying demographics. Nonetheless, various factors make a deepening *rapprochement* likely: mutual desirability of increased trade, wariness toward the West, Turkey’s pursuit of a “no enemies” foreign policy, Russia’s interest in regional great-power status, and common interest in regional conflict resolution.”<sup>266</sup>

While Warhola and Bezci are generally right, pointing out the prerequisites and the prospects of Turkish-Russian rapprochement, the following limitations of these prospects should also be singled out. According to Gareth Winrow, Russia and Turkey had a tacit consensus that they should take a concerted effort to limit the influence of supra-regional players in “the Black

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<sup>264</sup> Hurriyet Daily News, *Greece should mediate between Turkey and Israel*, by Burak Bekdil, August 24, 2010, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=greece-should-mediate-between-turkey-and-israel-2010-08-24>, last visited March 11, 2015

<sup>265</sup> Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar, “Turkey and Russia: Axis of the Excluded?” *Survival*, vol. 48, no. 1 (Spring 2006), pp. 81–92

<sup>266</sup> Warhola, James W., Bezci, Egemen B., *The Return of President Putin and Russian–Turkish Relations. Where Are They Headed?*, Sep. 17, 2013, SAGE Journals, available at: <http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/3/3/2158244013503165>, consulted June 15, 2014



Sea neighborhood". It is beyond doubt that their shared concerns about external players first and foremost referred to the United States and EU. However, despite the successful shuttle diplomacy with Moscow, Ankara simultaneously managed to improve the relations with Washington and Brussels, which excluded the establishment of a Russian-Turkish strategic partnership in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region.<sup>267</sup>

After the August 2008 war with Georgia, Russia was in desperate need to change its image in international politics. Thus it immediately embarked upon shuttle diplomacy with Turkey that included the discussion of Ankara's relations with Yerevan. Since the fall of 2008, an unprecedented number of high-ranking official and working visits have been exchanged between the two capitals. Turkey and Russia had a common interest of making sure that Georgia's role in the region was significantly diminished, which, from their standpoint, also meant a certain decrease of the US involvement in the South Caucasus. In this context, Armenia, probably with the mutual consent of Moscow and Ankara, was granted some symbolic role to play in the future regional architecture. Despite all past prejudices, and a geopolitical fear to see Turkish-Armenian relations normalized, it was now Moscow itself that called on the two countries to overcome the tragic past and settle the existing bilateral problems.

After the AKP came to power, the diplomatic contacts between Ankara and Moscow have been on a sustainable rise. The official relations between the two countries have been boosted by personal synergy that developed between Erdoğan and Vladimir Putin, when the Russian President paid an official visit to Turkey in December 2004.<sup>268</sup> The instability in Georgia and, consequently, unreliability of the existing pipeline routes was also an additional stimulus for Turkey to agree to tactical enhancement of Armenia's regional role and even consider the opening the common border. Aybars Gorgulu describes this change of political mind-set in Ankara as follows: "When all communication and energy transportation projects through Georgia were suspended during the war, Armenia's availability to become an alternate route for oil and gas pipelines running to the West from the Caspian Sea became more visible. This surely

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<sup>267</sup> Winrow, Gareth, Briefing Paper, *Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests*, Chatham House, Russia and Eurasia Programme/Europe Programme | November 2009 | REP/EP BP 2009/01

<sup>268</sup> Ibid

created a new motive for Turkey to open the border with Armenia in order to have an alternate route for pipelines.”<sup>269</sup>

In a book published a year after the AKP had first won the parliamentary elections, F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser described Turkey’s regional advantages in the Caucasus and Central Asia after the Cold War. The emergence of eight independent countries in those regions after the breakup of the Soviet Union presented Turkey with new geostrategic possibilities, giving its foreign policy a “new dimension”. As a result, Ankara began to have interests in the region, where it could not have afforded to pursue them in the age of bipolarity. But the new interests also meant new responsibilities, and, therefore problems.<sup>270</sup>

Turkish-Russian relations have been increasingly improving not only in the aftermath of the war in South Ossetia, but also in the context of Ankara’s policy of *zero problems with neighbors* and against the backdrop of Turkey’s deteriorating relations with the EU on the one hand, and Israel on the other.

At the same time, Turkey’s trade relations with Russia have been on the rise, with an annual turnover of \$38 billion. Despite a natural downfall of the trade volume after the war in South Ossetia, it was restored in 2009, after Putin visited Ankara to discuss multidimensional agenda of the bilateral relations that included customs, energy issues, transportation, food exports, etc. Inbar stresses that under new circumstances Turkey and Russia could become “natural partners”. Both governments are nostalgic about past domination and promise to restore “imperial glory”. Both have their reasons to be unhappy with the US and EU.<sup>271</sup>

Igor Torbakov, a senior researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, presents his account of the groundbreaking changes in Russian-Turkish relations in the aftermath of the August 2008 war in South Ossetia:

“As the Russia-West confrontation was escalating in the immediate aftermath of the Caucasus war, Ankara desperately wanted the crisis to end. As both Washington and Moscow continued to pressure Turkey, the Erdogan government felt increasingly uncomfortable. Given Turkey’s long-standing and intimate links with the Euro-Atlantic structures on the one hand, and the country’s “multidimensional partnership” with Russia

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<sup>269</sup> Gorgulu, Ibid

<sup>270</sup> Larrabee, F. Stephen, Lesser, Ian O., *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, p. xi, RAND 2003

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, p.15

on the other, the necessity to make an “existential” choice between the rival centers of power appeared to be Ankara’s nightmare scenario.”<sup>272</sup>

Shortly after the Georgian war, in an interview with *Milliyet*, Erdoğan made an interesting comment, which showed the limits of Turkey’s regional rivalry with Russia and coalition with the West:

“It would not be right for Turkey to be pushed toward any side. Certain circles want to push Turkey into a corner either with the United States or Russia after the Georgian incident. One of the sides is our closest ally, the United States. The other side is Russia with which we have an important trade volume. We would act in the line with what Turkey’s national interests require.”<sup>273</sup>

Turkey’s policy toward Russia was given a detailed and philosophical definition by Ahmet Davutoglu - at that time Erdoğan’s chief foreign-policy advisor. In another doctrinal commentary published by the Council on Foreign Relations, he addressed the issue of Turkey’s international orientation and political identity. On the one hand, he stated that there could be no doubts that Turkey, as a NATO member and EU membership candidate, belonged to the “Western bloc”. On the other, Davutoglu stressed that the nature of relations between Ankara and Moscow could never be the same as Ankara’s relations with Scandinavian countries or Canada. Turkey, with its geographical situation, could never afford to follow the policy aimed at the isolation of Russia. This never happened, because Turkey was “75-80 percent dependent on Russia (for energy).” Davutoglu was quite sincere when he claimed that the confrontation between the US and Russia or Russia and NATO was not in Turkey’s interest.<sup>274</sup>

Roman Muzalevsky expressed a similar opinion on the revolutionary changes in Russian-Turkish relations in recent years acknowledging the fact that the ties between the former enemies have improved significantly during recent years. Like Inbar, he stressed that the trade volume increased threefold between 2004 and 2008. Tourism was also on the rise. So was the successful cooperation in the energy field, which became one of the reasons why Russia was less anxious with Turkey’s increased presence in the Central Asia and South Caucasus.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Torbakov, Igor, *The Georgian Crisis and Russia-Turkey Relations*, Jamestown Foundation, 2008

<sup>273</sup> Quoted in Bulent Aliriza, “Turkey and the Crisis in the Caucasus,” *CSIS Turkey Project Commentary*, September 9, 2008, [www.csis.org/turkey](http://www.csis.org/turkey), visited January 23, 2015

<sup>274</sup> Torbakov, *Ibid*

<sup>275</sup> Muzalevsky, Roman, *Turkish New Foreign Policy in the New World*, *American Diplomacy*, April 2012, available at: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2012/0106/ca/muzalevsky\\_turkey.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2012/0106/ca/muzalevsky_turkey.html), consulted May 11, 2013

Brussels and Washington were puzzled, not to say concerned about the growing Turkish-Russian cooperation. In fact, the policy of *zero problems with neighbors* and regional rivals, Russia included, was governed by the same principal of complementarity, which on a much smaller scale predicated and shaped Armenia's foreign policy between 1998-2008. Ahmet Davutoglu tried to put Turkey's new relations with Russia into the context of Turkish complementarity: "We are not involved in a bipolar world anymore. It means our good relations with Russia are not an alternative to the EU. Or our model partnership with the United States is not a new partnership against Russia."<sup>276</sup> Russia and Turkey clearly share a common sense of frustration with the EU and U.S. policies, either vis-à-vis Iran or the recent war in Iraq.<sup>277</sup> While Moscow has supported Turkey's observer role in the SCO, Ankara, a NATO ally, has chosen not to extend NATO's Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean to the Black Sea.<sup>278</sup> Not only did Turkey fear undermining its growing ties with Russia but it also felt uneasy about being "encircled" by the US in the region.<sup>279</sup>

Such unexpected developments in Russian-Turkish relations caused not only concerns, but also calls for caution within American academic community. Zbigniew Brzezinski was quick to respond to this new geopolitical reality in the region, which he and his colleagues often described as *Eurasia's volatile South*. Yet in 1997, he warned the US administration against estranging Turkey and jeopardizing its interests in the Central Asia and South Caucasus. Brzezinski also sent a message to the EU urging it not to alienate Turkey lest it did not turn "more Islamic" and reluctant "to cooperate with the West in integrating Central Asia into the world community." He even went a step further insisting that America should offer its good offices to promote Turkey's "eventual admission to the EU."<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Davutoglu, Ahmet, 'Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy,' Address at SETA, Dec. 8, 2009, p.9.

<sup>277</sup> See also: Hill, Fiona and Taspinar, Omer, 'Russia and Turkey in the Caucasus: Moving Together to Preserve the Status Quo?,' IFRI, 2006

<sup>278</sup> See also: Goksel, Diba Nigar, *Turkey's Policy towards the Caucasus*, pp.16., in ed. Alexander Iskandaryan, *Caucasus Neighborhood: Turkey and the South Caucasus*, 2008.

<sup>279</sup> See also: Baran, Zeyno and Lesser, Ian, 'Turkey's Identity and Strategy – A Game of Three-Dimensional Chess,' Stanley Foundation, December 2008, pp.21-22

<sup>280</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *A Geostrategy for Eurasia*, *Foreign Affairs*, 76:5, September/October 1997. COPYRIGHT 1997 Council on Foreign Relations Inc.

Taking into account Brzezinski's geopolitical views in the Cold War years, it is not surprising that there is no mention of cooperation with Russia on the issues mentioned above. Instead he stressed that "regular consultations with Ankara regarding the future of the Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia, would give Turkey an assurance of "strategic partnership with the United States."<sup>281</sup> It would have hardly crossed Brzezinski's mind in 1997 that several years after, Turkey and Russia would build a partnership in the regions, where historically they used to be rivals and even archenemies.

Ankara's "overt friendship" with Moscow coexisted with "restrained competition".<sup>282</sup> This point becomes particularly valid in the context of the relations with Armenia. Richard Giragosian emphasized that distinct from the past, the new role of Russia in the Armenian-Turkish *football diplomacy* was altogether positive. The drastic change was conditioned by Moscow's desire to use the opening of the border between the two countries to its own advantage. Before that, Russia had always been against any substantial improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations, using the factor of the closed border as convenient leverage over Yerevan. The military base in Gyumri and the Russian troops controlling the border with Turkey were a demonstrable reminder that Yerevan had no choice but to continue to rely on Moscow as a security guarantor. Like many other experts, Giragosian traced the shift in Russia's policy to August 2008. At that time, it was in Russia's interests to minimize Georgia's geopolitical importance. The opening of the Turkish-Armenian border appeared to be a perfect means for that.<sup>283</sup>

It is not surprising that Azerbaijan's political and academic experts have a different view about the role of Russia in the Turkish -Armenian *football diplomacy*. According to Efgan Nifitiev there were two main reasons why Russia decided to go along with and even actively support the Armenian-Turkish normalization talks. While there was no disagreement between Azerbaijani political analyst and other regional experts on the first reason, i.e. Moscow's drive to improve its image in the international arena after the war with Georgia, the second reason mentioned by Nifitiev was completely different. He claimed that Russia was trying "to cause a

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid

<sup>282</sup> Muzalevsky, Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Giragosian, Richard, *Changing Armenia-Turkish Relations*, FOKUS ZUDKAUKASUS, February 2009, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Posted at <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/georgien/06380.pdf>, last visited April 12, 2013

rift between Azerbaijan and Turkey” to prevent a potential establishment of Baku-Tbilisi-Ankara axis from becoming a geopolitical reality.<sup>284</sup> This conspiracy theory was, of course, too far-fetched. Yet it was perfectly in line with Azerbaijan’s role of a *spoiler* in the Armenian-Turkish *football diplomacy*.

Azerbaijan’s public opinion was particularly nervous about the confidentiality of the talks, which Russian media allegedly used to stir up suspicions against Turkey. It was not until Ankara was alerted to the seriousness of the issue that the then Prime Minister Erdoğan paid a last-minute visit to Baku to give his assurances that Turkey would not open its border with Armenia until the Nagorno Karabagh conflict had been resolved. However, Russia, according to Nifitiev, managed to achieve its regional goal of causing a rift between two strategic partners and between Azerbaijan and the West in general.<sup>285</sup>

Together with Secretary Clinton, Foreign Minister Lavrov played a pivotal role in the last-minute diplomacy to bring the two sides together, when the signing of the Armenian-Turkish Protocols suddenly came under threat during the official ceremony in Zurich. As described in the previous chapters, the outcome of *football diplomacy- signed, but not ratified* protocols, was a perfect solution for Russia, because it coincided with how far the Kremlin administration was prepared to go in promoting the normalization of relations between Ankara and Yerevan. The unprecedented intensification of Russian-Turkish contacts and diplomacy was a puzzle not only for Baku, but also for Yerevan, particularly when the two traditional regional rivals discussed the geopolitical future of Armenia:

“The public perception of Russian-Turkish relations in Armenia is also permeated with stereotypes and phobias. The fact that Armenian-Turkish rapprochement coincided with a revitalization of Russian-Turkish relations raised some concerns amongst Armenian elites and society. Some actors voiced apprehensions that Russia and Turkey may agree on some regional projects behind Yerevan’s back that could jeopardize Armenia’s interests, quoting, as historical precedents, the 1920s Russian-Turkish agreements which were detrimental to Armenia, and the March 16, 1921 Moscow Treaty between Bolshevik Russia and Kemalist Turkey. However, these and similar apprehensions do not take account of the new political context in the

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<sup>284</sup> Nifitiev, Efgan, *Why did Russia Support Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement?* Washington Review on Turkish and Eurasian Affairs, June 2010, available at: <http://www.thewashingtonreview.org/articles/turkisharmenian-rapprochement.html>, consulted June 3, 2014

<sup>285</sup> Ibid

South Caucasus following the 2008 Russia-Georgia Five Day War. While Turkey's and Russia's tactics make them embrace joint initiatives in the South Caucasus, including those directed against Washington and some directed against Brussels, they remain "competing allies" in a strategic perspective."

In conclusion, it should be noted that there were repeated attempts by third countries to come forward with various initiatives to mediate Armenian-Turkish normalization and reconciliation talks. Most of them were either short-lived or confined to Track 2 format mainly focused on academic, cultural and societal discussions. The findings of the research showed that all of the mediation initiatives by third countries were conditioned and predicated by those countries' past history with regard to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. As for the prospects of making a breakthrough in Armenia-Turkey relations they will depend on two factors: the change of the previous mediation roadmap and the role of Russia, the key player in the region.

## Chapter V

### 5.1 *Dominant factors in the US mediation and policy in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region*

An attempted breakthrough in international mediation of the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement was among President Obama's first foreign policy endeavors in 2009. It was both a follow-up to the confidential talks that had started during the George W. Bush administration, and an effort to resolve one of the most arduous problems inherited from the last century, in the very beginning of his first term. This issue suddenly became a priority, as it moved to the top of Hillary Clinton's agenda during bilateral negotiations in Ankara shortly after her swearing-in as the Secretary of State. To probe into the dynamics of the US policy with regard to the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations it is important to not only focus on Track 1 talks, but to follow the changes in funding of Track 2 initiatives and to examine the role of American non-state actors.

In his April 2009 address to the Turkish Parliament, President Obama himself voiced the importance of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation:

"Human endeavor is by its nature imperfect. History is often tragic, but unresolved, it can be a heavy weight. Each country must work through its past. And reckoning with the past can help us seize a better future. I know there're strong views in this chamber about the terrible events of 1915. And while there's been a good deal of commentary about my views, it's really about how the Turkish and Armenian people deal with the past. And the best way forward for the Turkish and Armenian people is a process that works through the past in a way that is honest, open and constructive. We've already seen historic and courageous steps taken by Turkish and Armenian leaders. These contacts hold out the promise of a new day. An open border would return the Turkish and Armenian people to a peaceful and prosperous coexistence that would serve both of your nations. So I want you to know that the United States strongly supports the full normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia. It is a cause worth working towards."<sup>286</sup>

"The promise of the new day" coincided with Obama's desperate need for a success story in the US foreign policy at the very dawn of his presidency. The mess in Iraq and uncertainty in Afghanistan left behind by the Bush administration had not only jeopardized America's security, but also seriously damaged her international image. For the new administration quick action and demonstrable success in foreign policy became a bare necessity. The factors of quickness and

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<sup>286</sup> The White House, *Remarks of President Barack Obama to the Turkish Parliament on April 6, 2009* Posted at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-By-President-Obama-To-The-Trkish-Parliament,consultedApril29,2009](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Obama-To-The-Trkish-Parliament,consultedApril29,2009)



efficiency in US diplomacy overseas became all the more important against the general background of slow recovery from one of the deepest economic crises in America's history.

Thus, the palpable elevation of the US role in the Turkish-Armenian talks was, conditioned by the new Administration's resolve to re-prioritize its foreign policy agenda. The White House and the State Department were prepared to take bold steps on relatively small issues with a view to achieve tangible diplomatic victories in a short-term perspective. In this sense, the Turkish-Armenian puzzle was a captivating challenge, worth the calculated risk and effort.

There were also subjective factors that had an influence on Obama's involvement in the mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement. Svante Cornell pointed out that during his election campaign Obama had been more committed to recognizing the Armenian Genocide than any of his predecessors. The reality check came when he became the US President, who had to rely on Turkey as an ally in the "Muslim world". Therefore, the only dignified exit strategy for Obama was to engage in the mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement and "to work toward progress on the ground—progress that could be endangered if the US president were to comment on historical events."<sup>287</sup>

"The promise of the new day" and the unprecedented US mediation efforts were also inspired by President Obama's genuine belief that after long years of Track 1 and II diplomacy Turkey and Armenia were finally ready for a breakthrough. The prospect of establishing diplomatic relations and opening of the border between the two countries were not only seen as ground-breaking geopolitical development in the Black Sea/ South Caucasus region, but also as an important factor within the framework of global security and promotion of America's interests at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East.

To comprehend the logic of the elevation of the US role in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region it is important to follow Washington's perception of the changing geopolitical semantics of the closed Turkish-Armenian border:

- Closed border between Turkey, America's main ally in the Middle East and newly-independent Armenia, a nation with 1,5 million-strong Diaspora in the US

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<sup>287</sup> Cornell, Svante, *Ibid*, p. 287

- Closed main border between the South Caucasus and Black Sea region
- Closed border blocking the historical Silk Road, as well as potential energy routes and pipelines
- Closed main border between South Caucasus and NATO
- Closed main border between the European Neighborhood Policy participants, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and the EU membership candidate country, Turkey
- The last closed border in Europe
- Closed border blocking America's direct access to the region next door to Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan <sup>288</sup>

According to the well-known Russian expert Sergei Markedonov the year of 1997, the time when the US economic interest in the South Caucasus had already been fully shaped, “marked a watershed for the American policy on the Caucasus. Since then the South Caucasus has experienced three waves of “Americanization”. Up to 1997 American diplomacy had not regarded the former Soviet republics of the South Caucasus as an area of special strategic interest and it recognized the leading role of the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet space.”<sup>289</sup> The second wave was launched immediately after 9/11, when in addition to Turkey - America's main ally in the Middle East, the three countries of the region began to be viewed as important partners in the war against terror. The third wave coincided with the second war in Iraq. It was linked to a much broader geopolitical context: “...The invasion of Iraq was viewed as part of the global American plan of the “Greater Middle East.” Initially, the system of control over the macro-region was conceptualized in Washington in strong interaction with its closest allies – Turkey and Israel. According to the authors of the project, the practical realization of the “Greater Middle East Project” would successfully address a host of problems, from Israel's security concerns to the control over the main energy resources of the region. The South Caucasus is the rear of the Greater Middle East, and unlike the “front line” it should be stable and quiet.”<sup>290</sup>

This third “Americanization” wave of the South Caucasus also predicated the need to start

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<sup>288</sup> Note: this perception became more dominant after the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008. See also Shougarian, Rouben, *Evolution of American Interests in the Black Sea/South Caucasus Region and Mediation of Armenian-Turkish Relations. Normalization, reconciliation and transitional justice, SPECTRUM, Regional Security Issues: 2011, Center for Strategic Analysis, Yerevan, 2012*

<sup>289</sup> Markedonov, Sergei, *The Big Caucasus. The Consequences of the “Five Day War”, Threats and Political Prospects*, p.21, International Center for Black Sea Studies, 2009, Athens, Multimedia, Ltd.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid

thinking about a more active and consistent involvement in the mediation of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement.

Turkish-Armenian Track 1 diplomacy had its routine falls and rises until the late 90s, after which it was followed by a decade of stagnation. In the late 90s and early 2000s all efforts of Track 1 diplomacy proved inadequate, because the governments of both Turkey and Armenia were unwilling to move forward.

During that time, until the summer of 2008, the Track 1 Turkish-Armenian negotiations were more a matter of a tacitly agreed mutual pretense to settle the existing problems, than a serious diplomatic undertaking. It included:

- Two meetings between the presidents of Turkey and Armenia (1998; 1999); occasional meetings between foreign ministers (within the framework of the UN GA sessions, OSCE summits, Black Sea Economic Cooperation Council (BSECC) and other international forums)
- Turkish-Armenian cooperation within the NATO's PFP, PARP and IPAP formats
- Regular confidential meetings in Geneva and Vienna between deputy foreign ministers and their teams hosted by the Vienna Diplomatic Academy (2006-2008)
- Occasional contacts of government officials (energy, communications, transportation, law enforcement, etc.) within the framework of various European institutions and programs

As described above, in the mid and late 90s America's economic interests in the South Caucasus were eventually crystallized. In 2001, after the 9/11 attack, the Black Sea/ South Caucasus region found itself next door to what the US Congress and the State Department later described as the *axis of evil*. The protection of America's security interests around the world became a top priority. It gradually redefined and recalibrated the modality of her presence in the region in question. In this context the US mediation of Turkish-Armenian relations became more consistent and target-oriented.

Eventually, shortly after the August 2008 Russian-Georgian war, the issue of opening the Turkish-Armenian border moved up towards the top of America's foreign policy agenda. The back door to the Black Sea/South Caucasus region was no longer safe and secure to fully promote US interests. While President Saakashvili's loyalty was beyond doubt, Georgia's ability to remain stable under the new circumstances was put into question. Besides, the open Georgian-Turkish border does not provide sufficient geography to secure unimpeded access to the Black Sea/South

Caucasus region. Nor can it help to accommodate the emerging global security changes in that part of the world.

Hakob Chakryan suggested that the US had recognized the need to strengthen its presence in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region. This predicated concrete steps “to have closer ties with Armenia”. Therefore, the launching of *football diplomacy* aimed at opening of the border between the two countries and the initiation of *Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform* have to be viewed in the same context.<sup>291</sup>

The reconfigured map of multiple pipelines and energy routes, the war against terror, the changes in the US-Russian relations, the geographic proximity of Iran made the potential geopolitical merging of the Black Sea and the South Caucasus all the more important. US policy makers have gradually realized that the main access to the region in question can only be secured after the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border.

## ***5.2 US public diplomacy initiatives and Track 2 funding***

Among many public diplomacy initiatives, the Support to Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement (SATR) sponsored by the USAID should be singled out. While the magnitude and modality of this initiative can't be compared with groundbreaking Track 1.5 and Track 2 projects like TARC, or even TABDC, it is still interesting to follow the dynamics and methodology of SATR. The main purpose of this project, launched a year after the signing of the Zurich Protocols, was to promote stability and sustainable development in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region focusing on the improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations. SATR was designed with a view to engage civil society in reconciliation processes; establish and develop business partnerships and regional professional networks; and facilitate government-to-government dialogue. Viewed in the context of the methodology of international mediation, this initiative combined elements of Track 1 and Track 2 diplomacies. On the one hand, it had a premium on societal dialogue and establishment of Armenian-Turkish professional networks. On the other hand, it simultaneously envisaged a direct facilitation of official contacts between Ankara and Yerevan. SATR was inaugurated on

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<sup>291</sup> Chakryan, Hagob, *Turkey's Policy towards Armenia and Energy Security in the South Caucasus*, Turkish Policy Quarterly, Vol. 9, No 2, p.120

October 1, 2010, and continued until September 30, 2012. The Mid-term Evaluation Report pointed out that “USAID/Armenia awarded the project after a competitive procurement to the Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) as the lead member of an Armenian consortium”.<sup>292</sup> The project helped to establish an institutionalized cooperation of the Yerevan Press Club (YPC), International Center for Human Development (ICHHD), and Union of Manufacturers and Businesspeople of Armenia (UMBA) with corresponding institutions and organizations in Turkey. The government-to-government component of the USAID-sponsored project was revised in the third quarter of 2011.<sup>293</sup>

The Mid-term Evaluation Report described the reasons behind America’s political and financial engagement in promoting efforts to support Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, stressing that Washington had strategic “interests in peace, stability, and the development of regional ties in the Caucasus.”<sup>294</sup> Moreover, it mentioned that the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) prepared by the US Government for Armenia in March 2009, singled out the normalization of relations between neighbors. It had been designed to assist Armenia in constructive and unimpeded engagement in regional affairs. The conclusion of this document was quite predictable, as it suggested Armenia’s political and economic situation would be impossible to improve without the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and a rapprochement with Turkey.<sup>295</sup>

The question of funding public diplomacy initiatives to mediate Armenian-Turkish rapprochement is very important. It is a credible indicator of the degree to which the countries that provide financial means are interested in changing the geopolitical realities in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region. The US government and NGO-s have financed about 50% of Armenian-Turkish public diplomacy projects. According to Çuhadar and Gültekin-Punsmann European countries have financed about 26% of “grassroots initiatives”. The funding came largely from “German foundations and the Scandinavian embassies in Ankara and Yerevan. The

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<sup>292</sup> Support For Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement (SATR) Project: Mid-Term Evaluation Report, p.i, March 2012, available at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDACT906.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACT906.pdf), consulted Mar 12, 2013

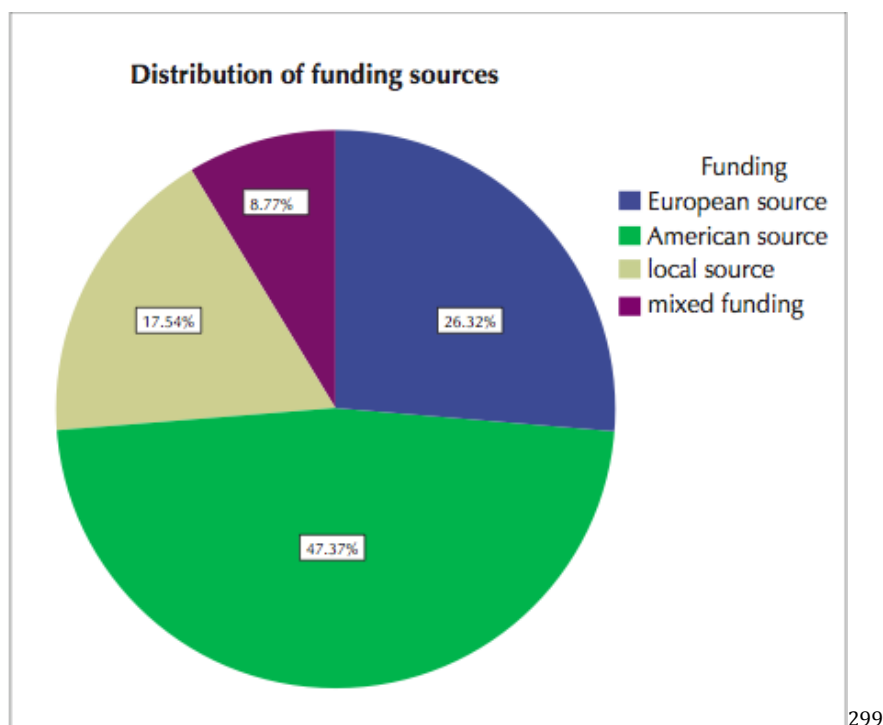
<sup>293</sup> Ibid

<sup>294</sup> Ibid

<sup>295</sup> Ibid, p.1

representation of the EU delegation has allocated some small scale grants as well.”<sup>296</sup>

Thus, it is no accident that the periods of the intensification of Armenian-Turkish public diplomacy “correspond almost directly to the availability of major funding sources from the US. In 2001 and 2009, a significant amount of US funding was funneled into Turkish-Armenian Track II activities through the US State Department and USAID.”<sup>297</sup> While the active years of Turkish-Armenian Track II projects coincided with “the inflow of funding”, the abrupt decrease in public diplomacy initiatives between 2003 and 2007 could be accounted for by “the obstacles at the Track I level.”<sup>298</sup> The distribution of Track II mediation funding according to the sources and donor countries is self-evident:



The financial contribution of the EU and related institutions has been very modest. This is in line with Brussels’s laidback approach to the direct participation in *football diplomacy* analyzed in detail in previous chapters. According to Gültekin- Punsmann, this appears to be paradoxical, as the European Commission has been one major assistance provider for Armenia and Turkey. Therefore the normalization of relations between the two geographical neighbors on

<sup>296</sup> Çuhadar, Punsmann -Gültekin, Ibid, p.39

<sup>297</sup> Ibid

<sup>298</sup> Ibid, p.15

<sup>299</sup> Ibid, p. 38

the border with Europe should have been a political priority for European institutions. The major non-political impediment for a greater Brussels's role was that the EU did not have "a budget line for Turkish-Armenian relations similar to the Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue Project launched in 2004 by the European Commission. The existence of different contractual frameworks for EU relations with Turkey and Armenia is a serious limitation to the funding of any Turkish-Armenian initiatives."<sup>300</sup>

The absence of financial mechanisms is undoubtedly a serious obstacle for the corresponding European institutions to become more actively engaged in the mediation of Armenian-Turkish public diplomacy projects. However, what these Turkish researchers stop short of noticing is that it is the absence of strategic political decision in Brussels with regard to Armenian-Turkish rapprochement that comes first.

On the other hand, Turkey itself as EU membership candidate country and a recipient of pre-accession assistance, could have initiated a normalization process with Yerevan putting it into the context of European integration. Taking into account that the Armenia is also "a beneficiary of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument", a link between the two financial instruments could be established. To do that "the Turkish government has to approve that money be allocated from its pre-accession budget to a regional project involving Armenia as well."<sup>301</sup>

Track 2 initiatives that can potentially be sponsored by the EU first need to be approved by the corresponding government institutions of Armenia and Turkey. The European Parliament in its resolution on South Caucasus tried to pro-actively encourage "the three countries not to hinder or veto EU-funded cross- border programs and projects aimed at resuming dialogue, building confidence between the parties and tackling regional problems." The resolution also addressed the issue of the closed Turkish- Armenian border. It called for "the Turkish and Armenian Governments to start the process of reconciliation for the present and the past, and calls on the Commission to facilitate this process while taking advantage of the regional cooperation realized within the ENP and the Black Sea Synergy policy and calls on the

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid, p.40

<sup>301</sup> Ibid

Commission and the Council to address the opening of the Turkish border with Armenia with the authorities of those two countries.”<sup>302</sup>

There are also technical obstacles for American financial aid to support Turkish-Armenian projects. Most of the US assistance is channeled through the USAID. Since Turkey is not officially among the recipients of the USAID assistance, “Armenian NGOs are the only beneficiaries of the US program for Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement. Although the program aims at supporting cross-border initiatives, NGOs located on the Turkish side of the border are not eligible as applicants. They can only be associated with action designed in Armenia and subcontracted with Armenian NGOs.”<sup>303</sup>

### **5.3 Non-state actors as mediators not funded by the state**

It was not only on official level that the US was actively involved in the mediation of Armenian-Turkish relations. Various non-state actors, who made repeated attempts to facilitate a dialogue between Yerevan and Ankara, can be found among ethnic and corporate advocacy groups in America.

The position of American Jewish organizations on the question of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the US Congress has evolved from a tacit support of Turkey to a much more balanced approach accompanied by a desire to play some role in the facilitation of Track 2 Armenian-Turkish diplomacy. The American Jewish Committee, the second largest and influential Jewish-American organization after the IAPAC, was the first to register the change and come forward with a facilitation initiative. As far back as in 1998, in cooperation with the Armenian Assembly of America it organized a joint fact-finding trip to Turkey, Armenia and Israel. There was another trip to Armenia and Azerbaijan in February 1999. This time, Ambassador Peter Rosenblatt traveled to the region not in the capacity of the President of the AJC, but as a retired US diplomat. He visited Yerevan and Baku together with Ambassador

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<sup>302</sup>European Parliament: Resolution of 17 January 2008 on a more effective policies of the “EU for the South Caucasus: from promises to actions”. (2007/2076 INI), available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef.=EP//Text//+TA+P6-TA-2008-0016+0+DOC+XML+VO//EN&Language//=EN>, consulted June 14, 2013

<sup>303</sup>Çuhadar, Punsman-Gültekin, Ibid, p 39



Edward Djerejian (ethnic Armenian), former US Ambassador to Syria and Israel. The two retired diplomats offered their good offices to start and mediate Track 2 Azerbaijani-Armenian dialogue.

The AJC's next visit to Turkey and Armenia in June 2008, with Ambassador Rosenblatt as the head of the delegation, coincided with the beginning of *football diplomacy*. While there is no sufficient evidence to find a direct link between the two, it is obvious that the timing was not coincidental, and the purpose of the visit was to provide additional support for the Swiss-American Track 1 mediation. The timing of the AJC's trip was also interesting from the point of view of the political turmoil around South Ossetia that evolved into a five-day Georgian-Russian war two months later. It should be noted that as result of that war, Georgia started losing its geopolitical importance, while the regional role of Armenia was temporarily elevated in connection with the upcoming *football diplomacy*.

The Anti-Defamation Leagues (ADL) position with regard to the Turkish-Armenian standoff had been changing more slowly, until in 2014 both the AJC and the ADL made statements recognizing the Armenian Genocide. After many years of denial the National Director Abraham Foxman "publicly acknowledged" that the events of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire should be recognized as Genocide.

His statement crowned "a seven-year campaign in which the Armenian and Jewish communities, as well as human rights activists and local officials, demanded that the ADL affirm this historical truth."<sup>304</sup>

In a speech delivered at Suffolk University Law School's commencement on May 17, 2014 Foxman stated: "Had there been people of courage to act in 1915 when the Armenian Genocide was taking place, had there been international intervention when massacres in Cambodia, Bosnia, and the genocide in Rwanda were happening, innocent lives in great numbers could have been saved."<sup>305</sup>

It should be noted that Foxman's personal position on the Armenian Genocide had evolved from advocating against its recognition by Jewish-American organizations and in the US Congress to a *loud and clear* acknowledgement of this historical fact. The AJC's statement on the

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<sup>304</sup> The Armenian Weekly, ADL's Foxman Recognizes the Armenian Genocide, May 28, 2014, available at: <http://armenianweekly.com/2014/05/28/adls-abraham-foxman-recognizes-armenian-genocide/>, consulted June 10, 2014

<sup>305</sup> Ibid

1915 Genocide was even more straightforward. David Harris, the AJC's Executive Director voiced it on April 24, 2014:

“In a month of solemn remembrance of the atrocities of the last century – from the 20th anniversary of the start of the Rwandan genocide to the annual commemoration in Israel and the United States of the Holocaust – we pause in mournful tribute to the memories of the estimated 1.5 million victims of the Meds Yeghern, the Genocide of Armenians, committed in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. AJC calls on the government of Turkey, a republic founded years after the empire's dissolution, to not only provide at long last full access, as the government has pledged, to the historical record of that dark period of mass murder, forced relocation, death marches, sundering of families, and other abuses – but to address the realities the records reveal. The process of healing of this nearly century-old wound can only begin when the truth of that sorrowful era is confronted.”<sup>306</sup>

What we are dealing with here is diametrically different from the approach described with regard to the Swiss, Canadian, Italian and Lebanese initiatives. As we have already discussed, having recognized the Genocide, the above-mentioned countries, offered to mediate a dialogue between Ankara and Yerevan. As for the AJC, as a non-state actor it has become involved in the facilitation of Armenian-Turkish Track II initiatives since 1998. Until the centennial anniversary it refrained from using the term *genocide* with regard to the events of 1915. In this sense the recent recognition of the Genocide by the AJC can be described as reverse backpedalling from its prior position in favor of Armenia and Armenians with a view to compensate for keeping long silence about the historical truth.

Corporate advocacy groups in the US engaged in the Track II mediation diplomacy in the Black Sea/South Caspian region in the mid and late 90s, when negotiations on the pipeline routes from Azerbaijan had already been completed. While oil companies, AMOCO in particular, were mainly focused on brokering possible deals and tradeoffs between Armenia and Azerbaijan, they also looked at the larger picture, trying to engage Yerevan in a dialogue with Ankara. In 1995-1998 Rob Sobhani, AMOCO's key negotiator on the issue in question, professor of international relations at Georgetown University and the president of Caspian Energy Consulting, made several trips to Baku to meet with President Heidar Aliyev to discuss ways to repeal Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. This legislation prohibited American Assistance to Azerbaijan until

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<sup>306</sup> Pan.Armenian. Net, American Jewish Committee Commemorates the Armenian Genocide, April 24, 2014, available at: <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/178263>, consulted June 10 2014

it lifted the land blockade of Armenia. AMOCO along with other corporate and ethnic lobbying groups was also engaged in parallel attempts to repeal the Humanitarian Corridor Act- the legally non-binding, but politically important legislation in the US Congress addressing the issue of the Turkish blockade of Armenia. Rob Sobhani traveled to Turkey to discuss the larger picture of new oil pipeline routes. Although there is no public information about that visit, those discussions must have directly or indirectly addressed the issue of the Turkish-Armenian border and Armenia's future role in the regional energy programs upon the resolution of the Karabagh conflict. Interestingly enough he, together with the "Caspian Group LLC"<sup>307</sup> was hired as a lobbyist of the government of Turkey in Washington in 2009-2010, the years of the rise and fall of *football diplomacy*. Sobhani was also instrumental in arranging and brokering a confidential meeting between President Heidar Aliyev and two representatives of the Armenian Assembly of America to discuss Section 907 in New York in 1995.

Rob Sobhani always insisted that Turkish-Armenian rapprochement should not be mediated until the Nagorno Karabagh conflict had been resolved. In 2010, a year after the signing of the Armenian-Turkish Protocols, Sobhani wrote:

"Washington should use its good will to bring Armenia to the negotiating table for a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. While it is important to achieve diplomatic peace between Armenia and Turkey, a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia would actually pave the way for Armenia's normalized relations with Turkey as well as achieve an even greater regional peace."<sup>308</sup>

In the second half of the 90s the promised business benefits were the main argument in trying to get Armenia on board. The methodology behind this approach of American corporate advocacy groups was summarized in an offer to Yerevan to trade national security for economic benefits. It had been replicated in Secretary Albright's short-lived Track I initiative for the South Caucasus region, known as the *Caucasus Economic Forum*, which ten years later became one of the distant prototypes for Ankara's Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform. In this respect, in the mid 90s there were two confidential proposals on the table to engage Armenia into

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<sup>307</sup> Source: <http://foreign.influenceexplorer.com//registrant/Caspian%20Group%20LLC/>

<sup>308</sup> The Hill, *Azerbaijan: A reliable partner in a turbulent region*, October 25, 2010, by Rob Sobhani, available at: <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/125745-azerbaijan-a-reliable-partner-in-a-turbulent-region>, consulted March 11, 2012

regional oil projects with a simultaneous opening of the border with Turkey. One was an idea to build a so-called spur pipeline to Armenia from the BTC and the other, was an offer to build an oil refinery in Armenia on the border with Georgia and Azerbaijan in exchange for a compromise in the negotiations on Nagorno Karabagh. This mediation methodology failed on both diplomatic tracks, as it was immediately rejected by Armenia.

Thus, in dealing with the Black Sea/South Caucasus region American corporate advocacy groups tried to initiate a Track II Azerbaijani-Armenian dialogue with longer-term plans to simultaneously play some role in the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations. On the other hand, ethnic advocacy groups by and large represented by Jewish American organizations have stopped providing one-sided support to Azerbaijan and Turkey in the US Congress. They also shifted their focus from the Nagorno Karabagh problem to supporting international mediation of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement. The latter was perceived as an important key to the change of geopolitical configuration at the Eurasian crossroads and a prerequisite for the promotion of the US and Israeli interests in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region.

#### ***5.4 The Diplomacy of Qualified Industrial Zones -QIZ as a Track 2 initiative - Israel or Jordan as possible mediators***

*As political upheavals accumulate and the world becomes seemingly more unmanageable, with incessant questions as to how the United States and its allies should respond, geography offers a way to make at least some sense of it all.<sup>309</sup>*

The mutual economic benefit of opening the Turkish-Armenian border is beyond doubt. It is common knowledge that Armenian businessmen have a very limited outreach to international markets. As a matter of fact, it is only the domestic market of 3 million people and Georgia with a population of 4.5 million that under present circumstances are accessible to Armenian goods. While the membership in the Customs Union was supposed to change the situation, the lack of communication routes and the unresolved regional conflicts do not allow making a tangible difference. This is why access to the Turkish market would “greatly improve Armenia’s

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<sup>309</sup> Kaplan, Robert D., *The Revenge of Geography*, p. XXII, Random House Trade Paperback Edition, 2013

investment rating, which is presently stymied by the narrow limits imposed on its foreign trade...”<sup>310</sup>

On the other hand, it is also in Turkey’s economic interest to open the border with Armenia. It is no secret that Turkey’s eastern regions neighboring Armenia are least economically developed. The per capita GDP in the provinces of Erzerum and Agri “are less than half the Turkish average (and also less than in Armenia)”<sup>311</sup> It is not surprising that there’s a growing support among the local authorities and the population of these regions for opening of the common border with Armenia. <sup>312</sup>

To operate successfully and efficiently, international mediators Turkish-Armenian relations are in need of clearly defined political/ economic mechanisms. Today there is much discussion about the importance of financial instruments to fund the cross-border trade. Before Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova were offered to sign the DCFTA within the framework EaP in 2013 an academic debate had already been in place around a possible Free Trade Agreement between the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) participants and the EU member or membership candidate countries.

It was obvious that Turkey and Armenia would need to develop appropriate infrastructure that could be put to work once the first steps of the normalization process had been made. The special report prepared by the International Crisis Group in April 2009 stresses the importance of this issue:

“The 325-km land border was closed throughout most of the Soviet period. There are two main crossing points: the rail link between Kars and Gyumri and the Markara/Alican road bridge over the wide Araxes River near Yerevan. The rail link opened in the 1980s, when passenger trains began to go both ways once a week. Turkey stopped the service on 3 April 1993 as part of sanctions when Armenia captured the Kelbajar district of Azerbaijan. No road link has been formally opened in modern times. ...Border security and border crossing, customs and tax agreements are needed as immediate steps. The negotiations would not only

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<sup>310</sup> Khachatrian, Haroutiun, *Economic Impacts of Re-Opening the Armenian-Turkish Border*, May 13, 2009, available at <http://www.tr.boell.org/web/50-788.html>, consulted May 14, 2012

<sup>311</sup> Ibid

<sup>312</sup> Ibid

build trust and contribute to greater cooperation but would also deepen ties among local officials on both sides of the border.”<sup>313</sup>

Regional cooperation between geographical neighbors in political conflict is of key importance.<sup>314</sup> One should not try to re-invent the wheel here. After the failure to get the Zurich protocols ratified, the US can try to revitalize the project of the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs), originally introduced by the Clinton administration for the Middle East, namely Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan in 1996. This trade format was designed to promote peace in the Middle East by encouraging regional economic cooperation primarily between countries in political conflict.<sup>315</sup> Authorized and designated by the US Congress, QIZs allowed Egypt and Jordan to export products to the United States duty-free.

According to the report of the Congressional Research Service:

“QIZs are typically industrial parks housing manufacturing operations. QIZs are distinguished from other trade zones as follows: Trade zones in general: (a) are stand-alone entities within one country (not directly connected to other countries); (b) produce for export to or domestic consumption in any country; and (c) operate solely under the authority of and conditions determined by the host government. QIZs, however: (a) have operations in two countries (Israel and either Jordan or Egypt); (b) produce goods solely for export to the United States; and (c) operate under both the authority of the host countries and the oversight authority of the United States, which determines conditions for and authorizes tariff relief for QIZ imports.”<sup>316</sup>

In the early 2000s the same trade mechanism was used for Chile, which joined NAFTA through QIZs. While political considerations were predominant in establishing QIZs in the Middle East, the Chilean example is of purely economic nature. It is also evidence that these cross-border industrial parks proved adequate not only for countries in conflict, but also for

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<sup>313</sup> International Crisis Group, Europe Report N 199, *Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders*, April 14, 2009. Posted at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/199\\_turkey\\_and\\_armenia\\_opening\\_minds\\_opening\\_borders\\_2.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/199_turkey_and_armenia_opening_minds_opening_borders_2.pdf), consulted February 15, 2012

<sup>314</sup> See also: Shougarian, Rouben, *The Diplomacy of Qualified Industrial Zones An alternative scenario for the US mediation of the Turkish-Armenian dialogue, accepted for publication*, Central Asia and the Caucasus, October 2015), Stockholm, Sweden

<sup>315</sup> See also: Shougarian, Rouben, *Stability in the Caucasus: Eight Principles of Regional Co-operation*, Central Asia and the Caucasus 1, (2001), Stockholm

<sup>316</sup> Bolle, Mary Jane; Prados, Alfred B. and Sharp, Jeremy M., *Qualifying Industrial Zones in Egypt and Jordan*, CRS Report for Congress, Jeremy M. Sharp Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, order code RS22002, updated July 5, 2006. Posted at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rs22002.pdf>, consulted February 16, 2012

neighbors simply willing to enhance their economic cooperation. In a comprehensive research paper on the QIZ initiative Joel Singer wrote:

“The QIZ initiative began to take shape in 1994-1995. It resulted from the strong conviction of both the Congress and the Clinton Administration that the economic aid requirements of the West Bank and Gaza in the post-Oslo Agreement stage, and Jordan in the post Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace stage, well exceeded the significant, yet insufficient, funds that the United States was able to provide. Both the Congress and the Administration were, therefore, looking for ways in which they could assist the economies of the West Bank, Gaza, and Jordan without having to raise the annual foreign assistance level.”<sup>317</sup>

QIZs are envisaged largely for high-tech production and textiles, which are imported tax-free to the United States. The same cross-border industry might work for the EU in its relations with the member candidates and ENP/EaP participants. It is through such concrete mechanisms that the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region can be effectively merged with a further incorporation into the European architecture. The key to this merging is not the truism of ethnic kinship between Turkey and Azerbaijan, but a substantive normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations.

The opening of the border with Armenia by Ankara through QIZs without any political preconditions will change the whole geo-political identity of the region. With a proper study of the QIZ mechanisms in Jordan, Israel and Egypt and a few necessary adjustments, as a well as a coordinated support on the Hill, it will not be difficult to establish such a zone in the region of Gyumri (Armenia) and Kars (Turkey) in the very near future. Providing limited access for trade (partial opening of the border) will become a first significant step in the roadmap of normalization of the relations between the two countries.

With regard to the mutual benefits of establishing different cross-border trade mechanism, David Philips pointed out that although the official contacts and negotiations between Ankara and Yerevan were in a deadlock, “beneath the radar” cross-border economic activity was still in place. Under the circumstances, business deals were by and large limited to

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<sup>317</sup> Singer, Joel, *The Qualifying Industrial Zone Initiative - A New Tool to Provide Economic Assistance to Middle Eastern Countries Engaged in the Peace Process*. Fordham International Law Journal, 2002, Vol. 26, Issue 3, Article 3, p. 560

“suitcase trade”, yet economic diplomacy between the two countries has never interrupted. Consumer goods were also transported from Turkey to Armenia through Georgian territory.<sup>318</sup>

Phillips is confident that even before the relations between Turkey and Armenia have been normalized, more serious economic cooperation between the two neighbors is possible, such as the export of surplus electricity from Armenia to Turkey. Armenia, in its turn could import high quality fiber optic cable produced in Turkey to support and develop Internet connectivity projects. Before the railway service between the cities of Kars and Gyumri is resumed, “Armenia could begin conforming the country's Soviet-era railway gauge to Turkish and European standards.”<sup>319</sup>

Speaking about economic diplomacy and Track 2 mediation, David Phillips sees great potential in establishing Turkish-Armenian QIZs:

“QIZ could be established to catalyze joint enterprises between Turks and Armenians. A QIZ is an industrial park and a free-trade zone, which is linked to a free-trade agreement with the United States. Goods qualify when partners contribute raw material, labor, or manufacturing. Kazan, an area in Armenia on the Turkish border, would be a suitable destination for joint ventures in textile and piece goods manufacturing.”<sup>320</sup>

In 2002 Turkey made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a stand-alone QIZ status for its eastern regions. Its diplomatic representations and advocacy groups in the US tried to use existing legislation to link into the Israeli-Jordanian model:

“The QIZ initiative has enjoyed great success on the ground, and the United States should be guardedly optimistic that the extension of the QIZ concept to other borders in the Middle East could encourage parties to resolve differences through political negotiations. Due, in large part, to the success of the QIZ initiative, the U.S. Congress is presently considering a second amendment to the U.S.-Israel FTA Implementation Act that would authorize the President to also extend duty-free treatment to goods produced in QIZs to be established in Turkey.”<sup>321</sup>

Interestingly enough, a low-key discussion on establishing QIZs in Turkey was resumed in 2008. It now had a very important new element that changed the entire format of the above-

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<sup>318</sup> Phillips, David, *Armenia and Turkey at Loggerheads*, posted at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-l-phillips/turkey-and-armenia-at-log\\_b\\_2957700.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-l-phillips/turkey-and-armenia-at-log_b_2957700.html), March 26, 2013

<sup>319</sup> Ibid

<sup>320</sup> Ibid

<sup>321</sup> Singer, p.569



mentioned initiative, which had failed to reach the floor of the 107<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. It no longer envisaged a stand-alone QIZ status for Turkey, but one shared with its geographical neighbor, Armenia. The discussion that went almost unnoticed coincided with the rise of *football diplomacy*.

In this regard, the *Hurriyet Daily News* ran an interesting piece describing the proposal of the Turkish Armenian Business and Development Council to establish QIZs. TABDC was founded in 1997, but it was not until the early and mid 2000s that it started to come up with important Track 2 initiatives. The QIZ proposal was a replica of “a similar model used between Jordan and Israel” that had serious political problems.<sup>322</sup>

According to Krikor Salbashian, the Armenian co-chairman of TABDC, a delegation of textile experts visited Turkey and Armenia to promote this regional cooperation model to normalize the relations between the two countries. Salbashian noted that while the question of establishing Turkish-Armenian QIZs had not been included into the talking points of the meeting between the two presidents in Yerevan in 2008, TABDC had planned to use this opportunity to promote their proposals after President Abdullah Gül’s historic visit to Armenia. According to the same source, the initial response from Ankara and Yerevan was very positive.<sup>323</sup>

Cahan Soyak, the Turkish co-founder and co-chair of TABDC spoke along the same lines and was even more specific about the prospects for the establishment of Turkish-Armenian QIZs. He singled out the textile sector as the most promising one to start a joint cross-border project between the two countries: “We can use this to the advantage of both sides. ... In Turkey, we have machines and fabrics, and there is a labor force in Armenia. It is possible to produce cost-effective textiles and sell them in the United States without taxes and customs tariffs.”<sup>324</sup>

The idea of establishing shared QIZs for Armenia and Turkey surfaced up within the framework of Track 2 diplomacy in the second half of 2008, when Track 1 talks were putting the

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<sup>322</sup> Hurriyet Daily News, *QIZ Proposal for Turkey-Armenia Trade*, Sep.22, 2008

Posted at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=qiz-proposal-for-turkey-armenia-trade-2008-09-22>, consulted February 11, 2012

<sup>323</sup> Ibid

<sup>324</sup> Today's Zaman İstanbul, February 9, 2009 Yonca Poyraz Dogan, *Turkish-Armenian Businessmen Await Normalization of Relations*. Posted at

[http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=167060](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=167060), consulted May 14, 2012

finishing touches on the roadmap that would lead to the signing of the bilateral protocols in Zurich. At that time, TABDC's proposal was probably meant to be an auxiliary means to promote comprehensive rapprochement between the two countries. After the failure of the all-or-nothing approach on Track 1, the Turkish-Armenian QIZ initiative could be revitalized as a main mediation initiative.

There were several reasons why the amendment to the US-Israeli FTA Implementation Act that would have extended the duty-free treatment to the goods produced in Turkey, never reached the floor of 107<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. First, California textile companies were vigorously opposed to the new legislation. Second, apart from the efforts of corporate lobbying, there was also a fear that powerful Armenian-American advocacy groups would kill the amendment on Turkey as soon as it reached the Full House.

The idea of establishing QIZs in the border regions with Turkey is not unfamiliar to the Armenian government. In 2003, a high-ranking delegation from the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited United States and Israel.<sup>325</sup> During the meetings in Washington, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, among other issues, a possible establishment of shared QIZs with Turkey was informally discussed. There were also plans to send a fact-finding delegation to Jordan, which, like Israel, had an FTA with the US, and, therefore, could provide QIZ extension for Armenia and Turkey.

While the Israeli option appeared to be politically more challenging, although strategically attractive, in the short-term, the extension of QIZs through Jordanian connection seemed more neutral and safe. The informal consultations in in the US and Israel were quite promising. However, the follow-up was not consistent enough, and the decision to take further steps was postponed indefinitely. The importance of those consultations was overshadowed by *football diplomacy* and a false hope for a quick, all-around normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. After the failure to ratify the protocols, it is beyond doubt that the international mediators should take a step-by-step approach to the normalization of the bilateral relations between Ankara and Yerevan. The package deal is impossible as long as Turkey continues to tailor its relations with Armenia by political pressures from Azerbaijan. Less ambitious projects must

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<sup>325</sup> Note: The author of this dissertation headed that delegation and has a detailed knowledge of the consultations with US and Israeli diplomats and QIZ experts.

come to the fore. The establishment of Armenian-Turkish QIZs could provide a way out from the current deadlock.

To appreciate political and economic components of the cross-border programs in the Middle East it is relevant to cite the remarks made in Cairo by Rachid Mohamed Rachid, Egypt's Minister of Foreign Trade, after signing the QIZ agreement with Israeli Vice Prime Minister and the US Trade Representative in 2004:

"We have high hopes that this arrangement will contribute to economic prosperity in the region. Indicators for success are very promising. No less important is the fact that the signing of this protocol today will help us start negotiating with our U.S. counterparts for a free trade agreement. However, economic interests are not our only goal for cooperation. It is our deep belief that the establishment of Qualified Industry Zones will contribute to just and comprehensive peace in the region - a peace that started many years ago with Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty."<sup>326</sup>

Today there is revived interest towards QIZ diplomacy both in the United States and in the Middle East. In the article *How QIZs can save the Middle East*, published by *Foreign Affairs* in August 2015, Oren Kessler on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Israeli-Egyptian economic partnership noted that billions of dollars had been "quietly pumped into Cairo's vulnerable economy."<sup>327</sup> He pointed out that the free-trade regime established within the framework of QIZs had originated from the 1979 peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. A similar trade deal with Jordan was a second step in the broader context of establishing regional stability and supporting economic development in the Arab countries. The implementation of the QIZ initiative had a positive economic impact on the region at large and peace building. 15 QIZs have already been established in Egypt and 13 in Jordan, which continue operating under the auspices of the US-Israeli Free Trade Agreement. Kessler noted the total annual export from these QIZs is around \$1 billion.<sup>328</sup> The economic effect in Jordan, where the QIZ project has been operating since 1997, is also quite tangible: "the kingdom's exports to the United States spiked from \$15 million to \$1.2 billion. This success led to the Jordanian-U.S. free-trade agreement of 2000,

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<sup>326</sup> <http://www.ustr.gov/about-us/press-office/speeches/archives/2004/december/remarks-after-signing-qualified-industrial-zone>, consulted June 14, 2012

<sup>327</sup> Kessler, Oren, *How QIZs can save the Middle East*, *Foreign Affairs*, August 23, 2015, available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/2015-08-23/trading-peace-egypt-and-israel>, consulted August 27, 2015

<sup>328</sup> Ibid

Washington's first with an Arab state."<sup>329</sup>

The United States has FTAs with 20 countries. On average, it takes approximately five years to negotiate such an agreement with each new candidate country. Therefore, it is quite a long process, if there is no special political effort and motivation behind it. Since the economic crisis of 2009 the Obama administration has been reluctant to start new negotiations and extend the list of the countries with which the US has an FTA. The only exception was Georgia. Obama's decision to start FTA negotiations with Saakashvili in January 2012 was purely political. The fact that Georgia is America's 113<sup>th</sup> largest trade partner is self-evident. Ariel Cohen and James M. Roberts pointed out that while it took the US administration approximately five years to negotiate and implement FTA-s with Panama, South Korea and Columbia, the same process could go much faster with Georgia.<sup>330</sup>

The Obama administration invited Georgia to start the process of joining the exclusive FTA club in early 2012, after all efforts to reanimate the talks on the deadlocked Turkish-Armenian protocols had turned out to be in vain. Thus, as the front access to the South Caucasus/Black Sea region remained closed, the back door became important again. While the politically motivated exception made by the White House for Georgia was a tribute to President Saakashvili's faithful cooperation with Washington, on the other, it was also predicated by the fact that the limited resource of signing but not ratifying the Turkish-Armenian protocols was coming to an end. The Zurich failure was no longer *perfect*. The US was still in need to promote its security and economic interests in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region: "Moving in a timely manner to implement a Georgia-U.S. free trade agreement (FTA) would promote economic freedom and prosperity in both countries and would serve U.S. security goals in Eurasia."<sup>331</sup>

As for the prospect of signing the US-Turkey FTA in the near future, the situation is quite complicated. This is not only because the Obama administration has refrained from initiating new free trade talks with any individual country since the 2009 crisis, but because it has recently

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid

<sup>330</sup> Cohen, Ariel and Roberts, James M., US-Georgia Free Trade Agreement: Time to Get Moving, July 27, The Heritage Foundation, issue brief 3684  
<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/07/us-georgia-free-trade-agreement-time-to-get-moving>, accessed Oct. 19, 2012

<sup>331</sup> Ibid

been involved in a much bigger economic deal of negotiating an unprecedented FTA with the EU. Such a turn of events has direct and indirect consequences for the Turkish economy:

“Turkey formed its customs union with the EU in 1995, with a view to eventually joining the bloc. The terms of this union stipulate that the government in Ankara can’t pursue a bilateral free-trade agreement with any country until the EU has established one already. By contrast, when the EU signs a trade deal with a third country, it gives access to Turkey’s market without Turkish consent... In the case of a trade pact as ambitious as the one Obama will be discussing with the EU, however, Turkey is put at a severe disadvantage. Turkey will have to negotiate its own agreement with the U.S., or else find itself lowering tariffs on imports from the U.S. with nothing in return.”<sup>332</sup>

However, opening the front gate to the Black Sea/South Caucasus region is still a priority issue on the US foreign policy agenda. And if politically motivated exception is being made to promote an FTA for Georgia, corresponding legislation designating and establishing QIZs for Armenia and Turkey should not be altogether impossible.

Paradoxical as it may sound, such legislation can be lobbied for by influential American-Armenian advocacy groups, which had been feared to oppose it, when the proposed amendment to the US-Israeli FTA Implementation Act envisaged a QIZ extension for Turkey only. While most of the Diaspora organizations were opposed to the texts of the Zurich Protocols, there is no reason why they should not support an alternative way to normalize the relations between Armenia and Turkey.

The powerful Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues at times numbering over 140 members and the Turkish Caucus that has recently increased to 157 members can take an unprecedented step. Should there be political support from Armenia, Turkey and the US administration, these Congressional groups can work together to introduce and co-sponsor an amendment on establishing Armenian-Turkish QIZs., Such turn of events and the resulting success story will not be as short-lived and controversial as Turkish-Armenian *football diplomacy*.

As described above, Turkey’s chances to sign a full FTA with the US are quite dim, as it became obvious during Vice-President Biden’s visit to Ankara and Istanbul in December 2011:

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<sup>332</sup> Cidar, Cenk and Barker Tyson *US- EU Trade Talks Risk Damaging Turkey*, May 12, 2013. Posted at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-05-12/u-s-eu-trade-talks-risk-damaging-turkey-ties.html>, consulted March 19, 2014

“The United States is currently not open to signing a free trade deal with Turkey, which would boost mutual trade, according to a top Turkish business representative. The focus for the US is Asia today, senior US trade official confirms.”<sup>333</sup>

Meanwhile, designation and establishment of Armenian-Turkish QIZs through adopting corresponding legislation in the US Congress appears to be the most realistic roadmap to reach a modest, but sustainable political and economic success in the context of normalization of relations between Yerevan and Ankara. Armenia and Turkey have all the necessary prerequisites that make them eligible for receiving QIZ extension within the framework of either US-Jordanian or US-Israeli FTA. Both countries are members of the WTO and are part of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which allows duty free export for a number of products.

Track 2 diplomacy must come to the fore again. International mediators should abandon the all-or-nothing approach and focus on cross-border projects that will de-link the Turkish-Armenian normalization process from the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution talks. On the one hand, it will make Ankara less constrained in the negotiations with Yerevan, on the other, Turkey will no longer have an excuse to explain the lack of good will by political pressure from Azerbaijan.

Designation and establishment of Kars-Gyumri QIZs can serve that goal. This seems to be a most natural geographical location to start. Both Kars and Gyumri regions have serious economic problems and are in dire need of new working places. The existing infrastructure there would also provide for a quick, limited opening of the Turkish-Armenian border.

Taking into account the level of involvement in Track 1 diplomacy, the funding of Track 2 initiatives and the role of non-state actors, it is logical to conclude the US has been the most interested and consistent mediator of Armenian-Turkish normalization and reconciliation negotiations. The lack of tangible results necessitates a change in the mediation strategy and the need to reconfigure the *roadmap* of negotiations. All-or-nothing approach has to be replaced by less ambitious, but manageable projects. Doing that will be more realistic if there are political incentives to get Russia, the key player in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region, on board.

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<sup>333</sup> Hurriyet Daily News, Dec. 4, 2011 Gökhan Kurtaran, *No US-Turkey Free Trade Zone Deal in the Pipeline*. Posted at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/no-us-turkey-free-trade-zone-deal-in-the-pipeline.aspx?pageID=238&nID=8422&NewsCatID=344>. Consulted May 20, 2013



At some point, Azerbaijan, which in new circumstances will find it much more difficult to play the role of a spoiler, can be invited to link to Turkish-Armenian QIZs and become a part of this mutually beneficial regional cooperation project. This should not be perceived as a mere act of damage control, but a pragmatic step that can be defined as *containment by inclusion*. Doing this will no longer turn the Turkish-Armenian normalization process into a hostage to the Nagorno Karabagh talks, but make Azerbaijan, a beneficiary of the step-by-step improvement of the relations between Ankara and Yerevan.

Turkey, on the other hand, will obtain a unique opportunity to become positively engaged in the South Caucasus region. An amendment to the corresponding legislation could be drafted in a way that would envisage a possibility of establishing another QIZ on the border with Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan.

In the longer run, a Georgian-Armenian-Azerbaijani QIZ with or without Turkish participation can be designated next to the region of Kazakh, where the three South Caucasian countries have common border. This seems logical especially taking into account that the US-Georgian FTA talks are already underway. Georgia, which was wary about the comprehensive normalization of the Turkish-Armenian relations, would feel much more comfortable should such project be put into practice.

<sup>334</sup> [http://www.armenian-history.com/images/maps/Ethnic\\_map\\_of\\_Transcaucasus%20copy.jpg](http://www.armenian-history.com/images/maps/Ethnic_map_of_Transcaucasus%20copy.jpg)



Last but not least, if Turkish-Armenian QIZs are established, the US will make a serious step towards the promotion of its security interests in the Black Sea/ South Caucasus region. Even a partial normalization of the relations between Yerevan and Ankara can turn out to become crucially important for Washington.

The EU already has an FTA with Turkey and has signed a DCFTA with Georgia. It can also become involved in supporting a QIZ project between Armenia and Turkey.

In the light of unprecedented intensification of Turkish-Russian political and economic contacts after 2008, Moscow might also try to reformat Turkish-Armenian QIZ or a similar project under the umbrella of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Thus, regional actors and international mediators of the Track I Turkish-Armenian talks - short-term beneficiaries of the *perfect* diplomatic *failure*, should have no reason to object to less *perfect*, but more realistic Track II projects. In conflict resolution setting a closer target is much safer than shooting over the bow. Mediators should keep in mind that with every missed opportunity the existing situation deteriorates and the chances for a rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey become slimmer.

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335 Ibid



## Conclusion

International mediation of the relations between Ankara and Yerevan in the last twenty-five years unfolded parallel to the evolution of the Turkish-Armenian standoff from a bilateral issue (1991-1995) to an issue of regional importance (1995-2001) and eventually a global security problem (2001- the present time). In other words, it went through three consecutive geopolitical cycles. The last one, in its turn, could be split into two sub-periods: (2001-2008) and (2008-2015), which is accounted for by the introduction of *football diplomacy*. In the context of international geopolitics, the active stage of *football diplomacy* coincided with the August 2008 war in South Ossetia. The historical logic of Turkish-Armenian relations presupposed that this diplomatic cycle would end in 2015, around the centennial anniversary of the Genocide.

Since independence international mediation of Turkish-Armenian dialogue has been focused both on the normalization of relations between the two countries and reconciliation of the Armenian and Turkish peoples. While the first presupposed the opening of the common border and establishment of diplomatic relations between Ankara and Yerevan, the second was generally built around informal proximity talks involving civil society leaders, intellectuals and Armenian Diaspora representatives. Normalization process, direct or mediated, has been predominantly handled within the framework of official negotiations. Reconciliation issues have almost always been discussed within the framework of Track 2 diplomatic format. Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (2001-2003) and *football diplomacy* (2008-2009) stand out as two exceptions, when international mediation tried to combine the elements of reconciliation and normalization in one diplomatic format. The first- TARC, mediated and sponsored from the US, was a typical example of what various academic sources and scientific literature define as 1.5 Track. The second was carried out under the auspices of official Swiss-American mediation within the framework of Track 1 diplomacy.

Whereas an attempt to combine the elements of reconciliation and normalization in one negotiation format turned out to be generally justified for the methodology of mediation on Track 1.5 (TARC), the same strategy on Track I, within the framework of *football diplomacy*, proved to be not only ineffective, but also harmful.

In general terms, the distribution of funding of Track 1.5 and Track 2 initiatives reflects the level of involvement and vested interest of the states and international actors involved in the mediation of Armenian-Turkish dialogue. Almost half of those initiatives were sponsored by the United States, constituting approximately 48% of reconciliation and normalization programs. European countries and institutions, with Germany and Switzerland<sup>336</sup> being the most active contributors, funded 26% of the initiatives. Around 17 % of the funding came from local institutions, while 8 % came from mixed financial sources.

While among European countries Germany has turned out to be a most consistent sponsor of the mediation of the Track 2 dialogue between Armenia and Turkey since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it was only Switzerland that came up with and implemented a clearly designed roadmap for the Track 1 talks.

The current research made it possible to conclude that the format, timing and intensity of a proposed international mediation of Armenian-Turkish relations by a third party/country is directly dependent on this country's position with regard to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Therefore, any substantive change of this position would have a tangible impact on the methodology and modality of the mediation by the country in question.

The US, having not officially recognized the Genocide, opted to actively engage in the establishment and sponsoring of different formats of Armenian-Turkish talks. The geography and proportionate distribution of the international funding of Armenian-Turkish normalization and reconciliation talks allow to conclude that the US has been the most active and interested mediator/actor in changing the geopolitical identity of the Black Sea/South Caucasus region.

The US-Swiss mediation became particularly effective and produced tangible results only after the considerable change of Russia's approach to the normalization of Armenian –Turkish relations in 2008. The unprecedented *Thaw* in the relations between Moscow and Ankara that lasted until the fall of 2015 created favorable conditions for *football diplomacy*. The shooting down of the Russian military aircraft on the border with Syria on November 24, 2015 put a temporary end to the Turkish-Russian rapprochement. However, Russia's positive role in

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<sup>336</sup> Swiss funding was made available to prepare and facilitate Track I negotiations within the framework of *football diplomacy*

helping to prevent the failed coup d'état attempt in Turkey in July 2016, led to the pressing of reset button in the relations between the two countries and their leaders.

In 1991, when Armenia regained independence, it became obvious that the bilateral relations with Turkey would not only be included as a complex priority issue in the foreign policy agenda of both countries, but would also be scrutinized in the broader context of international politics.

While international mediation and facilitation of Armenian-Turkish relations took different forms and modality during the last twenty-five years, the nature of negotiations remained very much the same. Ankara continued to put forward political preconditions to establish diplomatic relations and open the common border with Armenia, the mediators tried to find a compromise by limiting the number of these preconditions or changing their wording to make them more or less acceptable for Yerevan.

Armenia's repeatedly declared willingness to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey without any political preconditions made little difference at the negotiation table. Although it did find sympathy, understanding and even praise among international mediators, in practical terms they did very little to put any tangible pressure on Turkey to change things on the ground.

Ankara's preconditions to establish diplomatic relations with Yerevan have always been in place, regardless of whether Armenia included the pursuit of international recognition of the Genocide in the Ottoman Empire in its foreign policy agenda or not. Therefore, irrespective of when the international mediation and facilitation initiatives came to the fore, - during the first, second or third Armenian administration after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, they all had to address issue of Turkish preconditions.

The only thing that changed in the mid and late 2000s was that Ankara was able to make the mediators approve Erdoğan's initiative to establish a Turkish-Armenian commission of historians. In their turn, Switzerland and the US used their influence and good offices with the Armenian administration to make it accept the modified version of this initiative to eventually include it into the text of the Zurich Protocols.

This was how the processes of normalization between the states and reconciliation between the two nations were artificially merged in one document. This methodological mistake

of the US-Swiss mediation was one of the main reasons why the ultimate goals of *football diplomacy* could have never been fulfilled.

The *Decision* of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia adopted three months after the Zurich Protocols had been signed provided an *exit strategy* not only for Armenia, but to some extent, also for Turkey. However, it should be noted that Ankara's attempt to use certain provisions of the Decision as an excuse not to ratify the Protocols turned out to be incoherent and unconvincing. Turkey's arguments fell considerably short of being accepted by the international community, the mediators in particular.

While the Genocide recognition issue appeared to be the main stumbling block that prevented Turkey from normalizing relations with Armenia, whether it was or was not included into Yerevan's foreign policy agenda, it was the Nagorno Karabagh problem that proved to be a decisive factor in Ankara's continuing refusal to open the common border. Since the mid 90s Turkey has become a hostage of the public opinion and political pressure from Azerbaijan, whenever it decided to engage in Track 1 negotiations with Armenia.

The Azerbaijani authorities also tried to put pressure on international mediator-countries, particularly those countries that were simultaneously in charge of the OSCE-sponsored Nagorno Karabagh talks. This pressure increased exponentially immediately after the roadmap of *football diplomacy* was made public on April 22, 2009. The Aliyev administration resorted to political blackmail as a means to hamper the international mediation of the Armenian-Turkish negotiations.

Turkey in its turn, used the hard-line position of the Azerbaijani authorities as an excuse not to make any tangible concessions in the talks with Armenia and mediators, and eventually, not to ratify the Protocols.

The rest in Ankara's position turned out to be a comfortable entourage to play diplomatic games with the international community, in which mediators and facilitators were trapped to perform their roles. Turkey used the policy of *perfect diplomatic failures* as a means to improve its international image. This was of particular importance on the eve of the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Having engaged into a *constructive* dialogue with Armenia brokered by the US and Switzerland, Ankara managed to prevent a larger-scale

international recognition of the events of 1915. The mediators preferred to be satisfied with tactical diplomatic victories sacrificing the strategic perspective and postponing the problem of the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations for better times.

They eventually realized that in present geopolitical circumstances Turkey, despite its declared willingness to engage in *football diplomacy*, would never open the border and establish diplomatic relations with Armenia prior to the resolution of the Karabagh conflict.

Thus any mediation attempt to comprehensively normalize Armenian-Turkish relations before a tangible progress has been achieved in the Karabagh talks is doomed from the very first day of the negotiation process, just like Ankara's declared willingness to accept a new facilitation initiative is nothing but a diplomatic trick to mislead the international community.

What Ankara has done in the relations with Yerevan since 1991 can be defined as *seasonal diplomacy*, mediated or direct, which always tended to be activated in the spring months and would slow down immediately after April 24. 2008-2015 can be characterized as extended period of *seasonal diplomacy*. TARC was another example of a prolonged diplomatic effort, yet it was undertaken not in official negotiations, but within the Track 1.5 format.

To be understood in the broader framework of international politics this imitation of negotiation activity, which reached an unprecedented high during *football diplomacy* need to be viewed within the general framework of the AKP's policy of *zero problems with neighbors*. Turkey's attempts to play a more significant role not only in the Black Sea/South Caucasus, but also internationally should be considered in the same context.

So far these attempts have been quite controversial. This is always the case, when the courage to face national history without prejudice is substituted by politicized efforts to re-write it. There is no doubt that *transitional justice* is a powerful asset in international negotiations between the countries in political conflict burdened by the historical past. However, *transitional justice* should not be used and abused for political manipulations. Just like *transitional justice*, the limited success of *perfect diplomatic failures* can only be *temporal*. Historical truth, distinct from justice, can only be *permanent*.

The normalization of the relations with Turkey, partial or comprehensive, is an integral component of the regained Armenian statehood. To be able to promote its foreign policy goals

and national security agenda the Armenian authorities not only need to reconcile the collective memory of the past and the policy of pragmatism in the relations with geographical neighbors, but also gain the support of the civil society.

All these factors have to be taken into consideration by future mediators of Armenian-Turkish relations. If the lessons learned from the previous negotiations continue to be ignored, the only tangible result they could expect to achieve in the future would once again be a tactical political success and *perfect diplomatic failures*.

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## Appendix I

### *A brief historical overview of sports diplomacies in relation to the Armenian-Turkish football diplomacy*

Since the most eventful period of the international mediation of Armenian-Turkish relations is known as *football diplomacy* it is important to draw a few historical parallels to other sports used by states in political conflicts to resolve their differences. While it is a general belief that sports and politics do not mix, diplomacy and sports certainly do. Sports diplomacy, which in the last 50 years was repeatedly used to facilitate resolution of political disputes, usually falls under the category of Track II diplomacy. Gareth Evans, former Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the International Crisis Group (ISG), defined public diplomacy as “an exercise in persuasion and influence that extends beyond traditional diplomacy by leveraging a much larger cast of players both inside and outside government.”<sup>337</sup>

The US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs considers sports diplomacy as an important vehicle to bridge the divides between nations and help them overcome cultural differences. The general principles and philosophy of sports make them a perfect venue for bringing conflicting nations together.<sup>338</sup> Dr. Stuart Murray from Bond University, Australia, gives the following definition of sports diplomacy:

“It involves representative and diplomatic activities undertaken by sports people on behalf of and in conjunction with their governments. The practice is facilitated by traditional diplomacy and uses sports people and sporting events to engage, inform and create a favourable image among foreign publics and organisations, to shape their perceptions in a way that is (more) conducive to the sending government’s foreign policy goals.”<sup>339</sup>

One of the most recent examples of sports diplomacy was a so-called *cricket diplomacy*. After the 2008 attack in Mumbai, there was a three-year long interruption of negotiations on any level between Pakistan

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<sup>337</sup> Evans G., Grant B. (1995) *Australia’s Foreign Relations in the world of the 1990s*. Melbourne: Melbourne Uni Press, p. 66,

<sup>338</sup> Available at: <https://publicandculturaldiplomacy2.wordpress.com/2012/05/15/sports-as-cultural-diplomacy/>, consulted August 21, 2015

<sup>339</sup> Murray, Stuart, *Sports-Diplomacy: a hybrid of two halves*, p. 8, available at: <http://www.cd-n.org/content/articles/participantpapers/2011-symposium/Sports-Diplomacy-a-hybrid-of-two-halves--Dr-Stuart-Murray.pdf>, consulted February 12, 2015

and India. The Pakistani Prime Minister Gilani accepted an invitation from his Indian counterpart, Manmohan Singh and they met for the first time during the World Cup cricket match in 2011.

“In a goodwill gesture ahead of the cricket match, President Asif Ali Zardari will also free an Indian national, Gopal Das, who has been languishing in a Pakistani prison for 27 years as an alleged spy. Wednesday's match has been heralded as "cricket diplomacy", something of a tradition between the two countries that has at least helped ease tensions in the past.”<sup>340</sup>

Although the term *cricket diplomacy* was first used in 2011, the tradition of using this sport to bring the two nations together goes back to the late 80s. In 1987, former Pakistani president Mohammed Zia ul-Haq paid a one-day visit to India to be present at the historic game between the two national teams. This happened at the time when the situation at the border was critical, threatening to turn into a serious military confrontation. A similar visit to watch a cricket match in India was made in 2005 by Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's then military ruler. That trip was even more fruitful as it grew into a formal meeting, during which the two leaders and their diplomatic teams reached an agreement to open up the militarized frontier dividing the disputed Kashmir region.<sup>341</sup>

The first major example of sports diplomacy can be traced back to 1971, when the term *Ping-Pong diplomacy* was introduced and made its way to political vocabulary. After the World Table Tennis Championships in Japan, the American team was invited to visit China. This initiative, which was put forward after two decades of mutual antagonism, led to a significant improvement of the Sino-American relations and eventually to the official visit to China by Richard Nixon.<sup>342</sup> An interesting book by Nicholas Griffin “*Ping-Pong Diplomacy. The Secret History behind the Game that Changed the World*” gives a detailed account of *Ping-Pong diplomacy*. The book highlighted the pivotal role of President Nixon, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, as well as Bill Cunningham in helping to initiate the US-Chinese Track II diplomacy. While unofficial proximity talks between the two countries had long been underway with regard to the

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<sup>340</sup> Scrutton, Alistair, *India and Pakistan talk in the shadow of “cricket diplomacy”*, New Delhi, March 28, 2011, available at: <http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/03/28/idINIndia-55925220110328>, consulted May 11, 2014

<sup>341</sup> Ibid

<sup>342</sup> See Griffin, Nicholas, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy, The Secret History Behind the Game that Changed the World*, Scribner, 2014

status of Taiwan, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy* helped to bring about a comprehensive breakthrough in the bilateral relations between the United States and China.<sup>343</sup>

As for the factor of sports used to facilitate US-Iranian relations, two terms *wrestling diplomacy* and *football diplomacy* were put into circulation in the late 90s. In 1997, during his second term President Mohammed Khatami took a much more moderate approach to foreign policy that valued open dialogue with the international community.<sup>344</sup> It was his goal to establish diplomatic relations with the US despite Imam Khamenei's prohibition of any such relations.<sup>345</sup> Despite this edict by the Ayatollah, Khatami was able to find a work around in the form of international sports and 'people-to-people' relations. He may not have been able to establish direct official relations with the US government but he was able to signal to the Americans that Iran was ready to make amends to their estranged relations.<sup>346</sup>

The participation of Iran in the 1998 World Cup marked the high point in US-Iranian relations in the post revolution era. Both teams conducted themselves in a very cordial manner and even opted out of the individual team photos in favor of a joint photo.<sup>347</sup> The match went so well, in fact, that FIFA awarded the two teams the FIFA Fair Play award.<sup>348</sup>

In August 2014, when the Track I negotiations on the US-Iranian Nuclear Agreement were entering a decisive stage, a so-called *volleyball diplomacy* was called upon to support the normalization of relations between the two countries. The Iranian men's national team was invited to Los Angeles to play four friendly games. The State Department provided visa facilitation and logistical support. In this regard Al-Monitor wrote:

“ The US government is also energetically promoting the visit as part of an expanding public diplomacy campaign intended to build the ground for better relations and complement the negotiations on a long-term

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<sup>343</sup> Maslin, Janet, Table for Two (Countries)'Ping-Pong Diplomacy,' by Nicholas Griffin, The New York Times, January 2, 2014, consulted March 2, 2015

<sup>344</sup> Khatami, Mohammed, Official website of Sayyid Mohammed Khatami, 2012, at <http://www.khatami.ir/biography.html>, consulted January 19, 2013

<sup>345</sup> Chehabi, H.E. *Sport Diplomacy between the United States and Iran*, Diplomacy & Statecraft, Vol.12, No.1, (Pub. Frank Cass, London, March 2001), p. 98-99

<sup>346</sup> Ibid

<sup>347</sup> Ibid (cited in *Wrestling Diplomacy: Gateway to Better US-Iranian Relations?* The Eurasia Center/EBC, March 14, 2013, by Christopher R. Mancini)

<sup>348</sup> Ibid

nuclear agreement. State Department representatives met the team on their arrival at Los Angeles airport and the games are being live-streamed on both the Voice of America Persian service and the USA Volleyball website.”<sup>349</sup>

Just like the historic match between the US and Iran during the 1998 World Cup, the Armenia-Turkey football games played in 2008 and 2009, and attended by both presidents, could have been nominated for the FIFA fair play award. They became an indivisible part of the roadmap designed by the international mediators to sign the Turkey-Armenia Protocols in Zurich. While the Swiss-American mediation methodology and efficiency of Armenian-Turkish normalization was seriously questioned and argued in this research, there is little doubt that from the point of view of mediation technique and public relations in the US and Europe, *football diplomacy* could be described as a success story belonging to the same league with *Ping-Pong* and *cricket diplomacy*.

This is particularly important, because *sports diplomacy* has not always been as harmless, as the examples discussed in this chapter. Suffice it to remember a brawl that happened four years ago when the Georgetown University basketball team played friendlies in China.<sup>350</sup>

*Football diplomacy*, even before the official term came into existence, had also been known to be a double-edged sword. Stuart Murray made an interesting note about a scandalous soccer game between Honduras and El Salvador in 1969. What was planned to be a bridge between the two conflicting nations suddenly turned into a greater divide between them.<sup>351</sup> Therefore, as Murray rightly puts it, sports diplomacy “has a problem with duplicity.”<sup>352</sup> And it is not always as positive and harmless as a State Department official once described it: “sports-diplomacy is not really about competition at all. It is about respect for diversity, leadership, teamwork and dialogue.”<sup>353</sup>

Any sport is based upon the concept of competition. So is diplomacy, football or other. Internationally mediated Armenian-Turkish negotiations are not an exception. The Armenian-Turkish *football diplomacy*

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<sup>349</sup> Slavin, Barbara, *Iran, US try volleyball diplomacy*, Al Monitor, August 14, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/iran-volleyball-team-united-states-sports-diplomacy.html>, consulted March 2, 2015

<sup>350</sup> Wang, Gene, *Georgetown basketball exhibition in China ends in brawl*, The Washington Post, August 18, 2011, available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/colleges/fight-ends-georgetown-basketball-exhibition-in-china/2011/08/18/gIQAs1zeNJ\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/colleges/fight-ends-georgetown-basketball-exhibition-in-china/2011/08/18/gIQAs1zeNJ_story.html), consulted March 2, 2015

<sup>351</sup> Murray, Ibid, p. 19

<sup>352</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>353</sup> Walters, Caroline “Sports Diplomacy is the New comeback Kid,” August 3, 2007, [http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/index.php/newswire/cpdblog\\_detail/070803\\_sports\\_diplomacy\\_is\\_the\\_new\\_comeback\\_kid/](http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/index.php/newswire/cpdblog_detail/070803_sports_diplomacy_is_the_new_comeback_kid/), visited March 14, 2015

is a classical example of how a sports event attended by thousands of people can pave the way for official negotiations.

## **Appendix II**

### ***Several recommendations to amend and reconfigure the Armenian-Turkish roadmap***

- To convene a closed door multi-panel conference with a view to do a detailed inventory of the last 20 years of the Turkish-Armenian Track I, Track 1.5 and Track II diplomacy and elaborate the format of the future dialogue. A select group of former and present government officials and diplomats, public figures, international mediators, facilitators, businessmen and all other important participants of the Turkish-Armenian talks should be among the invitees.
- To clearly describe the responsibility and authority of Track I, Track 1.5 and Track II formats and improve the mechanism of coordination among the three. To prioritize and stratify multiple new and old Track II initiatives in business and cultural fields.
- To clearly define the formats of normalization of relations between the two states and reconciliation between the nations keeping them on parallel tracks. Track I should mainly focus on normalization (opening of the common border and establishment of diplomatic relations). Track II with its multiple initiatives and subdivisions, in which the Armenian Diaspora must be equally represented together with public figures, scholars and former diplomats from Turkey and Armenia, should, on the one hand, deal with a longer-term reconciliation issues, on the other, provide a support for the normalization process between the two countries.
- To revitalize talks on designating and establishing Armenian-Turkish QIZs. To hold Armenian-Turkish proximity consultations on the issue in question.
- To discuss the QIZ project with the State Department and USTR on the level of Armenian and Turkish ambassadors accredited to Washington, or with the US ambassadors in the respective capitals.
- To hold consultations with Armenian-American advocacy groups (Armenian National Committee and Armenian Assembly of America) and American-Turkish organizations (such as Turkish Coalition America and Assembly of Turkish American Associations).



- To discuss the issue in question with Jordan and send fact-finding missions to the Middle East to observe the operation of QIZs on the ground.
- To arrange a round-table expert discussion on the prospect of establishing Armenian-Turkish QIZs at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC. <sup>\*354</sup>
- To authorize the Turkish-Armenian Business and Development Council (TABDC) to start consultations with the USTR, as well as the Armenian Caucus and the Turkish Caucus on the Hill.
- To advocate the drafting and bringing to the floor the corresponding amendment to the US-Jordan FTA.
- To hold consultations on the issue in question with the EU to examine the possibilities of using the existing legislation and programs it currently has with Ankara and Yerevan for the benefit of Turkish-Armenian QIZs.
- To brief the rest of the regional actors and neighbors on the prospects of the Turkish-Armenian QIZ project. To discuss the possibility of QIZ extension to Georgia before it signs an FTA with the US, and Azerbaijan.
- To diversify and expedite other Track I and II initiatives, such as electricity swaps, opening of the railroad link, joint cultural projects and the restoration of the ancient Armenian city of Ani.
- To restart Track 1.5 reconciliation talks based on the report provided by Center for Transitional Justice in New York. The controversy about the point on sub-commission of historians included into the text of the Turkish-Armenian protocols can only be overcome, if they (the historians) will be given the authority to discuss not *what* happened in 1915, but *why* and *how* it happened.

## **Appendix III**

### ***Major global and regional security factors that could influence international mediation of Armenia-Turkey relations***

The collapse of the bipolar world order has changed the international security situation beyond recognition. Today's geopolitical disputes and the need to mediate them originate not only from current problems among regional neighbors, but also from dormant standoffs, the active phase of which seems to

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<sup>354</sup> Note: This is advised to be done as Thomas de Waal, a leading expert on the South Caucasus and Turkish-Armenian relations and Marwan Muasher, the former Foreign Minister of Jordan with first hand QIZ knowledge are currently with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC.

be long over. Comprehensive resolution of the latter is the key, and in the cases directly affecting global security, a necessary pre-requisite for the settlement of multiple regional problems of the present day.

The next diplomatic cycle of international mediation and facilitation of Armenian-Turkish relations will have to shape itself against the background of tectonic changes in today's geopolitics. It will be defined by three major global security factors, one regional problem and domestic developments in Turkey:

- Economic situation and political processes in Russia and its relations with the US and EU.
- Crisis in Syria and the war against ISIS. Re-assessment of Turkey's role and involvement in Syria and Iraq by key international actors in the Middle East.
- The US-Iranian Nuclear Agreement, the future course of negotiations between Washington and Tehran, and their impact on the Black Sea/South Caucasus region.
- The imminent threat of another war in Nagorno Karabagh.
- Domestic situation and developments in Turkey after the failed coup d'état in July 2016.

The totality and complexity of these global and regional geopolitical developments will predicate the timing, methodology and ultimate goals of the international mediation of Armenian-Turkish normalization and reconciliation negotiations. With all this in mind it appears logical to conclude that the time for seasonal diplomacy, short-term achievements and *perfect failures* is over. The political resource for maintaining the course of *football-like diplomacy* and mediation is exhausted. *Transitional justice* could still be helpful and even useful but only as an auxiliary means to achieve target-oriented results.

In the new geopolitical circumstances not only international mediators, the US in particular, but Turkey itself might have to reconsider the mechanisms to promote its policy in the Black Sea/South Caucasus region. Should this happen, the normalization of relations with the Republic of Armenia will become a real priority of *zero problems with neighbors*, graduating beyond the imitation of positive engagement in the region, and the premium on international image-making and *seasonal* outbursts of diplomatic activity.