

THE NAGORNO KARABAKH CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE
RELATIONS BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis seeks to examine the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in terms of the role that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict plays in this relationship. The Nagorno Karabakh conflict, which is one of the long-lasting ethno-territorial conflicts in the region, continues to be the major issue-area for Azerbaijan's foreign policy. In this respect, Azerbaijan's relations with Turkey, as well as NATO, the United States and Russia could be understood better through an academic study of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Contrary to the views of some scholars who claim that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has become relatively less important vis-à-vis the economic and energy issues in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey, this thesis argues that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict still maintains its centrality in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The thesis has five chapters, including introduction and conclusion chapters: Chapter Two explores the evolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict during the Elchibey period, while the Chapter Three and Chapter Four discuss the impact of this conflict on Azerbaijan's relations with Turkey under Heidar and Ilham Aliyev periods respectively.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Turkey, Armenia, the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict, Energy

ÖZ

KARABAĞ SORUNU VE BU SORUNUN AZERBAYCAN - TÜRKİYE İLİŞKİLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

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Bu tez, Karabağ sorunun Azerbaycan ve Türkiye ilişkilerindeki rolünü incelemektedir. Bölgedeki en uzun süren etnik ve bölgesel sorunlardan biri olan Karabağ sorunu, Azerbaycan'ın dış politikasında en temel unsur olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu anlamda, Azerbaycan'ın NATO, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Rusya'nın yanısıra, Türkiye ile ilişkileri, Karabağ sorununun akademik bir çalışma sonucu daha iyi anlaşılacaktır.

Azerbaycan ve Türkiye ilişkilerinde enerji ve ekonomi konularının karşısında, Karabağ sorununun daha az önemli hale geldiğini savunan bazı akademisyenlerin görüşlerinin aksine, bu tez Karabağ sorununun Azerbaycan ve Türkiye ilişkilerinde hala merkeziyetini koruduğunu savunmaktadır.

Tez, giriş ve sonuç dahil olmak üzere beş bölümdür. Bölüm iki Karabağ sorununun Elçibey dönemi esnasındaki oluşumunu incelerken, bölüm üç ve bölüm dört sırasıyla Haydar Aliyev ve İlham Aliyev döneminde bu sorunun Azerbaycan'ın Türkiye ile ilişkilerine etkisini tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Azerbaycan, Türkiye, Ermenistan, Karabağ Sorunu, Enerji

To My Daughters

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I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrisever for his support, encouragement and patience. I would also express my gratitudes to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fırat Purtaş and Assist. Prof. Dr. Bayram Sinkaya for their constructive comments.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIOC	Azerbaijan International Operating Company
ANA	Armenian National Army
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EU	European Union
GUAM	Georgia-Ukraine-Azerbaijan-Moldova
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKAO	Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation for Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace Program
PKF	Peace Keeping Force
SOCAR	State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic
TARC	Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission
TICA	Turkish International Cooperation Agency
TRT	Turkish Radio and Television Corporation
UN	The United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	The United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history, located on the trade routes and migration way, Caucasus has been a spectacular region for all the civilizations that survived and the empires that occupied. Due to its turbulent history, Caucasus has a multi-ethnic population and cultural, religious disparities. Bearing in mind, the Nagorno Karabakh issue remaining as one of the long-lasting conflict in history, continues to be the major problem of Azerbaijan and holds a paramount importance in shaping Azerbaijan foreign policy. In this context, the following study will elaborate the centrality of Nagorno Karabakh issue in relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan and highlight its dynamics in Turkish foreign policy.

1.1. Scope and Objective

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of Nagorno Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan-Turkey relations in the presidency of Abulfaz Elchibey, Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev. In this respect, this thesis examines three phases of Azerbaijan because in analyzing the role of Nagorno Karabakh conflict in Turkish foreign policy, one needs to look at the background and the current developments of the conflict to highlight its centrality in Turkey-Azerbaijan relations.

As one of the long-lasting dispute in the Caucasus, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict dates back 1988. The reawakening of Armenian nationalism by 1915 events in 1960s, laid a ground for the political formation in Gorbachev era that economic and political reforms yielded unexpected consequences rendering the outburst of national aspirations. With the intensified inter-ethnic clashes during 1989 and so on, the conflict turned into full-scale war which would also pose a major threat to the sovereignty of Azerbaijan after gaining its independence. In this respect, when Elchibey became the president of Azerbaijan, he was obliged to deal with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict which posed both domestic and external challenge. The successive Armenian attacks in Shusha, Lachin and most prominently, the killings of

Khojaly in 1992 arose hatred against Armenians and led to public demonstrations in Turkey. More importantly, Armenian aggression in Nakhichevan had repercussions in Turkey on governmental level that as the guarantor of Nakhichevan according to Kars Treaty, Turkey threatened to send troops there, namely, gave signals of military intervention subsequently the attacks halted in the face of Turkish military threat. All in all, these developments reinforced the cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan in terms of Nagorno Karabakh issue that afterwards Turkey has become the staunchest ally of Azerbaijan in this respect.

After signing the cease fire agreement in 1994 under the auspices of Russia, the peace process was conducted by Minsk Group which was established in 1992 within OSCE. Yet the misconception of Azerbaijan as an aggressor state against Armenia especially in the US yielded negative results that combined with the influence of the Diaspora, Azerbaijan was deprived of US 907 Freedom Support Act. In this sense, the efforts of Turkey in taking attention of the international community to the Karabakh conflict and clarifying the stance of Azerbaijan in the conflict yielded positive results.

This work also aims at visualizing the thorny transition period of Azerbaijan which had burden of state-building and nation-building process that integrating with regional and international organizations would not only make its economy part of the globe but also establish a ground for a joint cooperation against security threats emanating from regional conflicts which breed chaos and hampers the stability of the state. In this respect, Turkey promoted Azerbaijan in its efforts to integrate with the Western bloc. Respectively, OSCE, NATO and the EU are among the Euro-Atlanticist institutions that Turkey gives high priority to the involvement of Azerbaijan in those entities. The aim of analyzing the relations with these organizations stems from their background purpose which aims at ensuring the security of energy resources and the pipeline routes. Given the fact that Azerbaijan after the signing “the Contract of the Century” with giant oil corporations, has become a net energy exporter and by future projects Azerbaijan seems to increase its profile in worldwide. In this context, Azerbaijan has become more vocal and gained leverage for lobbying for international support for the peaceful settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Finally, the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia is another subject that holds paramount importance. After taking an office, in line with the

policy of “zero problem” with neighboring states, Justice and Development Party took concrete initiatives to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia. Signing the protocols based on opening the borders and establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia, Turkey-Azerbaijan relations got into stuck. The harsh reaction of Azerbaijan to the protocols culminated with their suspension to the indefinite future. Although implementation of the protocols grants many advantages for both Turkey and Armenia in terms of economy and security perception, Turkish parliamentary did not ratify the protocols not to antagonize Azerbaijan. As cited in both “National Security Concept” and “Military Doctrine” of Azerbaijan, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is stated as the most important challenge for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. In that context, Turkey shares it as the common security problem with Baku. Regarding this, the detailed analysis of the normalization process and its effects are stated in this thesis to highlight the spectacular importance of Nagorno Karabakh issue in Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan.

To sum up, after the independence of Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh issue affects the dynamics of domestic and foreign policy of Azerbaijan and in establishing bilateral relations with the other countries, their perception of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict play determining role in shaping the relations, especially it is valid for Turkey.

1.2. Literature Survey

An overview of the literature analyzing Turkey-Azerbaijan relations shows no one perspective dominates because the Nagorno Karabakh issue involves two sovereign states, Azerbaijan and Armenia, the three principal regional powers, Russia, Turkey and Iran, and non-regional powers, the US and France. So given their differing stance towards the issue, the sources related to the topic are various in this respect. The sources used during the research process include books, periodicals, the Internet materials.

The primary sources are cited in the “References” section. In this regard, some sources can be single out due to their paramount importance.

In terms of examining the early phase of Azerbaijan, T. Swietochowski, in his book “Russia and Azerbaijan” reflects the transition period of the South Caucasus making reference to political formation of Azerbaijan under the APF, subsequently the political environment after the independence of Azerbaijan. In this respect, his book serves spectacular contribution to my thesis. In the same line, the books “Small Nations and Great Powers” by Svante Cornell, and “The New Caucasus” by Edmund Herzig, including substantial information about the dynamics of region in the context of Russian and Turkish politics in the aftermath of the independence were useful in terms of analyzing the evolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and its linkage with other states.

The authors, Michael Croissant in his book, “The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict”, and Thomas de Waal, in his book “The Black Garden” touch upon the Nagorno Karabakh conflict from the perspective of Armenia which constitutes the third party to the conflict that in evaluating the sequence of the events in the Soviet Union and afterwards, their analysis play spectacular importance.

Serving as the core issue in this work, the foreign policy of Turkey towards Azerbaijan in terms of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is analyzed in broader perspective involving the Cold War Era and afterwards that the works of Abdulkadir Baharçiçek and Çağrı Erhan were beneficial to find out the process of integration of Turkey into the region. After the independence of the Soviet Union, the emergence of the newly independent Turkic states offered Turkey many opportunities in various fields. Yet Turkey initially, did fail to meet the expectations on the ground of domestic politics and the drawbacks of foreign policy. Bearing in mind, William Hale puts emphasis on domestic reasons of Turkey emanating from the mass military expenditure in the Southeastern region¹, additionally, from the perspective of Russian-Turkey relations, Stephen Larrabee focuses on the refrainment of Turkey not to collude with the resurgent Russia in the sphere of influence.²

From the perspective of energy issue, Azerbaijani oil and gas play spectacular importance in Azerbaijan-Turkey-Russian triangle. In this thesis, the works of Ali Granmayeh and Elkhana E. Nuriyev serve as an additional source to explain the dimension of energy asset. Given the impact of the “Contract of the Century” in

¹ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and The Military*, London: Routledge, 1994 pp. 281.

² F. Stephen Larrabee, “Turkey’s Eurasian Agenda”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter, 2011.

Azerbaijan policy making especially in Heydar Aliyev period, these sources play functional role. Moreover, in terms of the US energy policy, Azerbaijan oil and gas are of paramount importance. In this sense, as Amy Jaffe puts it, the diversification of the oil resources given the unstable environment of the Middle East, serves as primary interest for the US policy-makers.³ In addition, Glen E. Howard making reference to the Russian element, makes emphasis on the common interest of NATO, the EU and the US to terminate the Russian dependency on gas.⁴ Apart from energy issue, Leila Alieva points out the dimensions of military cooperation between Azerbaijan and NATO.⁵ In the same line, Turkey conducted military assistance to Azerbaijan through NATO channels. As Murinson stated that “Council on Military Cooperation” which coordinates the training of Azerbaijani officers in Turkey and in Azerbaijan is a concrete sign of deep military coordination of Azerbaijan and Turkey which was also assigned to mentor and facilitate the transition of the Azerbaijani army to Western standards and military doctrine.⁶ In addition, this thesis points out the process of PfP program in Azerbaijan to highlight the military and civil military reforms conducted by NATO in Azerbaijan. Given the Nagorno Karabakh issue, the integration of Azerbaijan into Western community would strengthen Azerbaijan stance so the analysis of Azerbaijan-NATO by Fariz Ismailzade contributed to my work in this respect. In addition, by regional organizations, Turkey-Azerbaijan relations flourished. For instance, through “Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, member states pursued cooperation in many fields as energy, transportation, communication. Moreover, as Larrabee stated, launched by Turgut Özal in 1989, the organization aimed at promoting private sector activity and stimulate the free movement of goods and services among member states.⁷ In short, Turkey actively

³ Amy Jaffe, “US Policy towards the Caspian region: can the wish-list be realized?”, in *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Ed. Gennady Chufrin, Oxford: Oxford University Press, New York, 2001 pp.136-150.

⁴ Glen E. Howard, “NATO and The Caucasus: The Caspian Axis”, in *NATO After Enlargement, New Challenges, New Missions, New Forces*, Ed. Stephen J. Blank, September, 1998 pp.151-227.

⁵ Alieva, Leila., “Integrative Processes in the South Caucasus and their Security Implications”, NATO Defense College Occasional Paper, March 2006.

⁶ Alexander Murinson, “The Military and Security Stronghold”, *Turkey’s Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, Routledge, 2010 pp.58-59.

⁷ F. Stephen Larrabee, Ian O. Lesser, “Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty”, *RAND National Security Research Division*, 2002.

supports Azerbaijan in its integration with international community through these channels paving way for the development of Azerbaijan in every field.

From the legal parameters of the Nagorno Karabakh issue, “the Karabakh Republic” is not internationally recognized. Based on the the constitution of the USSR, the treaty of CIS and international treaties⁸, the preservation of the states’ territorial integrity as of priority over other options such as the self-determination that while William Burnett⁹ makes emphasis on this point, in addition, Rajat Dosi making reference to the international law, focuses on the point that self-determination should not be construed to hold that every group has a right to establish its own state. Given the motherland of Armenia, the Karabakh Armenians are not accepted as the self-determination of peoples but are accepted as the minority of total population of Azerbaijan.¹⁰ So based on the legal basis of international law, Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity precedes the Karabakh Armenian’s bid for self-determination that this work pays special attendance to this legal issue which constitutes a functional importance in evaluating the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

As a critical note, the Turkish-Armenian normalization process which gained momentum as of 2001 and bore concrete results after signing Zurich protocols in 2009, holds spectacular importance in Azerbaijan-Turkey relations. Nona Mikhelidze and Rasim Musabayov mentioned the process as the critically important for the economic calculations of Armenia and Turkey along with their bid for the EU accession. However, after the serious reaction of Azerbaijan to the protocols, Turkey contended the settlement of Karabakh conflict as a precondition for the ratification of the protocols and this led to the suspension of the protocols by Armenia unilaterally. In this respect, the analysis of the normalization process by Rasim Musabayov added valuable contribution to my thesis.¹¹ In addition, as Minasyan states that the suspension of the protocols as Turkey contended the settlement of

⁸ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm#art15>

⁹ William Burnett Harvey, “Reflections on Self-Determination”, *Michigan Law Review*, Vol. 77, No.3, Jan. - Mar., 1979 pp.389-399.

¹⁰ Rajat Dosi, “Right of Self Determination in International Arena”, *Anton’s Weekly Digest of International Law*, Vol. 2, No. 13, March 2011.

¹¹ Rasim Musabayov, “Will Ankara Cross the border?”, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.regionplus.az/en/articles/view/278>

Karabakh conflict as a precondition, led to mistrust of Turkey even among pro-rapprochement political circles in Armenia. Disappointed by unrealized normalization process, the society and opposition put pressure on Armenian politicians to take tougher stance parallel to that in Diaspora.¹²

1.3. Main Argument

Contrary to the views of some authors such as Werner Gumpel, Nasib Nassibli, S. Rob Sobhani and Alexander Murinson¹³ who claim that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has become relatively less important vis-à-vis the economic and energy issues in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey, this thesis argues that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict still maintains its centrality in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

During the early years of Azerbaijan, the role of Nagorno Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan-Turkey relations serve as a core issue. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, unlike many newly-emerged states, Azerbaijan gained its independence with a long-lasting territorial dispute which challenged the sovereignty and stability of the country. With the escalation of the events, namely, the successive Armenian aggressions in many districts of Nagorno Karabakh, the conflict turned into a full-fledged war. Yet apart from Turkey, the developments in the region did not receive influential response. In this respect, Turkey played an important role in taking attention of the Karabakh conflict on the international level by shuttle diplomacy, also it was instrumental in bringing the Nagorno Karabakh issue to the agenda of OSCE. More importantly, the Armenian offensive in Nakhichevan in May 1992 paved the way for the intensified Turkish involvement in Azerbaijan. Following the Khojali massacres, the growing hatred among the Turkish society combined with the harsh criticism of opposition parties in Turkey resulted in taking

¹² Sergey Minasyan, "Prospects for Normalization between Armenia and Turkey: A View from Yerevan", *Insight Turkey*, 2010 pp.21-30.

¹³ Werner Gumpel, "Caucasus, Turkey and the Oil Problem", *Global Economic Review*, Vol.26, No.1, December 2007 pp.19-27; S. Rob Sobhani, "The United States, Iran, Russia and Turkey: The Struggle for Azerbaijan", *Demokratizatsiya*, Winter 1998 pp.35-40; Nasib Nassibli, "Azerbaijan's Geopolitics and Oil Pipeline Issue", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.4, No.4, 2000 pp.114-115; Alexander Murinson, "Azerbaijan-Turkey-Israel Relations: The Energy Factor", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3, September 2008 pp.47-64.

concrete steps and The Prime Minister of Turkey threatened Armenia to send troops to Nakhichevan. So Turkey risked its relations with Russia on account of Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

After the cease-fire agreement was signed in 1994, the political priorities of Azerbaijan shifted from the conflict resolution to the economic gains. The main motive here is also to contribute to the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by obtaining international support in favor of Azerbaijan. In this respect, the “The Contract of The Century” signed between SOCAR and the Western countries including Turkey under the British Petroleum, paved the way for the flow of foreign companies thereby rendering mass investments in Azerbaijan.

Regarding the drawbacks of Abulfaz Elchibey government, Heydar Aliyev in line with his multi-vectoral policy sought for the economic and security cooperation with regional states as well as Turkey and the US to ensure the stability of the state. In this respect, he refrained from any kind of military solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Instead, he sought for the consolidation of the relations with major powers by means of regional and international organizations. In its move, Turkey highly supported Azerbaijan for its integration with the Western community. The military cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan under the aegis of NATO bears to mention in this sense.

Another point bears to mention that the Minsk Group which carried out the mediation process since 1992 has yielded no positive results. Turkey being a member state of the group strongly supported Azerbaijan stance that in Lisbon Summit, it was instrumental in issuing of a notice on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

Finally, the initiatives that were taken to establish diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia bore concrete results by signing Zurich protocols in 2009. Along with being advantageous from many aspects, opening the borders with Armenia would mainly contribute to the geo-strategic importance of Turkey. More importantly, given the resurgent policy of Russia, this move would decrease the Russian dominance over the region. Yet in the face of harsh reactions of Azerbaijan to the protocols as they did not include the precondition that “Nagorno Karabakh conflict is contingent upon opening the borders” which were closed in a response to the Armenian occupation of Azerbaijan territory, Turkey stepped backward and contended the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as a precondition for the ratification of the protocols in parliamentary. In this respect, being cited as the biggest challenge to the

territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in National Security Concept, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict preserves its primary importance and is perceived as a common problem by Turkey and Azerbaijan. In broader perspective, due to the security gap that emanates from the ongoing conflict, the entire region faces the presumable threats of crime, illegal trafficking and high levels of migration. In addition, given its proximity to the South Caucasus, Turkey undoubtedly promotes the stability and the peaceful settlement of the conflicts especially the Nagorno Karabakh dispute which is the most pressing obstacle to the stability of the entire region.

In conclusion, in this thesis, the priority of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan-Turkey relations is analyzed. Contrary to the views of some scholars who claim that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has become relatively less important vis-à-vis the economic and energy issues in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey, this thesis argues that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict still maintains its centrality in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

1.4. Chapters of the Thesis

In order to understand the details of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, in the first chapter, we will look at several issues which form the relations between two countries including three phases of Azerbaijan after the independence.

In Chapter Two, there is a general overview of Turkish foreign policy towards the South Caucasus after the Cold War Era. Secondly, this chapter involves Abulfaz Elchibey period that Azerbaijan-Turkey relations will be analyzed in the framework of the influence of regional and non-regional powers respectively, Turkey, Russia and the US. Consequently, The Nagorno Karabakh conflict will be evaluated within the terms of Turkey-Azerbaijan relations.

In Chapter Three, the thesis analyzes Turkey-Azerbaijan relations within the aspect of Heydar Aliyev period and the dynamics of the region. From the aspect of Russia-Azerbaijan relations, the energy issue will be evaluated in terms of “the Contract of the Century” and the legal status of the Caspian Sea. Moreover, the US-Azerbaijan relations will focus on the notion of “the diversification of the energy resources” and the military cooperation under NATO-led peace operations in Afghanistan and the Wider Middle East. In terms of Turkey-Azerbaijan relations, the detailed analysis of its parameters will be stated and the dimensions of the Nagorno

Karabakh will receive special interests. In addition, the legal analysis of the Nagorno Karabakh issue will be investigated.

In Chapter Four, the thesis analyzes the Ilham Aliyev period within the terms of interactions with Russia, the US and Turkey. From the perspective of Russia-Azerbaijan relations, the Russia-Georgian war and its consequences will be pointed out. As to the US, the new security policy of the US that was adopted after the September eleven events will be highlighted combined with the NATO perspective. The process of Minsk Group works will be investigated. In this respect, the Madrid Principles and its legal dimensions will be evaluated. More importantly, the normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations and consequences will be investigated.

In Chapter Five, in the concluding part, the results of the previous chapters will be scrutinized. In terms of the evaluation of the chapters, the fact that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict exists in the center of the Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan is emphasized.

CHAPTER 2

THE NAGORNO KARABAKH CONFLICT AND RELATIONS BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND TURKEY UNDER ABULFEZ ELCHIBEY

2.1. Introduction

Located on a strategic territory, Azerbaijan is granted both challenges and opportunities. Landlocked configuration of the country poses challenges as Azerbaijan's export infrastructure passes through neighboring states for which Azerbaijan was forced to implement a long-term foreign policy in its early years. In this perspective, the relations with Russia played a determining role in shaping foreign policy in Elchibey period given the internationalized conflict in Karabakh which dated back the creation of the "Autonomous Soviet Republic of Nagorno Karabakh" in 1923 and gained momentum in 1960s when demonstrations held for the commemoration of "genocide". In Gorbachev tenure, the readiness of perestroika and glasnost flared up nationalist sentiments that Armenia sought for the transfer of Nagorno Karabakh to Armenia during 1980s. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the conflict between the two turned into a full-fledged war that culminated in around fifteen thousand death and one million displaced people.¹⁴ In this chapter, the evolution of the Karabakh conflict will be evaluated in terms of the relations with regional powers and specifically with Turkey.

2.2. The Origins of Karabakh and the Evolution of the Conflict

The first settlement of the contemporary Karabakh region dates back early first century AD. The region was the province of Arsakh or Karabakh which was a part of Caucasian Albania. During the history, Karabakh was under the influence of different kinds of religions and the cultures. From the third through the fifth century, Christianity dominated over the region then was conquered by the Arabs in the 8th

¹⁴ Taylor Stults, "Armenia and Azerbaijan Sign a Cease-Fire Agreement", *Great Events*, Vol. 12, 1993-1994.

century. Gradually, Islam spreaded in the region.¹⁵ Successively, the region was invaded by the Seljuks, in the 11th century, in the 1230s by the Mongols and finally, in 1805 the Russian Empire dominated over Karabakh region. Russia formally asserted its control over the South Caucasus by the treaty of Gulistan in 1813. Following the Treaty of Turkmenchai after the Russian-Iranian War between 1826 and 1828, Russia initiated a population exchange in the region. A vast Armenian immigration began into the area from Persia. The Russian-Turkish wars of 1855-56 and 1877-78 also culminated in further Armenian migration to the area.¹⁶ So it reached 53 per cent in 1880.

The Nagorno Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia is known to be the longest running one in the Caucasus. After the October Revolution, Karabakh was integrated into the independent Republic of Azerbaijan. Armenians who were known as reliable and pro-Russian people were favored by the authorities and occupied higher positions in the administration of the region on the other hand; Azeris occupied the lowest paid positions. Swietochowski states as follows:

The Azeris were for the most part half workers, half-peasants, of all groups of inhabitants, the most closely linked to their village background. If employed in the oil industry, they worked mainly as unskilled laborers. The better paid jobs, requiring skill or training were held by Russians or Armenians. Likewise, the municipal council had to be dominated by Christian majority. Ethnic communities continued to live their separate lives in distinct neighborhoods, and the differences in their socio-economic status perpetuated the divisions of culture, religion, and language.¹⁷

In the course of the Baku oil boom in 1800s, Armenians migrated to Baku taking up important managerial and industrial positions. After the regulation on bidding leases went into effect, Armenians, Russian and Western European competitors dominated over the oil-related enterprizes. As Croissant states that imbalance in the social class reinforced by the czarist nationality policies and the national lines paved the way for the animosity between the two parties.^{18,19} However,

¹⁵ Johannes Rau, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan*, Berlin: Dr. Köster, 2008.

¹⁶ Tim Potier, *Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia*, Cambridge: Kluwer Law International, 2001.

¹⁷ Tadeusz Swietochowski, "The Oil Booms and The Changing World of Baku", in *The Caucasian Challenge: Interests, Conflicts, Identities*, Ed. Cengiz Çağla, 2008 pp.60.

¹⁸ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998.

the substantial tensions escalated after the first Russian revolution. As Cornell indicates ‘the first blood of the conflict’ was spilled during this period. The disturbances that took place in Baku, Nakhchivan and Yerevan then Shusha resulted in the huge number of dead and the destruction of many Armenian and Azeri villages.²⁰

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the short-lived federal government was established by the three South Caucasian states. In December 1922, Stalin ordered that the Transcaucasian Federation join the Soviet Union. However, within the legal framework of The Brest-Litovsk peace treaty signed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Turkish armies gained a chance to advance in the Caucasus. The federation refused to recognize the Brest-Litovsk treaty and its preconditions so the Ottoman army’s intervention and the fragmentation among the three component states culminated in the dissolution of the Transcaucasian Federation.

When the World War I ended with the defeat of the Allied Powers, the influence of Ottoman Empire was replaced by the Great Britain in the region. The British Forces whether deliberately or not did not pursue a permanent solution to the border disputes between Azerbaijan and Armenia.²¹ Leeuw highlights it as follows:

The coming of the British to Azerbaijan after the Turks’ departure in November meant only an insignificant glimmer of hope for peace for the tormented communities in Karabakh. The half-hearted way the British command acted throughout its mandate found little appreciation in the eyes of both Armenians and Azeris, although for different reasons.²²

Given the oil interests of the Great Britain, Karabakh was given to the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan and an Azeri landowner Sultanov was appointed as the district’s governor.²³ After the withdrawal of British forces, both parties pursued the permanent control of the Karabakh region. However, on 22 March, as Croissant

¹⁹ Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000 pp.224.

²⁰ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, pp.55-56, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001.

²¹ Thomas de Waal, *The Black Garden*, New York: New York University Press, 2003 pp.128.

²² Charles van der Leeuw, *Azerbaijan: A Quest For Identity*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000 pp.151.

²³ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.57.

argued that Armenians initiated an uprising which indirectly contributed to the conquest of Azerbaijan by Bolshevik forces on 27 April.²⁴

2.3. The Early Soviet Period

With the Soviet Era, the Karabakh issue gained a new dimension which would trigger further conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan. At the outset, the disputed territories had been given to Armenia. “The Treaty of Brotherhood and Friendship between the Soviet Union and Turkey” played a significant role in determining the status of Karabakh in the Soviet era. As Cornell argues that the Bolshevik government was in need of allies against the Western powers.²⁵ Thus as another revolutionary force, the Ankara government cooperated with the Bolsheviks. Croissant argues that Turkey was a potential bridgehead for Communist expansion into the Near East and in turn Turkey was in need of arms and money from Moscow for the war against allied powers.²⁶ Thus the Kemalist- Bolshevik relations had vitally important effect on the transfer of Karabakh, Zangezur and Nakhchivan to Azerbaijan.²⁷

In Khrushchev period in 1963, about 2500 Karabakh Armenians signed a petition for the transfer of Karabakh to Armenia or to be attached directly to Russia.²⁸ Successively, in 1965 and in 1966, Karabakh Armenians under the pretext of the economic discrimination within the Azerbaijan SSR demanded the transfer of Karabakh to Armenia. Although in every time the appeal was rejected, with the onset of the Khrushchev era, it could be contended that the irredentist tendency flared up that would maintain till the dissolution of the Soviet Union.²⁹

²⁴ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.18.

²⁵ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.60.

²⁶ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.17.

²⁷ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.60.

²⁸ Christoph Zurcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars*, New York: New York University Press, 2007 pp.154.

²⁹ Tim Potier, *Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia*, Cambridge: Kluwer Law International, 2001 pp.6.

2.4. Gorbachev Era and the Sumgait Events

The reawakening of Armenian nationalism which was nourishing the 1915 events that rendered the unity of the Diaspora and the Soviet Armenians on the political consciousness revealed itself in mass movements on the streets of Yerevan in 1960s.³⁰ The monument built on Tsitsernakaberd Hill was symbolizing the “genocide” issue which was also the sign of the fact that the 1915 events were institutionalized rendering a powerful mobilizing action.³¹ In this respect, the most spectacular rally took place in Yerevan on 24 April 1965 for the commemoration of the “genocide” in the 50th anniversary. These demonstrations in 1960s laid a basis for the eruption of Karabakh conflict in Gorbachev Era.

In such an environment, loosening of the central rule of the Soviet Union with the political and economic transformation of the system backed fired. Namely, after taking the post, Mikhael Gorbachev set out a new series of reforms which were known as Perestroika (restructuring of society and economy) and Glasnost (openness) to heal the lagging economic and political systems. However, these reforms yielded unexpected consequences such as outburst of the national aspirations in the USSR. As McCauley states that

Glasnost and democratization did not suit with the conditions in the Union which was an empire. If the nationalities were given free choice it would be resulted in the dissolution of the Union. In fact, after the introduction of the law on state enterprises which afforded enterprises control over wages and promoted self-financing and self-management. When it was combined with political reforms in 1987, local economic and political elites began to pursue common goals-autonomy from Moscow.³²

The prominent one was certainly Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict. The Karabakh issue –“frozen potential”- which was kept for seventy years came to surface in perestroika period. It was the milestone of the Armenian nationalism and irredenta. Yet Azerbaijanis faced the issue unprepared.³³ In Gorbachev era, the status

³⁰ Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat Armenia in Modern History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993 pp.228.

³¹ Sedat Laçiner, *Ermeni Sorunu, Diaspora ve Türk Dış Politikası*, Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu, Ankara 2008 pp.149-150.

³² Martin McCauley, *Gorbachev*, Longman, 1998 pp.73.

³³ Thomas de Waal, *The Black Garden*, New York: New York University Press, 2003 pp.29.

of Karabakh was openly discussed and became the core issue of street demonstrations. Even those held for the environmental and economic reasons turned to a political asset. Day by day, mass rallies became a common occurrence in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh inspiring nationalism among both Armenians and Azerbaijanis.³⁴ In August, 1987, the Armenian Academy of sciences prepared a petition signed by hundreds of thousands to request the transfer of Karabakh and Nakhchivan to the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). However, Gorbachev emphasized the inviolability of internal borders and did not endorse the demand until 1989. On October 17, 1987, thousands of people took to the streets for the closure of the chemical plant and the nuclear power station in Armenia. However, some of them demanded a call for the unification of Karabakh and Armenia.³⁵ Armenians living abroad had also a significant role in influencing the political agenda in Armenia. The compression of the Armenian Diaspora and the large-scale demonstrations resulted in a new dimension. The Karabakh regional Soviet passed a resolution which demanded the transfer of Karabakh to Armenia. Upon these developments, the bloody clashes happened in Karabakh. Meanwhile, due to the escalation of the harassment and the tensions in Armenia, tens of thousands of Azeris reached Baku. On 20 February 1988, the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast passed a resolution and appealed to the USSR's Supreme Soviet for the unification of Karabakh with Armenia.³⁶ Yet the response of Gorbachev was negative as follows:

Having examined the information about the developments in the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region, the CPSU Central Committee holds that the actions and demands directed at revising the existing national and territorial structure contradict the interests of the working people in Soviet Azerbaijan and Armenia and damage inter-ethnic relations.³⁷

The rejection of the petition by Moscow culminated in street demonstrations ranging from Yerevan to other Armenian cities as well as in Karabakh. Then these demonstrations triggered the ethnic violence in both parties. On February 27, 1988, the most notorious one took place in Sumgait which witnessed violence and

³⁴ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.26.

³⁵ Christoph Zurcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars*, New York: New York University Press, 2007 pp.157.

³⁶ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.66.

³⁷ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.27.

pogroms.³⁸ Around 28 Armenians lost their lives and hundreds of people were injured. In the aftermath of the events, a huge flow of refugees from both sides left their homes. About 14,000 Armenians from Sumgait and 350.000 Armenians throughout Azerbaijan left the republic.³⁹ A large number of Azeris also left Armenia. The presence of Soviet army and interior ministry troops in the region did not change the sequence of the events. Whether Moscow did not intervene on purpose or not was controversial given a case of Russian 'divide and rule' policy. Instead of being founded a permanent solution to the conflict, as Zurcher indicates that the Sumgait events damaged the legitimacy of Moscow in Armenia and terminated the likelihood of the peaceful solution to the Karabakh conflict.⁴⁰

On 15 June 1988, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR passed a resolution to the USSR Supreme Soviet for the annexation of Nagorno Karabakh to Armenia. However, it was rejected by the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan on 17 June and by Moscow on 28 June calling the decision unconstitutional. The negative response from Moscow disappointed the Armenians and exacerbated their frustration. Subsequently, a large scale of demonstrations was held headed by the Karabakh Committee in Yerevan in July. Moreover, the deployment of Soviet troops heightened the Armenian anger. The NKAO Soviet of People's Deputies voted on 12 July in favor of unilateral secession from Azerbaijan. Expectedly, it was rejected by Moscow on constitutional basis.⁴¹ Gorbachev sided with the hardliners, namely, was against violation of territorial integrity. He states as follows:

... We regard any isolation of the Armenian population of Azerbaijan from Armenia in the sphere of culture, education, science, information and spiritual life as a whole to be inconceivable. Azerbaijanis living in Armenia should be surrounded with the same kind of attention, in exactly the same way and in equal measure.⁴²

³⁸ Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 pp.194.

³⁹ Thomas de Waal, *The Black Garden*, New York: New York University Press, 2003 pp.40.

⁴⁰ Christoph Zurcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars*, New York: New York University Press, 2007 pp.160.

⁴¹ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.71.

⁴² Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat Armenia in Modern History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993 pp.203.

These developments reinforced the sentiments of nationalism among Azeris as well. In November, mass rallies took place in Baku. The year of 1988 passed with sporadic violence between Armenians and Azeris. Gradually, Moscow carried out a speed development plan which rendered the separation of the Nagorno Karabakh from Azerbaijan. Arkadiy Volskiy, a Russian official, was sent to the region with the authority to administer the Nagorno Karabakh development program. With the intensified inter-ethnic clashes during 1989, the earthquake that struck northwestern Armenia led to the growing hatred against the Communist rule. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Soviet government taking the advantage of the severe conditions of the earthquake arrested eleven members of the Karabakh Committee⁴³ which had become more popular and reliable than the Communist Party.

On 12 January 1989, Karabakh was given a “special status” by the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium that Volski chaired the committee which was only responsible to the central Soviet government.^{44,45} So, from 1921, for the first time, the political control of the region was subjected to direct control of Moscow. The conflict was calmed down for six months which was a valuable time to initiate a lasting solution⁴⁶. However, as some argues that the effort that Moscow made to solve the conflict was groundless as it produced no permanent results such as determining the status of the region. Thus the tensions erupted in the spring again. On 24 April 1989, mass demonstrations were held in Yerevan for the release of the Karabakh committee members. Following the release, as the political move, the Karabakh Committee reemerged as Armenian National Movement (ANM) empowered by official status. Levon TerPetrosyan was the leading figure of the movement and became the chairman to the parliament in which ANM became the greatest group.⁴⁷ As Herzig stated that the new formation was like a national consensus which was composed of many Communist Party members as well as the

⁴³ Svante Cornell, “Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh: A Delicate Balance”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.34, No.1, 1998 pp.51-72.

⁴⁴ Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat Armenia in Modern History*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1993 pp.212.

⁴⁵ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.33.

⁴⁶ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.33.

⁴⁷ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.74.

nationalists.⁴⁸ The Karabakh Committee promoted democratization, social justice, economic reform and sovereignty of Armenia.⁴⁹ Inevitably, the unity rendered a smooth transition to the independence. In the same way, in Azerbaijan, a political formation named Azeri Popular Front (APF) was founded in July 1989. The formation was a non-Communist organization that was initially composed of seven national intellectuals, Araz Alizoda, Leyla Iunusova, Hikmat Hajizada, Tofiq Gasymov, Salamov, Isa Gambar, Aydın Balayev. At the outset, the organization aimed at promoting perestroika in the academic community but eventually turned its face to public becoming soon the main center of political influence after the Karabakh events.⁵⁰ In other words, as Altstadt stated that the continuing fight over the status of the Nagorno Karabakh and the presence of ten thousands of Azeri refugees made the Karabakh issue the most pressing one for the Popular Front.⁵¹ Although the APF gradually gained strength due to its tough stance for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and had similar respects as the ANM, the APF still lacked the legal base that the ANM had. The Communist party and the Popular Front had divergent policies as a result of which the Baku government prevented the formation of a national army as it still relied on the Soviet forces and also tried to ride out the nationalists. As Herzig points out that the APF was only able to be legalized by the election of Abulfaz Elchibey as a president in 1992, three years later. The polarization and the disunity between the nationalists and the communists laid a weak basis for a proper independent political formation and development.⁵²

On 28 November, the Soviet direct command was abolished leaving the Nagorno Karabakh under the direct rule of Azerbaijan. The decision was not welcomed by Armenia and Karabakh. On 1 December 1989, the Nagorno Karabakh

⁴⁸ Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus*, Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999, pp.13.

⁴⁹ Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat Armenia in Modern History*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1993 pp.202.

⁵⁰ Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 pp.199.

⁵¹ Audrey L. Altstadt, "Azerbaijan's Struggle Toward Democracy", in *Conflict, Clevage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Eds. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 pp.121.

⁵² Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus*, Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999, pp.14.

was incorporated into the Armenian republic: a “United Armenian Republic”.⁵³ As Croissant claimed that the withdrawal of the Soviet authorities from the Nagorno Karabakh resulted in “the escalation of violence and a subsequent large-scale Soviet military intervention in Azerbaijan”.⁵⁴

On 10 January, the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium passed a resolution which annulled the Armenian budgetary act that had included for the first time the budget of the Nagorno Karabakh as well. However, the inability of Moscow to carry out the resolution and its reluctant attitude in handling the Karabakh issue led to a mass rally organized by the APF on 13 January. Moreover, the news of the Armenian attack to Shaumian and Khanlar regions raised the tensions leading to Azeri refugees from Armenia to attack local Armenian residents in Baku. The pogrom resulted in the death of 88 Armenians. Consequently, in the face of Armenian aggression, the inaction of the communist party was strongly criticized and following killings of some Armenians by armed groups in Baku in January paved way for the Soviet intervention to the events.⁵⁵ In fact, as the real motive of the military intervention was to crush the APF formation, following the brutal slaughter which culminated in a huge number of deaths, the leading figures such as Etibar Mammadov, the head of the Executive Committee of the Popular Front and hundreds of its activists were arrested.⁵⁶ Consequently, Baku fell under the martial law enforced by Soviet occupation troops. In the history, entitled ‘Black January’, these days had deep impact on both Armenians and Azeris in the framework of the Soviet perception concurrently with ensuring the central control over the republic for a while.⁵⁷ In short, as the Soviet Interior Ministry troops stationed in Baku did not stop the violence, the trust in the Soviet military ended at the same time laying the basis for

⁵³ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.75.

⁵⁴ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.36.

⁵⁵ Audrey Altstadt, “Azerbaijan’s Struggle Toward Democracy”, in *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Eds. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 pp.122.

⁵⁶ Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 pp.210.

⁵⁷ Ronald Grigor Suny, “Dangerous Opportunities, Russia, the Central Asia and the Caucasus”, in *Russia, The Caucasus, and Central Asia*, Eds. Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov and Ghia Nodia, EastWest Institute, 1999 pp.159.

the evolution of the Azerbaijan-Russia relations after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It also bears to mention that the discredit towards the Soviet military led to the formation of the paramilitary groups which later laid a ground for the Armenian National Army (ANA).

On 23 February, the leaders of the ANM and the APF came together in Riga by virtue of the leaders of the popular fronts of the Baltic Republics. The divergent motives of the parties left no room for the compromise. Namely, Armenia pursued the principle of “right to self-determination” and Azerbaijan defended the principle of the territorial integrity.⁵⁸

In April, Armenia gradually protested the military rule that had been launched by the Soviet troops. In the meantime, paramilitary formations rose in number in both sides. An increasingly open flow of arms from Armenia to Karabakh strengthened the Armenian side leading to Armenian paramilitary forces to attack eight Azerbaijani villages in the Kazakh district in August.⁵⁹

Under the cooperation named “Operation Ring”, a joint Azerbaijani and Soviet military and police operation implemented in Armenian villages in Nagorno Karabakh and the Khanlar and Geranboi districts of Azerbaijan aiming at eradicating Armenian paramilitary forces and to prevent illegal moving of Armenians to Nagorno Karabakh that would artificially boost the Armenian population in these districts. In this sense, Azerbaijan was seeking for prompting the Armenians to leave Azerbaijan. On the other hand, Moscow was aiming at dissuading Armenians from the secession plans. However, they met the Armenian military resistance and in the meantime, the failed August coup led to the dissolution of the USSR. Subsequently, Soviet Interior Ministry forces ceased cooperating with Azerbaijani units paving way for the direct conflict between Armenian and Azerbaijan forces.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.76.

⁵⁹ Azerbaijan-Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, *Human Rights Watch*, Helsinki, December 1994 pp.3.

⁶⁰ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, pp.44, 1998.

2.5. Relations Between Azerbaijan and Russia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia emerged as an independent state in a chaotic environment. It faced many problems associated with economic transformation that could be hardly achieved, incoherent foreign policy and slow state-building process revealed themselves in adopting a “benign neglect” policy that initially, Moscow pursued a low profile in near abroad. During the course of 1991 and mid-1992, Russia aimed at getting rid of the burden of the Soviet Union. So it withdrew its military troops from the post Soviet space.⁶¹ However, Russia within the security context, maintained its hegemonic policy in terms of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In this respect, as Ayaz Mutalibov still perceived Russia as the guarantor of the country’s security that instead of setting initiatives for the formation of a strong and independent army which is one of the prerequisite of a sovereign state, he chose to integrate in CIS.⁶² Yet given the potential of Russian manipulation of ethnic conflicts, in the context of security structure, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) founded in 1991 to reintegrate the post-Soviet states on the territory of the former Soviet Union under Russian auspices was somewhat nonfunctional because the membership of CIS could not prevent the violation of Azerbaijan and Georgia’s territorial integrity by means of inter-ethnic conflicts.⁶³ In that sense, after being elected as a president of Azerbaijan, Elchibey did not conceal his anti-Russian attitude that he rejected Tashkent Treaty and the parliament objected to participating in the CIS. Another indication of challenging Russian influence was the objection to any deployment of Russian troops. Altstadt argues his government’s policy as follows:

⁶¹ Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus*, Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999, pp.49.

⁶² Shale Horowitz, “Political Sources of Military Defeat in Post-Communist Ethnic Conflicts”, *European Security*, Spring 2003 pp.17-38.

⁶³ Alexander Rondeli, “Regional Security Prospects in the Caucasus”, in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, 2000 pp.48-54.

... Elchibey's government planned to dismantle the old communist system domestically, including the remnants of the KGB and the old Supreme Soviet, the planned economy and its 'shadow' the black market...⁶⁴

In this framework, when Elchibey took an office only in mid 1992, the armed forces of Azerbaijan had composed of organized militias compared to the ANA, which was composed of Armenian militias and was consolidated by the ministries of defense and interior in 1990. So Elchibey could not have time to establish a national army and had to abide by independent para military groups which could easily be manipulated.⁶⁵ Additionally, Elchibey's tough stance towards Russia and closer ties with Turkey ensured Moscow's interference to already fragile domestic environment of Azerbaijan. Whereas seeking for a pragmatic policy towards Russia until consolidating internal control of the country could have entrenched Elchibey's position. Horowitz explains this as follows:

Reform nationalist governments came to power in periods of national military emergency and so were not in a position to concentrate all their efforts on centralizing control over these para-militaries. A purge of unreliable paramilitary leaders and their followers could result in internal violence, serious reverses in the inter-ethnic fighting or both.⁶⁶

As in the case of Colonel Surat Husseinov who was a commander of a paramilitary group, was appointed as a deputy prime minister by Elchibey during the Karabakh war. Yet in winter 1993, after a thrashing defeat against Armenians, Elchibey dismissed him. Upon these developments, he pulled his forces out of Mardakert in February and redeployed them in Ganja, Azerbaijan's second largest town. Huseinov and his 709th Brigade remained in Ganja where was known to be the center of APF opponents. Discontented with the regime of Elchibey, Russia was certainly instrumental in organizing a coup against Elchibey that unlike in other post Soviet states, Russian forces based in Ganja pulled out from Azerbaijan leaving substantial quantities of arms, ammunition and equipment to Huseinov instead of the

⁶⁴ Audrey Altstadt, "Azerbaijan's Struggle Toward Democracy", in *Conflict, Clevage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Eds. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 pp.111-155.

⁶⁵ Edmund Herzig, "The New Caucasus", Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999, pp.17.

⁶⁶ Shale Horowitz, "Political Sources of Military Defeat in Post-Communist Ethnic Conflicts", *European Security*, Spring 2003 pp.17-38.

government. On June 4, he intentionally began fraying Elchibey's government taking hostage a few deputy ministers and accusing Elchibey of attacking innocent people in Ganja.⁶⁷ The efforts to suppress Huseinov remained fruitless and he marched into Baku challenging Elchibey's regime subsequently, forced him to transfer power to Heydar Aliyev.⁶⁸ One of the factors that would have changed the tide of the events in this period was the timing of the parliamentary elections. As it had not been held by fall, when Elchibey was forced to resign, the parliamentary still consisted of Soviet-era members.⁶⁹ To sum up, in his short term, Elchibey's clear-cut rejection of a Russian relations resulted in his forced resignation. Throughout the history, serving as a buffer zone, the South Caucasus has always been perceived as a place of strategic and economic importance for Russia.

As noted above, energy holding as one of a primary asset for Azerbaijan also constitutes a vital importance in Russia-Azerbaijan relations. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, as other newly independent states, Azerbaijan had to confront various challenges that would be overcome in a long and thorny transition period. Previously, being integral part of Soviet central economy, now independent Azerbaijan had to make its way in economic sectors without the Soviet trade links.

Faced with socio-economic challenges ranging from job destruction, increase in poverty, hyperinflation to decrease in domestic investments and lower living standards in early 1990s, Azerbaijan had more difficulties by socio-economic burden of the internally displaced persons 660,000 and loss of productive lands in Armenian-occupied provinces of Azerbaijan as a result of the war over the Nagorno Karabakh.⁷⁰ In this respect, the oil industry was the only available asset in these circumstances in Azerbaijan. Hoffman explains the importance of oil and Azerbaijan's condition as follows:

⁶⁷ Audrey L. Altstadt, "Azerbaijan's Struggle Toward Democracy", in *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Eds. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, Cambridge University Press, 1997 pp.111-155.

⁶⁸ Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus*, Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999, pp.18.

⁶⁹ Audrey, L. Altstadt, "Azerbaijan's Struggle Toward Democracy", in *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (Eds.), Cambridge University Press, 1997 pp.111-155.

⁷⁰ Ramil Maharramov, "Petroleum-Fuelled Public Investment in Azerbaijan", *Caspian Energy Politics* Routledge, 2010 pp.39-40.

Given Azerbaijan's geographical and geopolitical isolation, then, it is little surprise that the government in Baku saw its oil industry as perhaps the only available asset capable of forging closer ties with foreign states. Oil, however, seldom if ever translates automatically into newfound friends on the international stage. In the case of Azerbaijan, however, an appropriate vehicle was found in the form of foreign energy companies, in particular western oil companies, whose long-term, capital-intensive presence in Azerbaijan would, it was thought, bend their home government towards more sympathetic relations with Azerbaijan. After all, between 1991 and 1994, the country was suffering regular humiliations not only on the battlefields of Nagorno Karabakh, but in the war for international sympathy, where it could muster no influential response to the powerful lobby of the Armenian diaspora in the West. Thus, from its inception, Azerbaijan has been driven to open its oil resources to foreign exploitation as a lure for attracting strategically significant foreign investors, and ultimately converting these relationships into diplomatic currency.⁷¹

Bearing in mind, three months after he was elected, Elchibey signed an agreement with the BP-Statoil consortium supplying 30 million dollars to Azerbaijan, and on October 1, an agreement with the Pennzoil-Ramco consortium. Finally, SOCAR and Western companies had a consortium on 4 June 1993 on the unified development of the Chirag and Guneshli fields.⁷² The companies were British Petroleum, Norway's Statoil, Amoco, Pennzoil, Unocal, McDermott, Aberdeen-based, Ramco, and Turkish Petroleum Company (TPAO).⁷³ Seeking for political objectives as well as economic ones, Elchibey excluded Russian oil companies from the consortium. Not surprisingly, Russian-backed coup against Elchibey by Colonel Surat Huseynov suspended the contract. In terms of controlling the pipeline routes and containment of Western states to access to energy resources, Russia skillfully manipulated fragile politics of Azerbaijan as in this case.⁷⁴

⁷¹ David I. Hoffman, "Azerbaijan: The Politicization of Oil", in *Energy and Conflict in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Eds. Robert Ebel and Rajan Menon, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000 pp:57-58.

⁷² Sabit Bagirov, "Azerbaijan's Strategic Choice in the Caspian Region", in *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Ed. Gennady Chufrin, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 pp.181.

⁷³ Audrey Altstadt, "Azerbaijan's Struggle Toward Democracy", in *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Eds. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 pp:111-155.

⁷⁴ Elkhan E. Nuriyev, "Conflicts, Caspian Oil, and NATO", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, 2000 pp.140-151.

2.6. Relations Between Azerbaijan and Turkey

After the Second World War, the international political system was reshaped resulting in the shift in power balance. The European countries reemerged losing their effectiveness in terms of both economic and military power. On the other hand, the US and the Soviet Union appeared on the scene as two super powers. After the war, the Soviet Union pursued an expansionist policy in the East Europe, Turkey, Iran and Greece. The desire to reach Mediterranean Sea, to dominate over the East European countries and the Middle East which holds the substantial oil resources directed the Soviet Union to promote more assertive policy towards Greece, Iran and especially Turkey. In this framework, Moscow put through some preconditions such as the annexation of Kars and Ardahan to the Soviet Union and the demand for the military bases on the Bosphorus, finally, the revision of Montro Treaty. Against the Soviet threat, especially after 1948 Prague coup and subsequently the siege of Berlin necessitated a shared military cooperation and thereby accelerated the formation of North Atlantic pact (NATO).⁷⁵ Holding a geo-strategic importance as a buffer zone between the Soviet borders and the European countries, Turkey became one of the arenas of the East-West power contention and consequently became the member of the NATO and OECD. After the Cold War Era, Turkey faced a new period which included both vitally important challenges and opportunities. Given the security issue and the threat perception emanating from the contention between the East-West blocs, during the Cold War Era, Turkey preserved its geo-strategic importance and this had a great impact on its membership in NATO. However, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and subsequently the end of the Cold War, the threat perception that stem from the Soviet expansionism and communism disappeared. Subsequently, with the end of bipolar policy, Warsaw Pact was dissolved in 1991. Faced with radical changes in new political arena, NATO adopted new strategies towards the new threat zones, which is vitally important for Europe in terms of security and energy resources that Turkey's role as "a flank state" of the NATO and the West

⁷⁵ Abdülkadir Baharçipek, "Soğuk Savaşın Anlamı ve Sona Ermesinin Türk Dış Politikası Üzerindeki Etkileri", *21. Yüzyılın Eşiğinde Türk Dış Politikası*, Ed. İdris Bal, İstanbul, Alfa Yayınları, 2001 pp.32-33.

faded away.⁷⁶ The new political order had also negative impact on Turkey-the EU relations in a way that East European countries which were assumed as a threat during the Cold War era, now, overtook Turkey in full accession.⁷⁷ As Murinson argues that the reluctance of the West to support Turkey for its membership in the EU in the beginning of the 1990s culminated in seeking for new searches for a replacement of Turkey's role as a "Northern Tier" state.⁷⁸ The newly-emerged states especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus offered Turkey new opportunities. As well as their cultural affinity and historical ties, Central Asia and the South Caucasus also pose vital importance to Turkey for their rich underground resources and they provide direct access to the markets of the West via Turkey. Situated on the East-West energy corridor, Turkey enjoys benefitting from the energy resources for its domestic need and transit fees. As to security dimension, in terms of its proximity to the region, Turkey promotes the sovereignty and stability of the South Caucasian countries for its own security guarantee and the European countries. To impede the Russian expansion in the region, Turkey should attribute to the military developments in Georgia and Azerbaijan thereby reducing their security anxiety in case of a Russian military intervention.⁷⁹ In this sense, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkey officially recognized all republics in the South Caucasus. From the early years of their independence, Turkey promoted the consolidation of their independence, territorial integrity and the realization of the economic potentials. Turkey backed their integration to international organizations such as NATO and OSCE and European Council.⁸⁰ Additionally, the contribution and the existence of Turkey in the region are materialized by these organizations that for instance, Turkey actively participates in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme which

⁷⁶ Çağrı Erhan, "Türkiye-ABD İlişkilerinin Mantıksal Çerçevesi", *21. Yüzyılın Eşiğinde Türk Dış Politikası*, Ed. İdris Bal, İstanbul, Alfa Yayınları, 2001 pp.121-122.

⁷⁷ Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms, Turkish Foreign Policy Since The Cold War*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003 pp.24-25.

⁷⁸ Alexander Murinson, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, Routledge, 2010 pp.2.

⁷⁹ Hakan Kantarcı, *Kısaçtaki Bölge Kafkasya*, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2006 pp.156-157.

⁸⁰ Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Objectives in the Caspian Region", in *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Ed. Gennady Chufrin, Oxford, 2001 pp.151-165.

promotes military cooperation and transparency further consolidation of stability-accompanied with Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine.

In the new political order, as many analyst expected that Turkey would excessively involve in the post-Soviet space assuming hegemonic role especially in the Turkic newly-independent states. Expectedly, in the early years, Turkey met the newly states in a euphoria regardless of its limits. Against presumable radical Iran, Turkey was supported by the West and the US under the umbrella of NATO in its initiatives in terms of cultural, economic aspects in the Caucasus and Central Asia. After their independence, high level diplomatic relations occurred between Turkey and other Turkic republics culminating in promising extensive co-operation that would take place on a variety of different levels. As Robins stated that, those visits and exchanges in many different spheres engendered the raise of expectations on both sides.⁸¹ The newly established states would procure a new market for Turkey. Furthermore, vast energy resources would attribute to Turkey's economy by transportation. On international level, Turkey would assume the leadership in Turkic Community. Given its linguistic and sectarian affinity, Azerbaijan holds the most important place in Turkey's sphere of influence due to its geo-strategic location that would provide Turkey cultural and commercial expansion in Central Asia. So regarding the priority status of Azerbaijan, Turkey was the first country to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan on November 9, 1991.⁸² Additionally, Turkey backed the country in the framework of economy, politics and military.

In the aftermath of the dissolution, the new political order apart from its opportunities created new challenges as well. In this framework, there were substantial factors that constrained Turkey's engagement in the region. First of all, internal problems emanating from economic and financial shortages and the internal political problems such as terrorism for which substantial financial resources flew to the Southeast Anatolia limited Turkey's ability to achieve its objectives in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Turkey's war on terror was a huge burden as the military gave the first priority to defense expenditure partly due to the terrorism for which the military retained special powers for the maintenance of order Regional State of

⁸¹ Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms, Turkish Foreign Policy Since The Cold War*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003 pp.278.

⁸² Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.281.

Emergency Governorate.⁸³ Moreover, the internal economic shortcomings due to high inflation which rose to 63 in 1989 and a high foreign debt engulfed Turkey limiting its move in the post Soviet space exclusively in the South Caucasus.⁸⁴ Foreign security policy issues in the Aegean, the Balkans and Cyprus required urgent attention accompanied with the Turkey's refrainment from antagonizing Russia for the involvement in her sphere of influence cast a shadow over Ankara's political, economic and environmental interests in region. More importantly, Russian-Turkish axis in the region holds many dimensions that initial Turkish expansionist policy in the region proved that Russian influence is stronger and more durable than expected.⁸⁵ Russia aimed at maintaining its sphere of influence in that region. Especially in the course of 1993, Russia adopted more assertive foreign policy in near abroad. She overtly stated in the military doctrine that the near abroad was its zone of strategic interests. So any involvement in the Caucasus would be perceived to be a threat to their security.

So Turkey refrained from any collusion with Russia in this sense. Another factor that constrained Turkey's engagement in the region was the attitude of the Western counterparts. At the outset, Russia was concerned with the Turkish military challenge to the South Caucasus regarding U.S and German military equipment that Turkey received under the NATO 'cascade' program. So it benefitted from the provisions of the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe between 1991 and 1993. Thus, the increase in Turkey's military capabilities arose anxiety in Russia whose military capabilities were in decline due to the lack of funding.⁸⁶ So even under the NATO umbrella, given some of the Western countries were on pro-Armenian stance, it was inevitable for Turkey to be under pressure not to be engaged in an active policy in Azerbaijan especially in the Karabakh conflict.

⁸³ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, Routledge, 1994 pp. 281.

⁸⁴ Scott A. Jones, "Turkish Strategic Interests in the Transcaucasus", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, 2000 pp.55-64.

⁸⁵ F. Stephen Larrabee., "Turkey's Eurasian Agenda", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2011 pp.111.

⁸⁶ Andrei V. Zagorski, "Traditional Security Interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia: Perceptions and Realities", in *Russia, The Caucasus, and Central Asia*, Eds. Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov and Ghia Nodia, EastWest Institute, 1999 pp.66.

Finally, Turkey's involvement in the region was its quest for membership in the European Union which discouraged the domination of a sole regional power including Turkey. As Cornell argues that the Western countries took advantage of the Turkey's dependency on them emphasizing that instead of pursuing an 'adventurist' policy in the Caucasus, Turkey should adopt a more balanced policy including the better relations with Armenia.⁸⁷

In short, due to the reasons discussed above, the initial euphoria "a North star" diminished. With the initiative of Turgut Özal, a series of objectives were launched. Opening cultural centers in the Central Asian Republics, extensive scholarship programs in Turkic countries and economic enterprises remained beyond the expectations.⁸⁸ Turkey's "big brother" image faded away among the newly independent states in the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁸⁹

From a narrower perspective, Azerbaijan, as a South Caucasian state, holds a spectacular importance for Turkey. In terms of cultural and linguistic affinity, Turkey gave priority to Azerbaijan that of the five Turkic republics, Azerbaijan was the first state to be recognized by Turkey. After the dissolution of the USSR, Turkey adopted not aggressive but an active policy among Turkic republics. A common culture, history, language and religion of Turkic Republics and Turkey were and would be unifying factors. Discontented with its new role in NATO and disappointing relations with the EU directed Turkey into the Caucasus and Central Asia. So in the aftermath of the break up of the Soviet Union, Turkey was involved in the region by frequent state level visits. In terms of cultural and linguistic affinity, Azerbaijan holds a spectacular importance that of the five Turkic republics. On the basis of economy, education and culture, cooperation between the two gave momentum to strengthening of the relations. By means of Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ankara provided economic and technical aid to Azerbaijan.⁹⁰ Many private Turkish companies went there for investment and trade. Elchibey being

⁸⁷ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.287.

⁸⁸ F. Stephen Larrabee, "Turkey's Eurasian Agenda", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2011 pp.104.

⁸⁹ Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Objectives in the Caspian Region", in *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Ed. Gennady Chufirin, Oxford, 2001 pp.151-165.

⁹⁰ Sabri Sayari, "Turkey, The Caucasus and Central Asia", in *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borders*, Eds. A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1994 pp.182.

aware of the oil as a political and economic asset for his country, in no time, opened up the oil and the gas resources of the country to Western oil companies including Turkey. Turkey also established educational facilities that between the two countries student exchange programs were developed and training programs in various fields such as foreign- service, central banking and military.⁹¹ Additionally, a Turkish school was opened in Azerbaijan. Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) began broadcasting in Azerbaijan on April 27, 1992 that contributed to flourishing Turkish influence in there.⁹²

During Elchibey tenure, the APF government pursued pro-Turkish policy that Azerbaijani ethnic identity was equated with Turkic identity.⁹³ In this period, a secular Kemalist Turkish model was promoted. Islam held an important place in society both as a form of culture and social relations but in a secular state, the religion could not be involved in political activity. Secondly, the impact of Turkish model was observed in language in a way that Latin alphabet was adopted as the official language on December 25, 1991 and later on December 22, 1992, the official language of the state was renamed as the Republic of Azerbaijan Turkish language.⁹⁴ More importantly, Elchibey's strong pro-Turkish orientation revealed itself in political life that he even emphasized that he would willingly accept a federation with Turkey. Although governing elite and leading intellectuals of Azerbaijan enthusiastically advocated Turkey in the framework of political cooperation or cultural affinity, they rejected any domination over the independence of their country. Moreover, another factor that shaped foreign policy during the Elchibey period was the uncompromising attitude of the APF towards Russia and Iran that it arose concern among the Russian and Iranian political elites. After the independence, as well as political parties, organizations sought for the improvement of relations with the Azerbaijanis in Iran. The intensive interaction between two sides and

⁹¹ Sabri Sayari, "Turkey, The Caucasus and Central Asia", in *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borders*, Eds. A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1994 pp.183.

⁹² İdris Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000 pp.91.

⁹³ Shireen T. Hunter, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, pp.40, 2000.

⁹⁴ Brenda Shaffer, "The Republic of Azerbaijan's Independence", *Borders and Brethren, Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002 pp.161.

Elchibey's campaigning for the civil and cultural rights of co-ethnics in Iran on state level discontented Iran. He states: "As an independent state rises in the north of Azerbaijan, it will make it easier for freedom to grow in the South."

Namely, Elchibey overtly spoke of the reunification of North and Iranian Azerbaijan. Thus Iran did not welcome the presidency of Elchibey.⁹⁵ By the same token, pan-Turkish nationalism could lead to the internal problems in Turkey as well. From the perspective of Iran-Turkey rivalry in the South Caucasus, Iran could trigger the events in the South-East of Turkey to counterweight Azerbaijan-Turkey cooperation. In this case, Iran would support the separatist movements in Turkey and as a loyal ally to Armenia, could cooperate with them on their common cause. Because as a threat to its territorial integrity, any independence movement in Iranian Azerbaijan could also spark the separation of Iranian Kurds as well as Turkic population of Iran.⁹⁶ Moreover, on international level, given the hostility between the USA and Iran, the attempts to prevent the broaden authority of the USA and Turkey in Azerbaijan can be properly expressed in Swietochowski's statement as follows:

Tehran's position towards Elchibey's Baku regime had its motivation primarily in an understanding of national rather than religious-ideological interests, and both the pragmatic and the clerical factions took the same stand. For those who wondered why the concern over Tabriz should be more serious because of the APF Baku regime than because of Russia, the explanation was that behind Baku stood Turkey, and behind Turkey, the USA.⁹⁷

Thus discontented with Elchibey's policy, Iran welcomed the tenure of Aliyev who promoted rapprochement with Iran by cordial relations with Iranian elites. However, the geopolitical objectives of Tehran in Azerbaijan remained fruitless. The Iranian desire to promote both cultural and economic Islamic model in the north of Araxes was replaced by the realization that in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse, the supposed power vacuum was never exist. The coup against Elchibey evinced the assertive Russian presence in the region.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Tadeusz Swietochowski, "The Two Azerbaijan and the Empires in Decline", *Epilogue*, 1995 pp.222.

⁹⁶ Graham E. Fuller, *Central Asia: The New Geopolitics*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1992 pp.36.

⁹⁷ Tadeusz Swietochowski, "Azerbaijan's Triangular Relationship: The Land Between Russia, Turkey and Iran", in *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borders*, Eds. A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1994 pp.131.

⁹⁸ Edmund Herzig, "The New Caucasus", Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999 pp.112.

To summarize, holding a spectacular importance in terms of historical, cultural and strategic aspects, Azerbaijan is positioned in a core place in the South Caucasian policy of Turkey.⁹⁹ During the Elchibey period, mutual relations promptly developed in various fields. The emphasis on the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan regarding the Nagorno Karabakh conflict gained prominence in Turkish foreign policy thus Turkey supported Azerbaijan in its initiatives in Karabakh issue in this period.

2.7. Relations Between Azerbaijan and the USA

The United States was one of the first states which recognized the independence of all the newly-established states within the former Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, it has promoted the territorial integrity and the stability of the countries in a way that it pursued a complex policy which included the settlement of the existing conflicts, the prevention of smuggling and Islamic extremism in the South Caucasus. Secondly, appearing in the region as a new actor, the US to prevent the monopoly of Russia in the development and export of energy resources which would also render alternative way to Persian Gulf oil, backed the new states in strengthening their sovereignty and political and economic reforms.¹⁰⁰ In this sense, in the new political and economic order, apart from the aim of the containment of Russia and to some extent Iran from the region, the consolidation of the independence and the stability of the states in the region posed great importance to the US administration in the framework of potential energy resources that the US and multinational energy companies could operate.¹⁰¹

Secondly, given the vulnerability of the South Caucasian States in a way that challenges in political and economic transition, ethnic conflicts would serve as a wedge on Azerbaijan and other Caucasian states' path to democratization and stability. In this respect, the US promotes the political and economic reforms and

⁹⁹ Nazim Cafersoy, "Elçibey Dönemi Azerbaycan Dış Politikası", *ASAM Yayınları*, 2001 pp.121-122.

¹⁰⁰ Elkhan Nuriyev, *The South Caucasus at the Crossroads, Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics*, Transaction Publishers, Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2007 pp. 286-287.

¹⁰¹ Thomas de Waal, *The Black Garden*, New York: New York University Press, 2003 pp.234.

backs them in their integration to international organizations and community. On the contrary, territorial disputes within the South Caucasian states and their fragile economy would make them potentially center of target to external forces, on par exposing anti-Americanism.¹⁰²

From a particular point of view, in the early years of the 1990s, during the Elchibey period, the Karabakh conflict precluded the settlement of a presumably peaceful relations between the US and Azerbaijan. The perception of “aggression” that was labeled to Azerbaijan due to the escalating fighting in Karabakh was reinforced with the blockade that Azerbaijan imposed to Armenia as of 1989. It was entitled “genocide” and was associated with the events of “1915”.¹⁰³ In characterizing Azerbaijan as an aggressive state after the eruption of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the powerful Armenian lobby in the US Congress had a substantial impact on Azerbaijan, that it was the sole country that was deprived of the US 907 Freedom Support Act in the Post-Soviet space. The prohibition of section 907 also had negative effect on the perceptions of Azeris on American efforts to establish a peaceful resolution in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.¹⁰⁴

2.8. Elchibey’s Approach to Nagorno Karabakh Conflict and the Role of Nagorno Karabakh Conflict in Relations Between Azerbaijan and Turkey

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Soviet Interior Ministry troops left the region and this led to the direct conflict between Armenian and Azerbaijan forces. The disappearance of the control and discipline over the Nagorno Karabakh by the withdrawal of the Soviet troops culminated in a full-scale war in the region in 1992.¹⁰⁵ In the process of the war, the alleged support of 366th Regiment of the

¹⁰² Peter K. Forster, “The Paradox of Policy: American Interests in the Post-9/11 Caucasus”, *Austrian National Defense Academy*, 2004 pp.2.

¹⁰³ Thomas Ambrosio, “Congressional Perceptions of Ethnic Cleansing: Reactions to the Nagorno-Karabakh War and the Influence of Ethnic Interest Groups”, *The Review of International Affairs*, Autumn, Vol.2, No.1, 2002 pp.32.

¹⁰⁴ Svante Cornell, “US Engagement in the Caucasus: Changing Gears”, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol.16, No.2, 2005 pp.111-119.

¹⁰⁵ Azerbaijan-Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, *Human Rights Watch*, Helsinki, December 1994.

Russian army to the Armenian side had important role especially in capturing Khojali. In 1992, Armenians occupied Azeri-populated town of Khojali, a town which had both strategic and symbolic value as it was the second largest Azeri proper. As Cornell argues that the “ethnic cleansing” of Azerbaijanis in Khojali also paved the way for fleeing of the remnants and the inhabitants in nearby territories that Armenians would invade later.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the town’s seizure not only led to the death of 1000 Azerbaijani civilians but also the regime change in Azerbaijan. The fall of Khojaly escalated the popular anger which combined with the government’s failure to preserve the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan forced Ayaz Mutalibov to resign on 5 March. Yaqub Mamedov assumed the presidency until the June elections.¹⁰⁷

In May 1992, Shusha, the last remaining Azeri stronghold in the Nagorno Karabakh and later the same month, Lachin were captured. Lachin was strategically important as it provided a land-bridge between Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh. It was entitled ‘the Lachin corridor’ which provided a physical link that had been cut since the Stalin era. Moreover, the fall of Lachin rendered the firm control of Armenian forces on entire Nagorno Karabakh.

In the light of these events, initially, Turkey preferred to be neutral to the conflict on the Nagorno Karabakh refraining from providing troops and military support. Assuming impartial mediator between the parties, Turkey made substantial efforts to take the attention of international community on Karabakh issue consequently, it was brought to the agenda of OSCE. In terms of security issue, the Nagorno Karabakh war was posing a threat to Turkey on the ground of bordering Armenia and its close proximity to the region. Any involvement in an ethnic conflict could put Turkey into an irrevocable situation and strain Turkish-Armenian relations.¹⁰⁸ However, the following events especially the killings of Azeris in the town of Khojaly in February 1992 arose hatred towards Armenia and led to public demonstrations consisting of hundreds of thousands of people in Turkey.

¹⁰⁶ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 2001 pp.81.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Praeger, 1998 pp.78-79.

¹⁰⁸ Sabri Sayari, “Turkey, The Caucasus and Central Asia”, in *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borders*, Eds. A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., London, 1994 pp.186.

Furthermore, the intensified criticism of the opposition parties for the government's mild attitude culminated in the adoption of a more pro-Azerbaijani stance in Turkey.¹⁰⁹

In May 1992, Armenians attacked Nakhichevan which opened a new page in the relations between Armenia and Turkey. Given the fact that Nakhichevan is under the protectorate of Turkey in terms of the 1921 Kars Treaty, in case of an aggression, Turkey had right to intervene. Mesut Yilmaz, the leader of the Motherland Party (ANAP) stated that Turkey should deploy the Turkish troops along the Armenian border to show the seriousness of Turkey attitude towards Armenian aggression.¹¹⁰ Additionally, the threats of Turkish government to send troops to Nakhichevan which has a seven mile border with Turkey led to grave concern about Turkish-Russian confrontation¹¹¹ that despite little probability, in retaliation for the possible military intervention, Russia implied that "the third party intervention in the dispute (between Armenia and Azerbaijan) could trigger a Third World War".¹¹² Bearing in mind, the attacks of Armenia which caused 470 Azerbaijanis to be killed or wounded in Nakhichevan, later halted.¹¹³

Elchibey pinned great hopes to Turkey for the military assistance. In the face of Russian-backed Armenian military superiority, Turkey remained so reluctance to help Azerbaijan in the war that the demand of helicopters from Turkey to evacuate Azeri refugees was rejected.¹¹⁴ Besides, in broader perspective, Elchibey sought for a security treaty with Turkey, but the Prime Minister Demirel turned it down stating that the security interests of Azerbaijan should be guaranteed within the Conference

¹⁰⁹ Scott A. Jones, "Turkish Strategic Interests in the Transcaucasus", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, 2000 pp.55-64.

¹¹⁰ Svante Cornell, "Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh: A Delicate Balance", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1998 pp.61.

¹¹¹ Deseret News, Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Spreads Toward Turkey, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/227638/NAGORNO-KARABAKH-CONFLICT-SPREADS-TOWARD-TURKEY.html>

¹¹² Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.81.

¹¹³ Elkhan Nuriyev, "Re-Emergence of Ethnic Conflicts: Old Tensions and New Realities", *The South Caucasus at the Crossroads, Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics*, Transaction Publishers, Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2007 pp.165.

¹¹⁴ Jonathan Aves, "The Caucasus States: the Regional Security Complex", in *Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia*, Eds. Roy Allison and Christoph Bluth, London: RIIA, 1998 p.181.

on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).¹¹⁵ In this sense, the divergent policy between Turkish President Turgut Ozal and the Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel had negative impact on taking concrete steps in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Unlike Ozal who overtly spoke of Turkish military intervention to the region, the Prime Minister Demirel adopted more cautious policy taking the consideration of both Russian pressure and pro-Armenian attitude of the US and Western countries.¹¹⁶ Additionally, from the economic perspective, the peaceful settlement of the conflict rather than its escalation and internalization would ease the realization of then Baku-Ceyhan pipeline which poses great importance to Turkey. It bears mention that Armenian lobby during the Nagorno Karabakh war, in case of a Turkish military intervention could serve as a problem for bilateral relations of Turkey and the US as well.¹¹⁷

Accordingly, the popularity of Elchibey and the APF began to decline in the first half of 1993 due to the defeats in the Nagorno Karabakh war. Yet Turkey could not prevent the coup against Elchibey and with his resignation, the establishment of Turkish model did not realize at all. Although military, economic, political relations were developed with Azerbaijan, the cooperations have never been realized to the extent expected from Turkey. In short, realizing its limits, Ankara refrained from any collusion with Russia, and became the loser in zero-sum game on supremacy over the Caucasus.

2.9. Conclusion

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as other newly independent states, Azerbaijan suffered from the dynamics and challenges of transition period. Yet barring Georgia, unlike other post-Soviet states, Azerbaijan became independent with an ethnic conflict which challenged its sovereignty. In terms of interior and foreign policy, when establishing relations with other states, the Nagorno Karabakh

¹¹⁵ İdris Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000 pp.147.

¹¹⁶ İdris Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000 pp.94.

¹¹⁷ Sabri Sayari, "Turkey's Caspian Interests: Economic and Security Opportunities", in *Energy and Conflict in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Eds. Robert Ebel and Rajan Menon, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000 pp.235.

conflict was a major issue in shaping the relations. Given the role of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in both domestic and foreign policy of the state, Azerbaijan-Russian relations in Elchibey period were relatively evolved around the issue of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Contrary to the tone of Soviet Union which pursued the inviolability of the borders within the USSR, after the independence, in the framework of “near abroad” policy, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict was exploited as leverage by Russia to maintain its sphere of influence in Azerbaijan. In this chapter, Azerbaijan-Russian relations which were mainly based on the parameters of the Nagorno Karabakh issue were evaluated being given the background events in Soviet Era.

Secondly, in this chapter, Azerbaijan-Turkey relations were under investigation making emphasis on the improvement of the bilateral relations in line with the pro-Turkish policy of Elchibey. He sought for developing cordial relations with Turkey and the West to contain Russian influence in Azerbaijan foreign policy. So the dimensions of the bilateral relations with the regional and non-regional powers were scrutinized in this chapter.

Thirdly, it can be concluded from the chapter that for the survival of his regime, the victory in the battlefields of Karabakh would be a determining factor for Elchibey. So, subsequent defeats in the districts of the Nagorno Karabakh region during the year of 1993 laid the ground for his resignation. In addition, idealistic manners of Elchibey made Azerbaijan closer to Turkey which was not prepared to assume an active role in terms of security or military cooperation that would fill the gap left by the Soviet Union. In line with the pro-Turkish policy of Elchibey, Russia supported, funded and trained Armenian military thereby changed the fate of the war.¹¹⁸ Namely, Elchibey’s clear-cut rejection of the cooperation with Russia undermined his presidency thereby terminated active pro-Turkish engagement in Azerbaijan. In this sense, the detailed evaluation of the Nagorno Karabakh dispute taking the Russia-Turkey axis into consideration was useful to comprehend the Elchibey period.

¹¹⁸ Brenda Schaffer, “Foreign Policies of the States of the Caucasus: Evolution in the Post-Soviet Period”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 2010 pp.52-65.

CHAPTER 3

THE NAGORNO KARABAKH CONFLICT AND RELATIONS BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND TURKEY UNDER HEYDAR ALIYEV

3.1. Introduction

The fragile side of Azerbaijan made it vulnerable to external powers, namely Russia that contrary to Elchibey, Heydar Aliyev until consolidating his regime, counterbalanced Russian imperial ambitions with the West. Abandoning ultranationalist policy of Elchibey which would have resulted in friction with Iran and Russia, Heydar Aliyev relatively pursued a multi-vectoral policy by integrating into Euro-Atlanticist institutions. In the chapter, the dimensions of Heydar Aliyev's multi-directional policy will be evaluated making reference to the relations with the regional powers.

With the signing of "the Contract of the Century" in 1994, Azerbaijan turned its energy resources into a major profit and this led to the flow of Western companies into the state with the increasing interest. Bearing in mind, the Azeri oil produced new initiatives especially for the US administration. In line with the oil boost in Azerbaijan, NATO which sought for the security of the region in foreground and the security of the pipeline routes in the background, developed the relations with Azerbaijan by Partnership for Peace (PfP). In this chapter, along with the evaluation of Azerbaijan- the US cooperation, the dynamics of Azerbaijan-Russia relations will be presented in terms of energy, Nagorno Karabakh conflict and the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

Another issue that holds spectacular importance during Heydar Aliyev period was the peace process of Minsk Group. Established in 1992 under the auspices of OSCE, the group maintained a thorny process in long-lasting conflict of Karabakh. In ten-year time frame of Heydar Aliyev, successive sessions of Minsk Group bore no fruit in the framework of the resolution of the conflict. In this chapter, the details of the peace process of the Minsk group and other dynamics of the peace process will be evaluated.

3.2. Relations Between Azerbaijan and Turkey

As a powerful and wise politician, Heydar Aliyev pursued a pragmatic policy which also reshaped Turkish-Azerbaijan relations in his period. In the short-run, the pan-Turkist policy and a quick destruction of links with regional powers, Russia and Iran; rendered a disaster for Azerbaijan which was under burdensome war with Armenia. Bearing in mind, Aliyev pursued a more balanced policy, diversifying the foreign partners but at the same normalizing relations with Russia and Iran particularly. Unlike the perception that the blow of the Elchibey government and thereby the comeback of Aliyev was the victory of Russia and the loss of Turkey, Aliyev did not yield to Russia as expected.

In terms of the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan in the early phase of Aliyev tenure, he abandoned pro-Turkish orientation. Instead of establishing strong ties with Turkey as in Elchibey period, he put distance with Turkey to some extent and the pan-Turkist ideals only remained in rhetoric as in his famous words:

The Azerbaijani-Turkish ties have a long history. We are one people, we have common roots; we have one history, one religion. During many centuries our peoples preserved and developed similar or slightly different traditions, culture and science. We were shoulder to shoulder. The relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan were always called friendly and brotherly. These are relations of peoples united by one root. This was our past, and when we have been deprived of the possibility to communicate, we preserved these traditions in our hearts and we have returned to them now.

From the perspective of multi-vectoral policy adopted, given the experience of an internationalized civil war, successful and attempted military coups, Azerbaijani foreign policy was reshaped in Heydar Aliyev period. Reserving strong centralized leadership within the state through non-military means such as stronger states or organizations by which Azerbaijan sought for gaining leverage to prevent domestic and external threats, at the same time benefitting from economic and military cooperation with them.¹¹⁹ In this sense, the cooperations with NATO or Commonwealth of Independent States could be explained in the framework of

¹¹⁹ Jason E. Strakes, "Anarchy, Hierarchy or Neither: An Indigenous Azerbaijani Concept of National Security", Vol. II, No. 10 (May 15, 2009), An Electronic Publication of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, Accessed September 2012 at <http://ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/vol2no10/20090526031722403.html>

Aliyev's multidirectional security policy¹²⁰ seeking for the maintenance of a sovereign Azerbaijani state which offset major regional and global powers. So, in this respect, Aliyev abstained from deepened strategic relations with Turkey not to overbalance the relations with other powers. Swietochowski explains the drawbacks of Aliyev as below:

With the passage of time interest in promoting the idea of unity, seen not only as outdated but also impractical, has waned; neither does Turkey wish to create a zone of influences or a quasi-empire in the post-colonial age with all its attendant costs and burdens, nor would Azerbaijan seriously entertain a union with Turkey. Above all, both Turkey and Azerbaijan are not willingly to challenge Russia for the sake of their drawing together.¹²¹

So, in the early years of Aliyev Period, Turkey-Azerbaijan relations mainly focused on economic cooperations rather than political ones. The most protracted project was the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline which involved various dynamics in terms of the regional policy.

With the intensified interest of the US in the South Caucasus, Turkey as a strategic partner of the US and a member of NATO was able to assert a new role in Azerbaijan. The pipeline projects between Ankara and Baku also had a major role in converging each other.¹²² In this respect, Turkey signed a declaration of 'Deepened Strategic Cooperation' with Azerbaijan in May 1997. In addition, as Aliyev needed to consolidate his power which required the support of Azerbaijanis, who love befriend Turkey, and as a member of NATO, Turkey would be a bridge for Azerbaijan to the West and last, Turkey would play an important role in balancing the influence of Iran and Russia in the region.¹²³ As mentioned in the following section, the victory of ultranationalists and conservatives in December 1993 parliamentary elections led to the shift in Russian foreign policy. The Euro-Atlanticist model was left and the West-Russian honeymoon ended. Consequently,

¹²⁰ Brenda Schaffer, "Foreign Policies of the States of the Caucasus: Evolution in the Post-Soviet Period", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 2010 pp.57.

¹²¹ Tadeusz Swietochowski, "Azerbaijan: Perspectives from the Crossroads", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 18, No.4, 1999 pp.429.

¹²² Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.389.

¹²³ Shireen T. Hunter, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, 2000 pp.43.

the West prompted pragmatic policy intending to save the energy resources in the post-Soviet countries especially in Azerbaijan. So these conditions enabled Azerbaijan to be less dependent on Russia.

From the perspective of integration with the West, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) since its foundation in 1992, has been a key regional and institutional structure, which has assumed various tasks for promoting regional cooperation in a variety of spheres and composing a unique identity in itself within the environment of Europe. The BSEC, although based on mainly multilateral economic integration, has promoted numerous initiatives ranging from market access, free trade, to oil and gas projects, refugee issues and environmental protection.¹²⁴ In terms of regional conflicts, instead of directly involving in conflict management, the organization assumes a “soft security role” under the OSCE mandate that BSEC can pave the way for the mass investments which would flourish the regional economy further enhance stability and security of the wider Black Sea Region. Because as emphasized in the documents of the OSCE (11th Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Maastricht, 2 December, 2003):

economy and the security are intermingled notions in the stability of the region that threats to security and stability in the OSCE region are today more likely to arise as negative, destabilizing consequences of developments that cut across the politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions, than form any major armed conflict.¹²⁵

Thus unresolved conflicts in the Black Sea region (e.g. Transnistria, Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and bilateral disputes pose a major challenge to the stability and sustainable development of the region.¹²⁶ Given the fact that member states of BSEC including Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia share the prerequisite of the core concept, namely the international security by subscribing to political and legal instruments under the United Nations, OSCE or Council of Europe, should promote the establishment of strong democratic institutions. In this respect, through such Western-based organizations, Turkey has supported

¹²⁴ Georgi Pirinski, “BSEC: A New Agenda 21?”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No.3, 2001 pp.174-174.

¹²⁵ OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in The Twenty-First Century, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.osce.org/mc/17504>, December 2, 2003.

¹²⁶ Panagiota Manoli, “Where is Black Sea Regionalism Heading?”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, September 2010 pp.323-339.

Azerbaijan's integration to these institutions thereby promoting the development of democratic institutions to be established in Azerbaijan.

3.3. Relations Between Azerbaijan and Russia

Russia, as a matter of security and special interest, plays a primary role in the South Caucasus. After the dissolution of the USSR, the uncertainty in determining a roadmap for implementing a security policy in the region stem from the political turmoil in Russia.¹²⁷ In the post-Soviet place, it faced many problems associated with economic transformation that could be hardly achieved, incoherent foreign policy and slow state-building process. Sharp decline in production and investment rates and hyper inflation deteriorated the economy. Unsuccessful economic reforms disappointed the majority of the society, at the same time, as Light states that the chaotic environment paved the way for the nationalists and communists to disgrace Yeltsin government and to open a way for their political comeback.¹²⁸ Instead of attributing to the development of democracy and the evolution of proper decision-making process, they exploited state assets for themselves.¹²⁹ Furthermore, the failure of shock therapy, decline in oil prices and the subsequent Asian economic crisis decreased the credibility of the Yeltsin's government and on a par increased the criticism of the opposition. The pro-Western approach by Yeltsin administration was criticized and was perceived to be the surrender to the West.¹³⁰ Thus Yeltsin dissolved the Duma in September 1993 by means of the military. In turn, he had to rely on the military in his tenure.

In November 1993, a new military doctrine was signed. According to the doctrine, Russia would intervene in local wars near its borders as it perceived these as threats to its security interests. The doctrine also emphasized the importance of the stability of regions directly bordering Russia. These revealed Russia's intention

¹²⁷ Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus*, Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999, pp.48.

¹²⁸ Margot Light, Light, Margot, "Foreign Policy," in *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, Eds. Stephen White, Zvi Gitelman and Richard Sakwa, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005 pp.224.

¹²⁹ Peter Rutland, "Putin's Economic Record", in *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, Eds. Stephen White, Zvi Gitelman and Richard Sakwa, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

¹³⁰ Henry Hale, "Independence and Integration in the Caspian Basin", *SAIS Review*, Vol.19, No.1, 1999 pp.163-189.

which was interpreted as the maintenance of its “sphere of influence” within the former Soviet Union.¹³¹ In the light of these developments, Yeltsin had to adopt more assertive policy in the Caucasus and the chaos in interior politics brought about the decision on Chechen war which would have negative results for Russia.¹³² In this respect, aside from Chechen war elaborated below, there were also other factors that shaped the Aliyev period in terms of economy and foreign policy.

As well as its geopolitical importance as the bridge for Russia’s relations with the Middle-East, the relations between Azerbaijan and Russia were mainly based on the oil interests. As in Soviet period, Russia desires to maintain monopoly over export routes. So that the security of the existing pipeline system between Baku and Grozny was one of the reasons for the Chechen war.¹³³ That is why the Russo-Chechen war had vitally important effects on the Azeri-Russian relations. First of all, as an economic and military disaster for Russia, it reduced the credibility of the country in the sphere of influence, especially in Azerbaijan. The Russian army was deeply engaged in Chechenya and the poor performance in the war resulted in more free political arena for Azerbaijan.¹³⁴ In 1999, Azerbaijan became more vocal in its anti-Russian stance resisting Russian attempts to base troops in the country.¹³⁵ Namely, contrary to expectations, Heydar Aliyev did not seek for the Russian dominance in Azerbaijan thereby rejected the deployment of Russian troops and board guards within the state except Qabala radar station.

With the policy shift that was bolstered by anxieties about the infiltration of regional and extra-regional powers accompanied with the threat perception based on the expansion of pan-Turkist or Islamist ideas, Russia’s policy towards the Caucasus became more assertive between the periods of mid-1992 and the end of 1994. Regarding this, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) served as a security

¹³¹ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.330.

¹³² Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus*, Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999, pp.106.

¹³³ Robert O. Freedman, “Russia and Iran: A Tactical Alliance”, *SAIS Review*, Vol.17, No.2, 1997 pp.93-109.

¹³⁴ Pavel Baev, “Russia's Policies in The Caucasus”, *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 1997 pp.38.

¹³⁵ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.340.

and defense structure within the Post-Soviet space for the maintenance of Russian influence. Alieva puts it as follows:

CIS, initially created to transform the Soviet Union, was later turned by Russia into an instrument for preserving its influence in the post-Soviet space. Also it was created to re-integrate the former Soviet states into a new political, social and economic space. Russia sees the CIS as a legitimate instrument of its policies, as it provides Russia with a security buffer, creates a common market, and is justified by the common cultural heritage.¹³⁶

For the reasons mentioned above, for Azerbaijan in Heydar Aliyev tenure, joining CIS was a matter of politics. In parallel to his pragmatic policy, for the restoration of the cordial relations with Russia, he agreed to join CIS in 1993 yet excluding from the collective security pact.¹³⁷ Obviously, the organization did not meet the expectations due to the both divergent security and economic dynamics of the member states and the inefficiency of the organization.

Establishing cordial relations with Russia in the early phase of Heydar Aliyev held primary importance in terms of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Given the fact that Elchibey's pro-Turkish policy ended with the loss of Karabakh war by means of substantial military support of Russia to Armenian side and his forced resignation due to Russian-led coup, Aliyev sought for the improvements of the relations hoping a satisfactory resolution to the Karabakh conflict. Yet Nagorno Karabakh forces conducted a series of offensives in Agdam, Fizuli and Dzhebrail and Horadiz resulting as Armenian gains. In the light of these events, Russia was contented with condemning these offensives. Realizing that Russia was beyond the settlement of the conflict and as a result of dispute over the legal status of the Caspian Sea and routes of energy pipelines, Aliyev returned to a pro-Western policy in later years.¹³⁸ So Azerbaijan initiated strong relations with the West on oil interests. Yet Russia could not prevent the inclusion of international oil companies. Especially the growing

¹³⁶ Leila Alieva, "Integrative Processes in the South Caucasus and their Security Implications", NATO Defense College Occasional Paper, March 2006.

¹³⁷ Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus*, Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999, pp.99.

¹³⁸ Shireen T. Hunter, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, 2000 pp.42.

interests of the USA and Turkey to the region in terms of politics and economy rendered relatively the containment of Russia in energy projects.¹³⁹

One of the prominent energy deals entitled “The Contract of The Century” was signed on 20 September 1994 opened a new page for Azerbaijan. The leading oil companies such as Amoco, UNOCAL, Pennzoil, Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, British Petroleum, Statoil, Lukoil, Turkish Petroleum, Itochu, Delta, Ramco, OIEC, Petrofina, Deminex, Total, Elf, Aquitaine, and Agip came together by means of the contract.¹⁴⁰ By the contract dubbed ‘the Contract of the Century’ in September 1994, the relations between Azerbaijan and Russia strained. It was a 30-year contract signed by State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) and Western oil companies and led by British Petroleum (BP) which would assume the development of the 3.8 billion barrel reserve in Azeri, Chirag and Guneshli offshore oilfields in the Caspian Basin. The contract was first shaped in Elchibey’s tenure that he had excluded Russia from the deal. Aliyev pursuing pragmatic policy, included Russia in the contract. However, although the Russian Company, LUKoil, received 10 per cent stake, the Russian Foreign Ministry described Azerbaijan’s exploitation of Caspian oil as ‘robbery’.¹⁴¹ The displeasure of Moscow on the contract which would pave the way for the flow of Western influences in the region on a par weakening Russian hand on oil extraction and routes was the cause of a coup attempted against Aliyev but he skillfully got rid of it and dismissed Huseynov. The failed coup consolidated Aliyev’s power over Azerbaijan.¹⁴²

Apart from its economic gains, the deal ensured the integration of Azerbaijan into the international community that by oil card Baku would gain the Western support that it did not initially have in Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Given the spectacular importance of oil and gas for both Azerbaijan and Russia, the issue that bears to mention is the Caspian Sea and legal aspects of its delimitation.

¹³⁹ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.350.

¹⁴⁰ Elkhan Nuriyev, “Conflicts, Caspian Oil, and NATO”, in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassady Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, 2000 pp.146.

¹⁴¹ Ali Granmayeh, “Legal History of the Caspian Sea” in *The Caspian: Politics, Energy and Security*, Ed. Shirin Akiner, London: Routledge, 2004 pp.17-47.

¹⁴² Tadeuz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 pp.227.

During the history, the Caspian Basin witnessed a long and turbulent relation or war between Russia and Iran. The delimitation of the Caspian Sea and the presence of warships in the sea were the core issues concerning the struggle between them. After the Bolshevik Revolution, both parties concluded respectively, 1921 and 1940 treaties which indicated the Caspian Sea as ‘an Iranian-Russian sea’, any statement did not exist with regard to the division of the sea, though.¹⁴³ However, in the aftermath of the Soviet Union, with the emergence of the newly littoral states, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, the status of the Caspian Sea was subject to renewed legal regulation. Azerbaijan, with the presidency of Elchibey, objected to the Alma-Ata Declaration (December 21, 1991) which had approved the validity of the Soviet-Iranian treaties of 1921 and 1940. According to Russia, the Caspian as a special case “a unique water reservoir” could not be entitled as either “sea” or “lake” that as in each case, each littoral state is entitled to the establishment of a coastal sector in addition to an exclusive economic zone instead of the joint use of Caspian resources by neighboring states.¹⁴⁴ Although the Caspian cannot be defined as a sea or a lake according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in both cases the Caspian would be divided into national sectors. If it is considered to be a sea, each littoral state would establish national zones along the coast and joint use in the center. If it is considered to be a lake, the Caspian would be divided into national sectors by equidistant median line. Not surprisingly, Azerbaijan favored the Caspian as a lake as it would allocate best areas for oil extraction. In terms of navigation, the utilization of fish stocks, the delimitation of sea frontiers also poses great importance on the ground that if it is considered to be a lake, Iran and Russia would be subject to the consent of Azerbaijan or Turkmenistan for passing their ships through their waters.¹⁴⁵ The dilemma that Russia had mainly stemmed from the conflict of interests as Bahgat states:

It is important to point out that policymakers in Moscow have been torn between the domestic oil companies, the foreign ministry, and the defense ministry, underscoring the tension between commercial interests and strategic interests. On one side, government

¹⁴³ Siamak Namazi, Farshid Farzin, “Division of the Caspian Sea: Iranian Policies and Concerns”, in *The Caspian: Politics, Energy and Security*, Ed. Shirin Akiner, London: Routledge, 2004 pp.232.

¹⁴⁴ Elkhan Nuriyev, *The South Caucasus at the Crossroads, Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics*, Transaction Publishers, Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2007 pp.235-236.

¹⁴⁵ Shannon O’ Lear, “Resources and Conflict in the Caspian Sea”, *The Geopolitics of Resource Wars*, Eds. Phillippe Le Billon and Frank Cass, 2005 pp.173.

agencies feel closer to Iran, which is a major buyer of Russian arms and a supporter of Russia's policy to contain US and Turkish influence in the region. Moscow still earns millions of dollars each year from arms sales to Iran. On the other side, energy accounts for 40 percent of Russia's exports and 13 percent of its gross domestic product.¹⁴⁶

So Russia changing its initial position on the joint use of Caspian proposed that the delimitation of the Caspian should be on the seabed along a modified median line but the surface of the water is subject to joint use.¹⁴⁷ In January 2001, Azerbaijan and Russia came to an agreement on the principles of cooperation in the Caspian Sea. In February 2002, Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan had a general agreement and Turkmenistan agrees only on the delimitation of the sea thereby leaving Iran aside.

To sum up, Heydar Aliyev sought for the consolidation of the Azerbaijan independence in his tenure. For that, he skillfully managed to play energy card as leverage in Russia-Azerbaijan relations at the same time relatively rendering the containment of Russian influence in Azerbaijan internal and foreign policy.

3.4. Relations Between Azerbaijan and the USA

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the US has appeared in the South Caucasus having an active role. As part of historical legacy, the South Caucasus serving as a core arena for the competition among Iran, Russia and Turkey now emerged as a region of strategic importance for the USA as well. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the US to secure the energy resources and to prevent the impact of Russia and Iran in the region, has cooperated with the regional states and has given them active diplomatic and political support.

As witnessed from the history, apart from its economic value, oil also served as a political leverage for many oil producing countries. The first oil shock taken place in 1973 was the culmination of the oil politics. The support of the US for Israel on Arab-Israel wars led to oil embargo which was carried out by Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) members.¹⁴⁸ Political turmoil and unforeseen

¹⁴⁶ Gawdat Bahgat, "Splitting Water: The Geopolitics of Water Resources in the Caspian Sea", *SAIS Review*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002 pp.5.

¹⁴⁷ Sabit Bagirov, "Azerbaijan's Strategic Choice in the Caspian Region", in *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Ed. Gennady Chufrin, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 pp.188-189.

¹⁴⁸ Toyin Falola, Ann Genova, *The Politics of the Global Oil Industry: An Introduction*, Westport CT: Praeger, 2005 pp.70.

shifts in oil prices-for instance Saudi Arabian crude oil went from \$3 a barrel in 1973 to \$36 a barrel in 1980- resulted in the second in 1979 (with the Islam Revolution in Iran and the Iranian-Iraq war) and the third oil shocks which affected all over the world including the US. In this respect, from the perspective of American interests and NATO's national security planning, Azerbaijan oil was vitally important in the diversification of the oil resources and transportation. Aiming to prevent any supply disruptions especially in the Persian Gulf, the United States sought to diversify the energy resources. Additionally, NATO-aligned states of Eastern Europe Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine desire to evade the Russian monopoly over the energy. Moreover, given the objectives of NATO which promote to ensure access to Caspian basin energy resources, subsequently containing Russia's role in undermining the regional stability by provoking ethnic conflicts, NATO and the South Caucasian States, especially Azerbaijan and Georgia have joined policies in blocking Russian influence in the region.¹⁴⁹ However, as the restoration of Azerbaijani territorial integrity in the framework of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict was not as on NATO's agenda, the liberation of the Azerbaijani territories from the occupation was just a matter of rhetoric.¹⁵⁰ Although the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is a major security issue in terms of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, NATO excluding itself from the process, emphasized the role of the structures of OSCE and UN in the settlement of the conflict¹⁵¹ thereby missing the expectations of Azerbaijan.

For the Allies, as the security of pipelines and the transportation of Caspian oil to Western markets determine the role of NATO in the region, the expressions of NATO Secretary General Javier Solana in his visit to Azerbaijan in 1997 bear to mention:

“The Caucasus is an important region for Europe which has enormous social and economic potential. Europe will not be completely secure if the countries of the

¹⁴⁹ James E. Detemple, “Military Engagement in the South Caucasus”, *Joint Force Quarterly*, 2001 pp.68.

¹⁵⁰ Alexander Murinson, “The Military and Security Stronghold”, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, Routledge, 2010 pp.58-59.

¹⁵¹ Elkhan Mekhtiev, “Security Policy in Azerbaijan”, NATO-EAPC Research Fellowship, 1999-2001.

Caucasus remain outside European security”¹⁵² summarizes the strategic importance of the Caucasus in terms of the concerns of Western states on energy security.

After signing “the Contract of the Century” with the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC) in which the United States holds the largest per cent (40 per cent) and with the growing size of U.S oil companies in the Caspian, the Caucasus has become a pivotal arena for the US and NATO Allies.¹⁵³ For the US as well, the prevention of monopoly over the pipeline routes poses critically geo-strategic importance. In lieu of desire to decrease the Russian influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus in the framework of both economic and political reasons, the US sought for the multiple pipeline policy: Baku-Novorossisk and Baku-Supsa pipeline which contains Russian route for transporting early oil of Azerbaijan. In the same pattern, the US insisted on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project (BTC), which was the most expensive of all routes for the transportation of Caspian oil.¹⁵⁴ Thus the US sought for the reduction of oil dependency on the Middle East by diversifying the energy resources. One of the alternative ways was the Caspian oil. Supposing that terrorist organizations were funded by Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf countries along with the anti-Arab feelings that intensified after the September eleven events paved the way for the reduction of oil dependence on Persian Gulf.¹⁵⁵

From the perspective of security concerns, the geo-strategic importance of the South Caucasian states has grown in the aftermath of the security paradigm of 9/11 events. As a crucial corridor to deployed the US military units in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, especially Georgia and Azerbaijan supported the US on its war against terrorism. Azerbaijan was among the states that granted the US to use airspace and overflight rights.¹⁵⁶ As the US have great security concerns in a way

¹⁵² Accessed September 2012 at

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/QC7809568ENC.pdf

¹⁵³ Glen E. Howard, “NATO and The Caucasus: The Caspian Axis” in *NATO After Enlargement: New Challenges, New Missions, New Forces*, Ed. Stephen J. Blank, September 1998 pp.151-227.

¹⁵⁴ Amy Jaffe, “US Policy towards the Caspian region: can the wish-list be realized?”, in *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Ed. Gennady Chufrin, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 pp.136-150.

¹⁵⁵ Gawdat Bahgat, “Splitting Water: The Geopolitics of Water Resources in the Caspian Sea”, *SAIS Review*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002 pp.273-292.

¹⁵⁶ Svante Cornell, “US Engagement in the Caucasus: Changing Gears”, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol.16, No. 2, 2005 pp.113.

that the proximity of the region to Chechnya, the improper border controls which would pave the way for the ease of smuggling of high explosives on the route between Russia and Pakistan and east-west route between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan has acquired an increasing strategic importance.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, in November 2002, Azerbaijan deployed 30 troops in Afghanistan under the ISAF. Nuriyev states the perceptions of the US about the South Caucasus as below:

Noticeably, the United States has become more active in the Caspian basin over the past several years because Washington views the South Caucasus as a zone of strategic significance. Questions related to oil pipelines, gas reserves and the security of energy supplies are of vital national, economic and geo-strategic interest to the United States. Azerbaijan and Georgia in turn consider the US one of their main partners in the international system.¹⁵⁸

As mentioned above, regarding the national interests of the US, the bilateral relations between the two has gradually developed. The dramatic change in the US-Azerbaijan relations after September 11 revealed itself in military funding as well. The Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act which the US deprived Azerbaijan of since 1991 due to the war on Nagorno Karabakh was amended to allow for a presidential waiver on 25 January 2002. Lifting the sanctions on Azerbaijan was in response to regional cooperation on anti-terrorism. After signing the waiver of Section 907, the US granted \$50 million to Azerbaijan in 2002.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, Azerbaijan signed an agreement with the US on military and peace-keeping training, border security and the modernization of military airports.¹⁶⁰ The growing cooperation between the two states also had repercussions in the US-led Operation in Iraq. Azerbaijan granted its airfields to the US and deployed 150 troops in Iraq.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Peter K. Forster, "The Paradox of Policy: American Interests in the Post-9/11 Caucasus", *Austrian National Defense Academy*, 2004.

¹⁵⁸ Elkhan Nuriyev, "Great-Power Politics: Renewed Rivalries and Foreign Influence", *The South Caucasus at the Crossroads, Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics*, Transaction Publishers, Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2007 pp.290.

¹⁵⁹ Alec Rasizade, "Azerbaijan after a Decade of Independence: Less Oil, more Graft and Poverty", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.21, No.4, 2002 pp.349-370.

¹⁶⁰ Richard Giragosian, "The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus: An Overview", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 2004 pp.43-47.

¹⁶¹ Jim Nichol, Armenia, "Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests", *Congressional Research Service*, July 13, 2009.

Additionally, Azerbaijan and Georgia received technical assistance from Turkey and the US about force restructuring and reorganization.¹⁶²

In broader perspective, NATO-led missions could be explained as follows. After the Cold War ended, NATO has developed new roles for the newly established democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. Anderson contends these roles as follows: first, the management of crisis, and second, the projection of stability.¹⁶³ In the frame work of integration into the Euroatlantic structures, it was Elchibey who first started relations with NATO in March 1992.¹⁶⁴ Yet it gained momentum in 1994 when Aliyev signed Azerbaijan's membership to NATO's Partnership for Peace Program (PfP). As balancing the foreign powers was primary policy of Aliyev to contain Russian and Iran influence, NATO was playing the most prominent role as a Euroatlantic institution.¹⁶⁵ Bearing in mind, PfP served as one of the primary channels to build closer military and security ties between the Caucasian states and the West. NATO aims at enhancing regional security and stability through peace-time military engagement. In the framework of PfP program, NATO got engaged in intensified military cooperation with the South Caucasian states. Initially, the establishment of PfP program was materialized via Turkey which has cultural and linguistic ties with Azerbaijan. As the second largest armed forces in NATO, Turkey provided Azerbaijan military assistance in the framework of The Council on Military Cooperation, which conducted military training of Azerbaijani officers in Turkey. Given the fact that Azerbaijan aspires to be full member of the NATO alliance, its involvement in joint military exercises, training, and restructuring the military establishment made Turkey and Azerbaijan closer under the NATO aegis. So serving

¹⁶² James E. Detemple, "Military Engagement in the South Caucasus", *Joint Force Quarterly*, 2001 pp.69.

¹⁶³ Ewan W. Anderson, "NATO Expansion and Implications for Southern Tier Stability", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Eds. Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, Routledge, 2000 pp.135.

¹⁶⁴ Heydar Aliyev Heritage International Online Library, Accessed September 2012 at <http://library.aliyev-heritage.org/en/7198785.html>

¹⁶⁵ Fariz Ismailzade, "Azerbaijan's Integration into Euroatlantic Structures", *Black Sea Paper Series*, No.1, 2007 pp.3.

as a conduit for building military ties between Azerbaijan and PfP program, Turkey deepened its cooperation with Azerbaijan in this respect.¹⁶⁶

In line with the multi-directional policy of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan's integration into Euro-Atlanticist community by the cooperation with leading organizations such as NATO, OSCE relatively fulfilled. As well as the US, as the agenda of those institutions was affected by oil interests, they failed to implement a coherent policy to ease the transition period of Azerbaijan.¹⁶⁷

3.5. Heydar Aliyev's Approach to Karabakh Conflict, the Role of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in Relations Between Azerbaijan and Turkey

While a political crisis was occurring in Baku during 1993, the ongoing war on Karabakh developed to the disadvantage of Azerbaijan. In late June, Agdere and in July Aghdam were attacked by Armenian units.¹⁶⁸ The inferior Azerbaijani military paved the way for the loss of these two remaining strongholds. By late August 1993, Fuzuli, Jebrail, Zangelan and Goradiz were occupied respectively. Although counter-offensives by Azerbaijani units yielded hopeful results displacing 40,000 Armenians from the districts, the positive atmosphere did not last long on the grounds that Armenian units retaken Aghdam, Fizuli and Agdere (Mardakert) in spring 1994.¹⁶⁹ By capturing Kelbajar, Armenia had a land link with Karabakh, thereby occupying 16% of the Azerbaijani territory at the end of the war. Finally, under the auspices of Russia, three warring parties signed the cease-fire agreement in Bishkek on May 16, 1994 leaving the responsibility of mediation process to the Minsk Group which conducts peace process for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict since 1992.

¹⁶⁶ Glen E. Howard, "NATO and The Caucasus: The Caspian Axis" in *NATO After Enlargement: New Challenges, New Missions, New Forces*, Ed. Stephen J. Blank, September 1998 pp.172.

¹⁶⁷ Leila Alieva, "Integrative Processes in the South Caucasus and their Security Implications", NATO Defense College Occasional Paper, March 2006 pp.32.

¹⁶⁸ Suha Bölükbaşı, *Azerbaijan, a Political History*, London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2011 pp.208.

¹⁶⁹ Christoph Zurcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars*, New York: New York University Press, 2007 pp.170.

The Minsk Group was established on 24 March 1992 by Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) previously named CSCE aiming to normalize relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, to have a consensus on the status of the Azerbaijani and Armenian populations of the Nagorno-Karabakh and to find a solution to the lifting of all blockades and displaced persons.¹⁷⁰ It consists of 11 members: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Belarus, the United States. In the first session of the talks in June 1992, two major conditions evaded the negotiations. Armenia insisted that the Nagorno- Karabakh should be recognized as a separate negotiating party; however, Azerbaijan rejected the provision as the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh would be contrary to the sovereignty of Azerbaijan. The second issue which set a major obstacle to the negotiations was the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenians insisted that international peacekeeping troops should have deployed in the region before the discussion of the legal status of the Nagorno-Karabakh. However, Azerbaijan rejected the condition as the deployment of the peacekeepers in the territory would be a threat to the sovereignty of Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh since their presence might not affect the process of the talks evenhanded. So the peace negotiations initially bore no fruit on the ground of the inviolability of the preconditions that both sides contended.¹⁷¹ With regard to Russia, from the very beginning, it was involved in the mediation process, however, in line with the Russian doctrine; Russia undermined the peace efforts of the CSCE which opposed to a Russian-only peacekeeping force in the region. Secondly, the draft by Moscow called for the two contentious areas, Lachin and Shusha to remain under Armenian control until their status could be determined. However, Azerbaijan rejected the dispatch of the Russian-dominated peacekeeping force and the provision insisting on the withdrawal of Armenians from all the occupied areas as a precondition for the peace settlement. So the Moscow-led peace negotiations remained futile.¹⁷² Azerbaijan decreed peace talks were acceptable only in the framework of the OSCE. Finally, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and unrecognized Republic of the Nagorno

¹⁷⁰ Azerbaijan-Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, *Human Rights Watch*, Helsinki, December 1994.

¹⁷¹ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.85-86.

¹⁷² Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.osce.org/mg>

Karabakh commenced negotiations in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan on May 4, 1994. The protocol terminated the Nagorno-Karabakh war and included the provisions on disengagement of the warring parties, withdrawal of military forces from occupied territories, discontinuation of energy and transportation blockades, return of refugees and prisoners of war, the special status of Lachin corridor linking the Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia and resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh's final legal status. Aliyev endorsed the protocol in spite of the potential deployment of Russian peace-keeping forces in Azerbaijan.¹⁷³

On December 6, 1994 in Budapest, Russia became permanent co-chair and all three parties agreed on the multinational peacekeeping forces in the region. For the possible Peace Keeping Force (PKF) in the region in future, Russian force would operate with OSCE under a UN mandate. Thus through peacekeeping troops and border guards, Russia's desire to be the sole power in the region was evaded. In the same pattern, Moscow allowed the inclusion of OSCE in peacekeeping operations in the region to prevent the NATO enlargement.

At the Lisbon Summit in December 1996, the primary issue was the emphasis on the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan along with the highest degree of autonomy for the Nagorno- Karabakh. Yet Armenia was not satisfied with the Lisbon summit and perceived it's principles as an obstacle to the peace process.¹⁷⁴

In 1997, the nomination of France to the co-chair of the Minsk Group caused Azerbaijan's objection to the decision given the large Armenian community in France. The stalemate was solved with the inclusion of the United States as the third co-chairman, thereby counterbalancing the influence of France.¹⁷⁵

In September 1997, the OSCE proposed a step-by-step solution, taking into account the common purpose of both states to cooperate. Accordingly, military issues such as the withdrawal of Armenian troops from occupied areas, the return of refugees and the deployment of peacekeeping troops would be materialized in the first phase then from the perspective of political issues, the legal status of the

¹⁷³ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.110.

¹⁷⁴ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 2001 pp.101.

¹⁷⁵ Thomas de Waal, *The Black Garden*, New York: New York University Press, 2003 pp.258.

Nagorno-Karabakh would not be solved until after the military aspects have been resolved.¹⁷⁶ In detail, according to the provision, both parties agreed on “the rejection of the use of armed force” to resolve disputes between them. Secondly, the armed forces of each side would withdraw to “the agreed lines designated by the High Level Planning Group” thereby rendering the deployment of OSCE forces in a militarily secure buffer zone. Along the division zone in which OSCE peacekeeping forces would implement “monitoring of security conditions in conjunction with the Permanent Joint Commission” and ensure the safe return of refugees to their own places.¹⁷⁷ Armenia and Azerbaijan accepted the proposal in principle as a basis for the further negotiation. As an important point, it bears to mention here that internal politics of Armenia had also determining role in shaping the policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, namely, Ter-Petrosian approved the Minsk Group’s proposal according to which the final status of the Nagorno-Karabakh would be determined in an undefined future.¹⁷⁸ Thus, the nationalist wing of the government headed by the Prime Minister Robert Kocharian accompanied with many Armenians who saw the peace plan as a betrayal to the national interests, met the decision with anger and dissatisfaction.¹⁷⁹ Along with the internal political turmoil, Petrossian’s approval of the phased settlement by Minsk Group caused his resignation paving way for the election of Robert Kocharian and the foreign policy in Armenia evolved into more radical stance.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, the Nagorno-Karabakh rejected the proposal, because from the very beginning Karabakh Armenians objected to any status which would restore the Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani sovereignty.¹⁸¹ So the latest version of the peace deal again remained fruitless.

¹⁷⁶ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.102.

¹⁷⁷ Accessed September 2012 at http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/accord17_22Keytextsandagreements_2005_ENG.pdf

¹⁷⁸ Svante Cornell, *The South Caucasus, A Regional Overview and Conflict Assessment*, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, August 2002 pp.15.

¹⁷⁹ Armenia’s Turmoil. New York Times, 03624331, 2/ 9/1998, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/02/09/opinion/armenia-s-turmoil.html>

¹⁸⁰ Ian Bremmer, “Help wanted for Armenia”, *Christian Science Monitor*, 08827729, 2/25/98, Vol. 90, Issue 62, 1998.

¹⁸¹ Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, Westport: Praeger, 1998 pp.121.

In April 2001, in Key West, Florida, for the first time, the chief representatives of the three Minsk Group co-chairs, the United States, France, and Russia came together with both presidents in the same place. Initially, Aliyev and Kocharian agreed on the main principles of the document. Armenia agreed on the formula that Karabakh would be a 'loose Bosnia-type confederation'.¹⁸² However, Aliyev later considering the status of Karabakh would be a concession to national interests rejected it.¹⁸³ For the first time, the both sides were considered to come closer to peace plan. The process was described as "The biggest achievement here was moving from abstract concepts on how peace may be achieved to concrete details" by the US ambassador Carey Cavanaugh.¹⁸⁴

During the Heydar Aliyev period, the uncompromising attitude of both parties brought to an impasse of the peace process and the efforts of the Minsk Group bore no fruit. The stalemate basically stems from the legal aspects of the Nagorno Karabakh. Regarding Azerbaijan's stance, the "territorial integrity" of the state is of paramount importance, on the other side, the tone of Karabakh Armenians based on the "self-determination". In this respect, in order to understand the legal basis of the Nagorno-Karabakh, three legal frameworks should be evaluated: First, the constitution of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, second, the treaty of the Commonwealth of Independent States; and third, international legal principles.

As of early 1988, with the escalation of the violent events, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict turned into a full-fledged war between Armenia and Azerbaijan that in order to soften the events on July 18, 1988, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR - that is the highest existing instance in the Union - confirmed the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh as an autonomous region within Azerbaijan.¹⁸⁵ The Nagorno-Karabakh's demands during the late Soviet Union period for the unification with Armenian Republic reached its highest point when the Supreme Soviet of Armenia adopted a resolution on the annexation of the Nagorno-Karabakh

¹⁸² Emil Danielyan, "Armenian/Azerbaijan: Summit Offers No Quick Fix For Karabakh Conflict", Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1100535.html>

¹⁸³ Thomas de Waal, *The Black Garden*, New York: New York University Press, 2003 pp.267.

¹⁸⁴ Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Armenia/Azerbaijan: International Mediators Report Progress On Karabakh Dispute", April 10, 2001 Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1096184.html>

¹⁸⁵ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations & Great Powers*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 pp.75.

to Armenia in 1989. In terms of legal status of the region, the resolution posed a great significance. However, within the framework of the constitution of the USSR which envisaged the territorial integrity as a priority, the resolution contradicted to the provision in Article 78 as below:

Article 78. The territory of a Union Republic may not be altered without its consent. The boundaries between Union Republics may be altered by mutual agreement of the Republics concerned, subject to ratification by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

As in the Article 78, without the consent of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan, unilateral demand of the Armenian SSR for the translation of the Nagorno-Karabakh had no legal basis.

Article 87.3 The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic includes the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region.¹⁸⁶

Furthermore, entitled as an Autonomous Region in Article 87.3, the jurisdiction of the Nagorno-Karabakh was regulated by the constitution and the region was a constituent part of Azerbaijan SSR that the Nagorno-Karabakh's demand for the secession also contradicted to the Soviet constitution.¹⁸⁷ Because while a Union Republic had a territorial claim, an autonomous republic had not as designated in Article 84, 86 and 87.3:

Article 84. The territory of an Autonomous Republic may not be altered without its consent.

Article 86. An Autonomous Region is a constituent part of a Union Republic or Territory. The Law on an Autonomous Region, upon submission by the Soviet of People's Deputies of the Autonomous Region concerned, shall be adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republic.

Secondly, after the decline of the USSR, the legal aspect of the Nagorno-Karabakh can be analyzed within the framework of the Charter of CIS. In the aftermath of the failed coup of August, with the withering of central power of the Soviet Union, all the Soviet republics declared their independence. Following these

¹⁸⁶ Constitution of the USSR 1977, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/1977toc.html>

¹⁸⁷ Svante Cornell, "Undeclared War: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Reconsidered", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Fall 1997.

events, the Karabakh Armenians, too, held a referendum to vote for their independence as a new republic of the Nagorno Karabakh on December 10, 1991.¹⁸⁸ Successively, it applied to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for the membership. However, as envisaged in the charter of the CIS, the declaration of the independence contradicts with the Article 3 which designates the inviolability of the territorial integrity:

With the view to attain the objectives of the Commonwealth and proceeding from the generally recognized norms of international law and from Helsinki Final Act, the member states shall build their relations in accordance with the following correlated and equivalent principles: respect for sovereignty of member states, for imprescriptible right of peoples for self-determination and for the right to dispose their destiny without interference from outside inviolability of state frontiers, recognition of existing frontiers and renouncement of illegal acquisition of territories, territorial integrity of states and refrain from any acts aimed at separation of foreign territory.¹⁸⁹

As it is contrary to the principles of the treaty of CIS, the membership of the so called the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was rejected by all members including Armenia.¹⁹⁰

Thirdly, in terms of the international law, the preservation of states' territorial integrity is of paramount concern both strategically and legally that secession may result in undermining the present units of a precarious international order: fragmentation into several weak states which have neither political nor economic viability.¹⁹¹ Apart from some norms in terms of a right to secede, self-determination should not be construed to hold that every group of human beings who constitute a distinct ethnic community has a right to establish its own state.¹⁹² After the demise of the USSR, the Karabakh Armenians changed their positions. Namely, in the late

¹⁸⁸ Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat Armenia in Modern History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993 pp.245-246.

¹⁸⁹ Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States (with declaration and decisions). Adopted at Minsk on 22 January 1993, Accessed September 2012 at http://untreaty.un.org/unts/120001_144071/6/8/00004863.pdf

¹⁹⁰ Svante Cornell, "Undeclared War: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Reconsidered", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Fall 1997.

¹⁹¹ William Burnett Harvey, "Reflections on Self-Determination", *Michigan Law Review*, Vol. 77, No.3, Jan.-Mar., 1979 pp.389-399.

¹⁹² "Right of Self Determination in International Arena", *Anton's Weekly Digest of International Law*, Vol. 2, No. 13, March 2011.

Soviet period, the Nagorno-Karabakh demanded the unification with Armenia seceding from Azerbaijan, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union, they sought for the establishment of an independent state based on the self-determination of people. However, given the motherland of Armenia, the Karabakh Armenians are not accepted as self-determination of peoples but minorities that comprise 2% of the total population of Azerbaijan. The Article 21:

“Article 21: Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

emphasized that as a national minority, they would enjoy free participation in the political life of Azerbaijan and maintain their economic, social and cultural development within the state.

Article 27: In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.¹⁹³

As also mentioned in Article 27, the national minority would be granted equal rights as the rest of the population. However, they are not entitled to have a right to determine their own political status that would dismember or impair the territorial integrity of the sovereign state. Article 8 para. 4 of the UN GA declaration is as follows:

“Nothing in the present Declaration may be construed as permitting any activity contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States”.¹⁹⁴

Finally, as international law sets forth, the territorial integrity of a state is given priority over other options. Additionally, the oldest principle of international law “pacta sunt servanda” which refers to the point that for a treaty to be binding or

¹⁹³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm#art15>

¹⁹⁴ United Nations, A/RES/47/135, Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r135.htm>

enforceable, all parties participating in a treaty should have consent on it.¹⁹⁵ So, without the consent of Azerbaijan, the right of self-determination of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic cannot be applied according to the international law. Again in Article 9 in Vienna Convention, the adoption of a text is valid “in case of the consent of all the states participating”.¹⁹⁶

In short, international law is obliged to states, peoples, minorities, or majorities that are objects of that state. Bearing in mind, the current status of the “Republic of the Nagorno-Karabakh” is not binding in terms of the international law. Given the international law, Azerbaijan agrees to any form of autonomy for Karabakh region yet only within the territory of Azerbaijan entity. However, autonomy proposal of any kind has been rejected by Karabakh Armenians.¹⁹⁷ They still persist in their current stance giving no concessions for the resolution of the conflict playing for time to realize “fait accompli” as in the case of Kosovo.

From the perspective of Turkey in terms of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Ankara maintained its tough stance during Heydar Aliyev, too. In all Minsk Group sessions, Turkey actively supported Azerbaijan that the peace process could only be achieved by the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Azerbaijani territories thereby ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. In that sense, Turkey was effective in issuing of a notice on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in Lisbon Summit in 1996.¹⁹⁸ Aside from little progress in shaping draft plan for the peace plan, no concrete steps were taken during the Heydar Aliyev tenure. Lack of readiness in both parties to arrive at a compromise due to the inviolability of the conditions that both sides put forward obstructed the OSCE’s efforts for initiating a settlement for the conflict. So the great hopes that were pinned to OSCE for the ending of the dispute came to nothing as no concrete progress was achieved.

¹⁹⁵ International Law, Treaties, Britannica Online Encyclopedia, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/291011/international-law/233499/Treaties?anchor=ref794916>

¹⁹⁶ United Nations, Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969, Accessed September 2012 at http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1_1_1969.pdf

¹⁹⁷ Alec Rasizade, “Azerbaijan’s Prospects in Nagorno-Karabakh”, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 13, No.2, 2011 pp.215-231.

¹⁹⁸ Svante Cornell, “Turkey’s Role and Prospects in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and Its Regional Implications”, *Marco Polo Magazine*, 1998 pp.4-5.

3.6. Conclusion

Adopting pragmatic policy to balance the regional powers, Heydar Aliyev partly managed to consolidate his regime thereby focusing on energy resources that would be a conduit between Azerbaijan and the West. Cooperated with the US on giant energy projects, Azerbaijan became more vocal in Nagorno Karabakh conflict. In addition, aside from economic calculations, given the geo-strategic outcomes of the September eleven events, Azerbaijan-the US relations intensified and both cooperated in the fields of Islamic extremism and war on terror. Moreover, the increased interests of the US also manifested itself in lifting the sanctions that had been implemented on Azerbaijan due to the full-fledged war in Karabakh between 1992 and 1994.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, after the cease fire in 1994 under the auspices of Russia has become the core element in Minsk Group works. Initially involved in the peace process, as of 1994, being designated as a permanent co-chair, Russia would operate under the OSCE mandate. So Russian-based mediation process was eliminated and its influence on the process was limited. From the perspective of Turkey, the Nagorno- Karabakh conflict preserved its vital importance in Turkey-Azerbaijan relations in this period as well. Turkey as a member of Minsk Group, strongly supported Azerbaijan's stance on the process also became very effective in issuing a notice the made emphasis on the "territorial integrity" of Azerbaijan in Lisbon Summit in 1996. To sum up, in this chapter, the Nagorno- Karabakh conflict was evaluated on the framework of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan and the direct and indirect effects of the relations with major powers on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was elaborated.

CHAPTER 4

THE NAGORNO- KARABAKH CONFLICT AND RELATIONS BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND TURKEY UNDER ILHAM ALIYEV

4.1. Introduction

After the death of his ailing father, Ilham Aliyev became the president of Azerbaijan in 2003. In line with the foreign policy of Heydar Aliyev, he, too, promotes the developments of relations with regional powers and the US. In the aftermath of the September eleven events, emerged as one of the strategically important region in terms of its proximity to Afghanistan and wider Middle East, the South Caucasus, especially Azerbaijan has figured more prominently in the foreign policy of the US. Subsequently, the alignment revealed itself in military and political cooperation. In this chapter, the details of Azerbaijan-the US relations will be evaluated in terms of security paradigm.

In terms of Azerbaijan-Russia relations, the five-day Russia-Georgian war which resulted in the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia by Russia gave signals of Russian resurgent policy, in narrower sense, its perception in ethnic conflicts.

More importantly, as one of the major powers in the entire region of the South Caucasus, Turkey plays a more active role. Bilateral relations will be evaluated in terms of energy, security and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. By signing the protocols in Zurich, 2009, Turkey took concrete initiatives for the normalization of the relations with Armenia. Without the inclusion of the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as a precondition in the protocols subsequently strained Azerbaijan-Turkey relations. In this perspective, in the chapter, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict will be evaluated making reference to the protocols and normalization process.

As of 2004, the intensified Minsk Group works sometimes including the personal engagement of Presidents of Russia, the US and France display an optimistic perception. Yet the effort of the Minsk Group to materialize the 'Basic

Principles' depends on the readiness of Armenia and Azerbaijan in a literal sense. The inviolable conditions mentioned above regarding national interests of both countries present an obstacle to the settlement of the conflict. In this chapter, the detailed process of Minsk Group works will be evaluated in the framework of Azerbaijani and Armenian approaches towards the conflict.

4.2. Relations Between Azerbaijan and Turkey

After the death of his father in October 2003, with the 76% of the votes, Ilham Aliyev became the president of Azerbaijan with the smooth transfer of rule. Familiar with the dynamics of Azerbaijan foreign policy due to his early career as a vice-president of SOCAR, Ilham Aliyev maintains pragmatic policy of his father to some extent. In this context, he has given spectacular importance to the solidarity between Turkey and Azerbaijan and promoted the developments of relations in various fields.

In Turkey-Azerbaijan relations, the energy issue plays a vital role in a way that major energy projects between the two have made them close alliance. Regarding Turkey, playing an increasingly important role as a transit route for the oil and gas supplies from Caspian to Europe, Turkey has gradually involved in Azerbaijan. As to Azerbaijan, rich in oil and gas reserves, Azerbaijan's global profile as an influential regional player is raising. As holding one of the fastest growth rates in the world-13 per cent in 2007-Azerbaijan economy is promising. Moreover, estimated reserves about at 3 billion to 5 billion tons of oil and 5 trillion cubic meters of gas unsurprisingly reveal Azerbaijan's future gas and oil potential.¹⁹⁹ As of 2006, Azerbaijan began exporting natural gas so terminating the situation of being full dependency on Russian gas. The rich Shahdeniz gas field of Azerbaijan with its 7.7 billion cubic meter's reserves came on stream. The oil capacity is to be of 1.2 million b/d and in the first three quarters of 2010, through the BTC pipeline 213.5 million bbl was exported. In the framework of energy dimension, in Turkey-Azerbaijan relations, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline project holds vital importance and marked two phases of Azerbaijan. Inaugurated officially in July 2006, the BTC

¹⁹⁹ Global Insight, Azerbaijan, March 31 2008, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.global-insight.net/reports/2008/2008_03_azerbaijan.pdf

is vitally important as it is the largest non-OPEC source of oil supply, the most expensive pipeline ever built (\$2.9 bn) and one of the longest pipeline in the globe covering three nations in its route. It runs 1,110 miles from the Azeri, Chirag, and Guneshli fields in the Caspian Sea via Georgia to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, Turkey.²⁰⁰ The project was implemented under development by a BP-led 10 Western consortium-the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC). Since its inauguration in 2006, the oil flow rates through the pipeline have steadily increased and currently, it has the capacity of 1.2 million bbl/d or 50 million tons per year.²⁰¹ From Turkey's perspective, the BTC involves spectacular importance that as a transit country, it anticipates huge amounts of transit fee-200 million dollars per year. The project has also enhanced Turkey's significance in energy security realm rendering it an energy terminal in the global scale. According to the BP Statistical Review of the World Energy 2007, in Turkey, energy consumption has increased so significantly that in the last five years, the energy demand in Turkey has doubled.²⁰² The BTC also enables the security of the environment associated with the oil-related traffic through the Istanbul straits which are among the most notoriously congested waterways that approximately 50,000 vessels pass through the straits annually.²⁰³ From this perspective the project has reduced the shipments of oil which pose great danger to the straits in Turkey.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ EIA, U.S Energy Information Administration, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=AJ>

²⁰¹ *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2008, pp.7, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2008/STAGING/local_assets/downloads/pdf/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_review_2008.pdf

²⁰² *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2008, pp.35, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2008/STAGING/local_assets/downloads/pdf/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_review_2008.pdf

²⁰³ Jeff Crook, Rebecca Pool, "Extreme Oil: The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Project Promised to Free the West from Middle East Oil but at What Cost?", *IEE Power Engineer*, October/November 2005 pp.32-37.

²⁰⁴ *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2008, pp.7, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2008/STAGING/local_assets/downloads/pdf/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_review_2008.pdf

The second energy project that of paramount importance is the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline which is also known as The South Caucasus Pipeline began operating in 2006. It runs parallel to the BTC Pipeline for 429 miles before landing in Erzurum, Turkey.²⁰⁵ In the first three quarters of 2010, 19.3 million standard cu m/day of Shahdeniz gas was exported to the world market. In this respect, the exploration of the major offshore Shah Deniz gas field is also expected to make Azerbaijan one of the major gas suppliers for Turkey and West European markets.²⁰⁶

As well as these joint ventures, some future projects bear to mention given Azerbaijan oil and gas potential. The Transit-Anatolian Pipeline which is expected to transport 16 million cubic meters of Azeri gas a year²⁰⁷ will be constructed from the Georgian-Turkish border to the Turkish border with Bulgaria and Greece.²⁰⁸ For the project, Azerbaijan and Turkey signed a memorandum on consortium that initially involve SOCAR with 80 per cent stake and the remaining 20 per cent stake will be granted to Turkey.²⁰⁹ The president of SOCAR, Rovnag Abdullayev noted that this project would not terminate the Nabucco Pipeline Project²¹⁰ which aims at transporting Caspian Gas to Europe via Turkey, will also enhance Turkey's role as an energy bridge. Although some obstacles in the capacity of the gas and transport costs, if the project is implemented, it will reduce the energy dependency of Europe on Russia and Azerbaijan as a major gas supplier of the project at least in initiating phase will be a key cog for Europe and Turkey.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ EIA, U.S Energy Information Administration, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=AJ>

²⁰⁶ Roland Götz, "The Southern Gas Corridor and Europe's Gas Supply", *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, 03/09, 2009.

²⁰⁷ AzTV, Turkey, "Azerbaijan Sign Contract on Trans-Anatolian Pipeline Consortium", Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.aztv.az/readnews.php?lang=en&id=871>

²⁰⁸ BBC Türkçe, "Trans Anadolu Doğalgaz Hattı İçin İmzalar Atıldı", December 26, 2011, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2011/12/111226_turkey_azeri_gas.shtml

²⁰⁹ SOCAR to Take 80 PER CENT of Trans-Anatolian Pipeline, Natural Gas Europe, December 27 2011, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.iea.org/work/2006/energy_security/Cavanna.pdf

²¹⁰ Reuters, Azerbaijan, "Turkey Start Work on Trans-Anatolian Pipeline", November 17, 2011 Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/17/turkey-azerbaijan-gas-idUSL5E7MH1SJ20111117>

²¹¹ F. Stephen Larrabee, "Turkey's Eurasian Agenda", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2011 pp.113-114.

Aside from economic aspects of the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in Ilham Aliyev Period, in the context of security issue, both states enhanced cooperation by means of NATO and its subsidiary institutions. In this phase, given the Nagorno Karabakh issue, in the framework of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, Azerbaijan-Turkey relations got strained following the Zurich ceremony. The protocols of “The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between The Republic of Turkey and The Republic of Armenia” and “Development of Relations Between The Republic of Turkey and The Republic of Armenia” in Zurich, 2009, did not include the resolution of Karabakh conflict as a precondition for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Armenia and opening the borders which were closed in the face of Armenian aggression in 1993. In this sense, the protocols had repercussions in Azerbaijan producing serious strains in Turkey-Azerbaijan relations. Combined with the reaction of the opposition parties in Turkey, the potential risk of the rupture in relations with Azerbaijan culminated in backward step by the Turkish government and suspended to an indefinite future.²¹²

The developments in 2010 warmed the relations that were blocked due to the signing of the protocols between Turkey and Armenia. Regarding this, both states reassured the mutual staunchest alliance which was formalized by respective accords. On 16 August 2010, Azerbaijan and Turkey signed an agreement on “Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance” which involves the cooperation in economy, security and military that under the terms of the treaty, in the face of any attack or aggression, Turkey and Azerbaijan will support each other.

On September 11 2012, both states signed an accord entitled “Turkish-Azerbaijani High level Strategic Cooperation Council” which included the fields of communications, family and social policy.²¹³ Yet the deal holds great importance in terms of Nabucco pipeline project that according to the deal, the Shahdeniz II oil will be transported across Turkey to Eastern Europe²¹⁴ in 2016.

²¹² News.az, “We cannot Permit Ourselves to Lose Azerbaijan For the Sake of Relations With Armenia”, March 31, 2011, <http://news.az/articles/turkey/33534>

²¹³ Azerbaijan Embassy, “The working group visit of the President Ilham Aliyev to Turkey”, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.azembassy.org.tr/index.php?options=news&id=18&news\id=27>

²¹⁴ Sevil Küçükkoşum, “New Turkish, Azeri deal boosts Nabucco Hopes”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=new-turkish-azeri-deal-boosts-nabucco-hopes-2011-10-25>

In terms of military cooperation with Turkey, the adoption of “military doctrine” which makes emphasis on the deployment of foreign military bases on Azerbaijani soil envisaged by international treaties that Azerbaijan ratified, gives signals of a Turkish military deployment in Nakhichevan of which Turkey is a pursuant guarantor according to Kars Treaty.²¹⁵ Again, according to the doctrine, the statement “any political, military, economic, or other support provided to the Republic of Armenia and to the separatist regime created with Armenia’s support on Azerbaijani territory with the aim of securing official recognition of the results of occupation will be interpreted as an act directed against the Azerbaijan Republic” indirectly makes reference to the growing military cooperation between Armenia and Russia that the deal signed between Yerevan and Moscow on August 20, 2010 prolongs the period of Russian military base in Gyumri of Armenia to the date of 2044 at the same time the defense agreement formalizes Russia as a security guarantor of Armenia.²¹⁶

In this respect, the growing military alliance between the two blocs, Russia-Armenia and Turkey-Azerbaijan may undermine the peace process of Minsk Group in the Nagorno Karabakh as German puts it:

It has been argued that Turkish military support merely serves to prolong the dispute with Armenia over Nagorno Karabakh, as it allows Yerevan to perceive a military threat from Turkey and thus increase its reliance on Russia, fuelling further instability. Both Russia and Turkey would suffer if there is a return to conflict in the South Caucasus, particularly if the dispute over Nagorno Karabakh turned into all-out war again.²¹⁷

Given the substantial progress in terms of military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey, such cooperation should contribute to the process on the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh rather than cast a shadow over it. As the growing militarization of Azerbaijan and the renewed military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey would be perceived by Armenia as a security threat, it would influence the peace process in negative way. So, within the context of the “National

²¹⁵ Liz Fuller, “Azerbaijan Adopts Military Doctrine At Long Last”, June 9, 2010, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijan_Adopts_Military_Doctrine_At_Long_Last/2066758.html

²¹⁶ Alec Rasizade, “Azerbaijan’s Prospects in Nagorno-Karabakh”, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 13, No.2, 2011 pp.215-231.

²¹⁷ Tracey German, “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia: Security Issues in the Caucasus”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 2, June 2012 pp.216-229.

Security Concept of Azerbaijan” which highlights the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as the biggest problem of Azerbaijan, the close alliance of Azerbaijan and Turkey should contribute to the settlement of the conflict rather than remain it “frozen”.²¹⁸

To sum up, after taking an office, Ilham Aliyev has pursued the developments of relations with Turkey in various fields. Both states have supported each other in energy, military and security issues that holding a prominent place, Nagorno Karabakh conflict for which Turkey has given highly supports to Azerbaijan in many respects preserves its centrality in bilateral relations.

4.3. Relations Between Azerbaijan and Russia

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, bilateral relations between Russia and Azerbaijan are mainly shaped by the conflict over the Nagorno Karabakh and the economic aspects that stem from petroleum sector. Soviet legacy, maintaining “sphere of influence” revealed itself in different political forms since the independence of Azerbaijan. As MacFarlane states:

Russia in particular has followed a strategy of denial-seeking to inhibit the development of political and economic ties between the region’s states and the West, Russia’s pipeline policy being is an obvious case in point. It is widely believed that for much of the Yeltsin period, Russian policy-makers took the view that the persistence of conflict gave Russia leverage over the region’s affairs and its governments. To the extent that Russian assistance has been instrumental both in initiating and sustaining conflict, Russia’s policies have been a significant complicating factor in the region’s development.²¹⁹

The “near abroad” policy that was entitled in early years of Russian policy, which was explained in detail in previous chapters, and its different forms of descriptions in Putin and Medvedev periods revealed that energy sector has also been used as a political tool in several former Soviet republics including Azerbaijan.²²⁰ Although during the Putin period, Moscow promoted a pragmatic policy in terms of

²¹⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Azerbaijan, Accessed September 2012 at http://azerbaijans.com/content_534_en.html

²¹⁹ S. Neil MacFarlane, “Security and Development in the Caucasus”, *Conflict, Security & Development*, Vol.4, No.2, August 2004 pp.133-148.

²²⁰ Heidi Kjaernet, “Azerbaijani-Russian Relations and the Economization of Foreign Policy”, in *Caspian Energy Politics: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan*, Eds. Indra Overland, Heidi Kjaernet and A. Kendall-Taylor Routledge, 2010 pp. 150-161.

the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, making substantial effort on the resolution of the conflict, the Russian-Georgian war proved that Russia is contented with the status quo. Otherwise, in the event of Armenian-Azerbaijani peace deal, Armenia's security dependence on Russia would decrease, concurrently with an increase in energy cooperation in Azerbaijan-Western bloc.²²¹ In this context, the evaluation of Russian-Georgian War would be appropriate to understand the Azerbaijan-Russian relations in Ilham Aliyev term. After the dissolution of the USSR, Georgia has appeared as a newly independent state which would be confronted with economic problems, security and especially survival issues in transition period. In the early years of its independence, Georgia was largely dependent on Russia which manipulated Georgia's internal weakness and disunity. In order to save from Russian yoke, Georgia aimed at fostering regional and international cooperation. In 1994, it joined NATO Partnership for Peace Program, successively the membership of GUAM rendered cooperation among the member states Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova under OSCE umbrella.²²² Additionally, the bid for the part of European community or the West revealed itself Georgia's joining the Council of Europe and the World Trade Organization in 1999. However, due to the 'near abroad' policy of Russia, Georgia's bid for the right to the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which is an official step to join NATO is not welcomed. It is argued that to be a member of the Alliance would remove Russia's grip on Georgia especially through the process of international peacekeeping process, Russian influence on the frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and the South Ossetia would decrease.²²³ On the other hand, specific initiatives that were launched by Russia appeared to designate its determination to maintain its dominance over Georgia in a way that for instance, in June 2002, according to the law amended in Russian Duma, the residents of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were allowed to have Russian citizenship. This move was interpreted as

²²¹ Elkhan Nuriyev, "The South Caucasus at the Crossroads, Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics", Transaction Publishers, Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2007 pp.274.

²²² Alexander Rondeli, "The Choice of Independent Georgia", in *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Ed. Gennady Chufrin, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001 pp.195-211.

²²³ Kakha Jibladze, "Russia's Opposition to Georgia's Quest for NATO Membership", *Central Asia Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program*, 2007 pp.47.

Russia's influence which could even lead to the detachment of the two regions. In fact, the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 revealed this line of action perfectly.²²⁴

In broader perspective, Russia's military intervention to Georgian-South Ossetia war in August 2008 had great impact on policy-making process of some countries in the region especially of Azerbaijan. The five-day war between Russia and Georgia resulted in the death of 1000 people including 600 civilians which also meant that Azerbaijan could be the next target in aggressive Russian policy. After the Rose Revolution, the pro-western styled Saakashvili's top priority was based on the territorial integrity of Georgia, thereby resolving the conflicts in the two breakaway regions-Abkhazia and South Ossetia- and consequently to have a whole control over the territories where were under de facto control of Russia. In addition, Georgia's bid for Georgian NATO membership was another reason for the crisis. So, the war that was erupted between Russia and Georgia has been followed by the repercussions throughout the region. For fear that Russia can pursue the same policy in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan has been cautious about making harsh statements on Russian-Georgian war. Moreover, it was perceived in Baku that Georgia's triumph in settlement of the South Ossetia conflict would have been a stronghold for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. However, the victory of Russia and its recognition of the breakaway republics especially Abkhazia where Russia deployed a base close to pipelines taking oil and gas from the Caspian Sea to the West. Furthermore, the fact that the West condoned the war²²⁵ disappointed Azerbaijan in the framework of the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.²²⁶ Obviously, the US and other Western countries were unwilling to antagonize Russia by boycotting it. As Russia aimed at maintaining control over the South Caucasus, it did not hesitate to provoke conflicts in those countries. For example, the legalization of the status of two villages-Khrakhoba and Uryanoba in northern Azerbaijan that under an agreement signed in 1954 was designated as the Russian exclaves within Azerbaijan after 20 years and subsequently in a conference, a brochure which was published

²²⁴ F. Stephen Larrabee, Ian O. Lesser, "Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty", *RAND National Security Research Division*, 2002 pp.114.

²²⁵ Anar Valiyev, "Victim of a 'War of Ideologies': Azerbaijan after the Russia-Georgia War", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol.17 No.3, July 2009 pp. 269-288.

²²⁶ Isabel Gorst, Stefan Wagstyl, "A Harder Power", *Financial Times*, August 2, 2009 pp.5.

jointly by the Federal National-Cultural Autonomy of the Lezgins and the State Duma's Committee for Nationality Affairs included the endorsement of Lezgin territorial claims on Azerbaijani territory could be pronounced as Russian aggressive policy.²²⁷ So it was inevitable for Azerbaijan to develop balance policy, which was actually shaped as of Heidar Aliyev tenure, between Russia and Western countries especially the US which presumably would not back Azerbaijan with military support in case of a war on the Nagorno Karabakh.²²⁸

4.4. Relations Between Azerbaijan and the USA

In Ilham Aliyev term, the prerequisites of the policy makers of the US in the South Caucasus, namely, in a narrower context, in Azerbaijan have preserved their magnitude. The US has sought for the sustainability of its national interests in the fields of cooperation in the war on terrorism, the preservation of the US interests in energy security and enhancement of internal stability in Azerbaijan.

After the September 11, the US has intensified its involvement in the South Caucasus. In parallel to its political orientations, the US has welcomed the presidency of Ilham Aliyev. Increasing primacy of security issues were main drivers of the US policy for the deployment in the region during Ilham Aliyev period. Bearing in mind, in 2003, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in his visit to Azerbaijan gave the signals of establishing an air base on the Apsheron peninsula near Baku²²⁹ but it has not been materialized yet. As in Heydar Aliyev tenure, in this period, too, with the cooperation of the Departments of Defense and State of the US, Azerbaijani security forces have received training and equipment²³⁰ in the areas of “counterterrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction” two of which are

²²⁷ Liz Fuller, “Analysis: Does Azerbaijan Face a New Irredentist Threat”, *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 2008. Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1117493.html>

²²⁸ Richard Weitz, “Azerbaijan Becomes Object of Russian-Western Rivalry”, *World Politics Review*, September 7, 2008, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/2632/azerbaijan-becomes-object-of-russian-western-rivalry>

²²⁹ Graham Bradley, “Rumsfeld Discusses Tighter Military Ties with Azerbaijan”, *Washington Post*, December 4, 2003.

²³⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Azerbaijan-the US Relations”, March 23, 2012, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2909.htm>

perceived as threats to national security of Azerbaijan as envisioned in National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted in 2007.²³¹

In line with the cooperation on war on terror and the security issues, the enlargement of NATO in spring 2004 revealed new security interests oriented towards southward. In the framework of Euro-Atlantic security, the Istanbul Summit in June 2004 addressed increasing level of cooperation and tightening of NATO with the South Caucasian states. In the aftermath of the September 11 events, the perception of security threats gained a new dimension. In terms of the war on terrorism, the military presence and peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan and Wider Middle East have made the South Caucasus a strategically important region for the Alliance.²³² In this sense, with the intensified dialogue between Azerbaijan and NATO, Azerbaijan signed “The Individual Partnership Action Plan” for military and civil-military reforms in 2005. The program provides a road map for joint activities which would consist of “political issues, security policy, defense planning and military issues” in the framework of the reorganization of the armed forces using NATO standard.²³³ In this sense, the adoption of “military doctrine” by Azerbaijan is stated to be crucial to NATO standards thereby, control over army by a civil body which is the key element of the democratization envisaged by the Individual Partnership Action Plan is said to enhance army’s effectiveness in Azerbaijan.²³⁴ In addition, the document includes the public information and emergency civil planning; and information security as well.²³⁵ Although Azerbaijan’s slow progress on reconstruction of Azerbaijani armed forces and the establishment of democratic institutions and as such fields, in 2008, the second “Individual Partnership Action Plan” and in 2011, the third document were implemented with the accord between

²³¹ National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 5.

²³² Svante Cornell, “NATO’s Role in South Caucasus, Regional Security”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No.2, June 2004 pp.124.

²³³ Liz Fuller, “Azerbaijan: Opposition Deplores Indecision Over NATO”, RadioFreeEurope, GlobalSecurity.org, 2008.

²³⁴ Today.az, “Politics Turkish Diplomat: Adoption of Azerbaijan’s Military Doctrine Crucial to NATO Standards”, June 16, 2009, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.today.az/view.php?id=53149>

²³⁵ NATO, “NATO’s relations with Azerbaijan”, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49111.htm

NATO and Azerbaijan. The drawbacks that lie behind slowdown in the efforts for the rapid integration into NATO could be explained as such: “as requirements of NATO under the PfP programme; re-distribution of power between central and local authorities, civilian control over the military forces, the adaptation of democratic principles into these government structures” barring their benefits, could also pose challenges to political leadership of Azerbaijan which legitimized the authoritarian rule in an insecure environment emanating from ongoing ethno-political conflict within the state.²³⁶ All in all, “the lack of interest” of Azerbaijan in NATO integration could be interpreted as the part of its foreign policy dynamics which cannot be formed without the consideration of Russian element.

Apart from military cooperation, through non-governmental and governmental organizations, the US conducts many projects in Azerbaijan to flourish economy and to improve democratic institutions. In terms of the Agency for International Development (USAID), the US promotes democratic reforms which include “media freedom, electoral reforms, improving the transparency of electoral and political processes”.²³⁷ From the aspect of development of non-oil sector, especially in the areas of agriculture, tourism, and information and communications technology, the US contributes to a business-enabling environment accompanied by the implementation of legislative reforms and monetary management policies that would pave the way for the enhancement of the non-energy field and ease the barriers of bureaucracy in trade.²³⁸ Bearing in mind, through such organizations mentioned and other the US-based ones which contributed to the establishment of civil society and human rights, as well as the development of market economies sought for the stability of the South Caucasus which would guarantee the security of petroleum sector.²³⁹

²³⁶ Fariz Ismailzade, “Azerbaijan’s Integration into Euroatlantic Structures”, *Black Sea Paper Series*, No.1, 2007 pp.3-4.

²³⁷ U.S. Department of State, “Azerbaijan-the US Relations”, March 23, 2012, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2909.htm>

²³⁸ USAID/Azerbaijan “Our Mission: USAID in Azerbaijan”, January 27, 2011 <http://azerbaijan.usaid.gov/node/3>

²³⁹ Edmund Herzig, “The New Caucasus”, Chatham House Papers. London: Cassell & Co. for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1999 pp.114.

In short, the US-Azerbaijan relations seem to be promising in many aspects given the fact that the intensified interests of the US after the September 11 events. Both states promote the stability and the security of the South Caucasus region. Regarding this, the US backs a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict through Minsk group process. So the rhetoric of Ilham Aliyev on use of force for the settlement of the conflict undermines bilateral relations to some extent.²⁴⁰ In this sense, for the ruling elite in Azerbaijan, the perception of the NATO as a platform for the settlement of the conflict rather than a conduit to integrate Azerbaijan into Euro-Atlantic space overbalances that as Fuller points out growing military cooperation with NATO may emanate from the intention for the enhancement of Azerbaijani military incase diplomacy fails for the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.²⁴¹

4.5. Ilham Aliyev's Approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, the Role of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in Relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey

The efforts of OSCE for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict maintained in Ilham Aliyev period, too. In the framework of Prague process, the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia came together in Sofia within the context of the high level meeting of the 12th OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2004.²⁴² Since then, the both parties at presidential and foreign ministerial level met respectively, at 13th meeting of OSCE in Ljubljana in December 2005, in January 2006 in London and finally, in June, 2006 in Bucharest to reach an agreement on the basic principles of the conflict, however, both sides did not give positive feedback to the OSCE-based principles.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Peter K. Forster, "The Paradox of Policy: American Interests in the Post-9/11 Caucasus", *Austrian National Defense Academy*, 2004.

²⁴¹ Liz Fuller, "Azerbaijan Steps Up Cooperation With NATO", Thursday, August, 9, 2012, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.rferl.org/content/azerbaijan_cooperation_nato/24448824.html

²⁴² Elkhan Nuriyev, *The South Caucasus at the Crossroads, Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics*, Transaction Publishers, Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2007 pp.317-318.

²⁴³ Suha Bölükbaşı, *Azerbaijan, a Political History*, London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., pp. 211, 2011.

On July 3, 2006, the co-chairs of the Minsk Group released a statement on the basic principles of the proposal which would also be a basis for the Madrid principles in 2007. The proposals included “the redeployment of Armenian troops from Azerbaijani territories around the Nagorno Karabakh, with special modalities for Kelbajar and Lachin districts”.²⁴⁴ With regard to the final legal status of the Nagorno Karabakh, when the necessary preconditions were established, a referendum would be held for the legal status of the region.

4.6. Madrid Principles

Madrid principles were originally presented by the Minsk Group in the OSCE ministerial conference in the Spanish capital Madrid in November 2007. The document is a revised version of the peace settlement proposal unveiled by the OSCE Minsk group co-chaired countries (France, Russia, and The US).

The principles were mainly based on the provisions of Helsinki Final Act of 1975. They pursue a “phased” rather than a “package” settlement which focus on “non-use of force, territorial integrity, self-determination of peoples, deployment of international peacekeepers, and withdrawal of Armenian and the Nagorno Karabakh Armenian forces from all occupied territories and finally, the return of all displaced persons”.²⁴⁵

Bearing in mind, in the first phase, it envisions the withdrawal of Armenian military from Agdam, Fizuli, Jabrayil, Zangelan, Qubadli and thirteen villages in the occupied Lachin District.

In the second phase, it entails the withdrawal of the remaining Armenian forces from Lachin and Kelbajar, when the peacekeeping forces assure the demilitarization of the region, Azeri refugees would return to the Nagorno Karabakh.²⁴⁶ The peacekeeping observers are supposed to be deployed ensuring the

²⁴⁴ OSCE, “Statement by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs”, July 3, 2006, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.osce.org/mg/47496>

²⁴⁵ OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, October 3, 2011 Working Session 11: Humanitarian Issues and Other Commitments/ IDPs 600 000 IDPs waiting for 20 years to return to Nagorno-Karabakh and the 7 Azerbaijani districts occupied by Armenia. Accessed September 2012 at <http://osce.org>

²⁴⁶ Statement by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs on July 10, 2009, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.osce.org/mg/51152>

security of Azerbaijani displaced persons returning to their abandoned homes.²⁴⁷ The third phase will involve the future determination of the final status of the Nagorno Karabakh in compliance with a legal binding expression of “will”.²⁴⁸

The discussions around Madrid Principles focus on political outcomes rather than their legal implications in a way that the principle of territorial integrity as envisioned in Helsinki Final Act (Article 4), points that the Nagorno-Karabakh will never be independent, however, Armenia interprets it as a right for self-determination:

Article IV. Territorial integrity of States: The participating States will respect the territorial integrity of each of the participating States.

Accordingly, they will refrain from any action inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations against the territorial integrity, political independence or the unity of any participating State, and in particular from any such action constituting a threat or use of force.

The participating States will likewise refrain from making each other’s territory the object of military occupation or other direct or indirect measures of force in contravention of international law, or the object of acquisition by means of such measures or the threat of them. No such occupation or acquisition will be recognized as legal.²⁴⁹

So, for Azerbaijan, complied with the international law, article 4 points that de facto Nagorno Karabakh will be a constituent part of Azerbaijan. Yet Armenia on the basis of the right for self-determination as entailed in Article 8, Helsinki Final Act, final status of the Nagorno Karabakh in compliance with the Armenian majority’s will is a legally binding expression. Article 8 as follows:

Article 8: Equal rights and self-determination of peoples The participating States will respect the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, acting at all times in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of States.

By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, all peoples always have the right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status, without external interference,²⁵⁰ and to pursue as they wish their political, economic, social and cultural development...

²⁴⁷ Suha Bölükbaşı, *Azerbaijan, a Political History*, London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2011 pp.211.

²⁴⁸ RFERL, “Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Discloses Details of ‘Madrid Principles’ ”, March 15, 2010, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani_Foreign_Minister_Discloses_Details_Of_Madrid_Principles/1984485.html

²⁴⁹ Helsinki Final Act, Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe, Final Act, Helsinki, August 1, 1975, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.hri.org/docs/Helsinki75.html>

²⁵⁰ Helsinki Final Act, Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe, Final Act, Helsinki, August 1, 1975, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.hri.org/docs/Helsinki75.html>

Azerbaijan rejects a number of principles in the document of Madrid Principles for the reason that it would legalize binding expression of Karabakh Armenians' "will" for determining the final legal status of Karabakh through a referendum.²⁵¹ Accordingly, Azerbaijan has also rejected the non-use of force, the right to self-determination.²⁵² The reason for rejection may emanate from the perception that Article 2 in Madrid Principles that designates the non-use of force will bloc Azerbaijan to exercise its legal right as envisioned by Article 51 of the UN Charter to liberate occupied territories. Furthermore, given the fact that the Nagorno Karabakh is not a state or a member of OSCE, the principle of territorial integrity is not binding for the status of the Nagorno Karabakh. In other words, unlike the perception that even after a referendum that would grant the Nagorno Karabakh "the widest form of autonomy" but not independence is a false assumption in the exclusion of Article 1:

Article I. Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty. The participating States will respect each other's sovereign equality and individuality as well as all the rights inherent in and encompassed by its sovereignty, including in particular the right of every State to juridical equality, to territorial integrity and to freedom and political independence. They will also respect each other's right freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems as well as its right to determine its laws and regulations²⁵³

which would have obtained Azerbaijan total sovereignty over its territory including the Nagorno Karabakh.²⁵⁴

Although the principles serve for the sake of Armenia, Armenian Diaspora and Armenia also reject the updated Madrid principles. The problem may arouse from the ambiguity in the definition of "future determination" of the Nagorno Karabakh status. As Huseynov puts it, given the fact that the status of the Nagorno Karabakh will not be determined at the time of withdrawal from the territories

²⁵¹ Beniamin Poghosyan, "The Deadlock in the Karabakh Negotiations: A Possible Way Forward", *The European Geopolitical Forum*, December 9, 2011, Accessed September 2012 at <http://gpf-europe.com/forum/?blog=security&id=107>

²⁵² Interfax Europe, "Baku Unwilling to Hold Karabakh Talks Based on Madrid Principles - Armenian Minister", January 14, 2011.

²⁵³ Helsinki Final Act, Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe, Final Act, Helsinki, August 1, 1975, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.hri.org/docs/Helsinki75.html>

²⁵⁴ Murad Gassanly, "What Do Madrid Principles Say on Karabakh?", pp.3, Azeri Report, Accessed September 2012 at http://azerireport.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2226

undermines the reliability of the Madrid Principles that as the withdrawal would also eliminate a vital bargaining chip, for Armenian side, preserving the status quo would further legitimize the status of Nagorno Karabakh probably in terms of fait accompli²⁵⁵ similar to the Kosovo case that Azerbaijan and international community will be forced to recognize de jure their de facto gains.²⁵⁶ Secondly, with the return of Armenian-occupied territories around the former Nagorno Karabakh (Autonomous Oblast) to Azerbaijan, further the repatriation of internally displaced persons-around may result in the Azerbaijani-populated majority in the territories of the Nagorno Karabakh that in an Armenian perspective, a legally binding expression of “will” by calling for a referendum will bore no fruit.²⁵⁷ Both parties are not taking any steps apart from the Minsk Group for the resolution of the settlement -a stalemate- dated back 1992. The lack of any constructive and a peaceful atmosphere in both Armenia and Azerbaijan always casts a shadow over the peace negotiations ever since. Existing hatred between the two people accompanied with the continuous military rhetoric of Azerbaijan for the annexation of the Nagorno Karabakh are perceived by Armenia as a unilateral concession by the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the “buffer zone”.²⁵⁸

In pursuit of Madrid Principles, in presidential and ministerial level, a number of occasions were held respectively in November 2008 in the framework of Moscow Declaration, in 2008 at the OSCE Ministerial Council meetings in Helsinki and in 2009, in Athens and at the OSCE Summit in Astana in 2010.²⁵⁹ Finally, in December 2011, within the context of the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Vilnius, sides consented to reach a framework for a comprehensive peace settlement and maintain negotiating process under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group on the principles

²⁵⁵ Jale Sultanli, “Moving Forward from Kazan: Prospects for Peace Process”, *Caucasus Edition, Journal of Conflict Transformation*, August 2011 pp.7.

²⁵⁶ Tabib Huseynov, “Mountainous Karabakh: New Paradigms for Peace and Development in the 21st Century”, Vol. 15, No.1, *International Negotiation*, 2010 pp.7-31.

²⁵⁷ Mark Dietzen, “New Look at Old Principles: Making the Madrid Document Work”, *Caucasus Edition, Journal of Conflict Transformation*, August 2011 pp.3.

²⁵⁸ Anahit Shirinyan, “From Kazan to Nowhere: A Reality-Check for Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict?”, *Caucasus Edition, Journal of Conflict Transformation*, August 2011 pp.2.

²⁵⁹ OSCE, “Joint Statement by the Heads of Delegation of the Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries and the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan”, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.osce.org/mg/85838>

and norms of international law, the United Nations Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act.²⁶⁰

4.7. The Normalization Process between Armenia and Turkey and Its Dimensions in Relations Between Azerbaijan and Turkey

In terms of Turkey-Azerbaijan relations regarding the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, one of the protracted issues that marked the Ilham Aliyev period was the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia which was concluded with signing protocols in Zurich in 2009.

Turkey was the first country to recognize the independence of Armenia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, yet the ongoing conflict in the Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia's assertive attitude which resulted in occupation of other regions apart from the Nagorno Karabakh was followed by the repercussions in Turkey subsequently, Turkey closed its border with Armenia and laid the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as a pre-condition for the normalization of the relations ever since.²⁶¹ Yet after winning the elections in Turkey in 2001, the Justice and Development Party launched many objectives in terms of foreign policy. In the framework of "zero-problem" foreign policy, the government desired to establish good neighborly relations in broader perspective. Ahmet Davutoğlu, the foreign minister of Turkey emphasizes the Turkey's role in the region promoting the doctrine of "strategic depth" which embraces the Middle East, the Black Sea and the Balkans.²⁶² In line with the foreign policy, internal and external dynamics that had compelling factors brought the two countries together.

In 2004, the EU agreed to open accession talks with Turkey which was forced to seek for reform program in the frame work of human, political and ethnic minority rights that Brussels has explicitly stated the necessity of the inclusion of the "genocide issue" within the membership talks. Given the fact that nine EU member

²⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Azerbaijan-the US Relations", March 23, 2012, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2909.htm>

²⁶¹ F. Stephen Larrabee, Ian O. Lesser, "Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty", *RAND National Security Research Division*, 2002.

²⁶² Hugh Pope, "Pax Ottomana? The Mixed Success of Turkey's New Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, 2010 pp.161-173.

states have recognized “Armenian genocide”, it was inevitable for Turkey to face this situation.²⁶³ Apart from the genocide issue, as one of the prominent trade partner, the EU provides compelling incentive for Ankara. So in the negotiating process with the EU, the importance of good relations with neighboring states is stressed.²⁶⁴ According to an article in InsideEurope, long-sealed borders with Armenia mark a watershed in accession talks as follow:

The document that defines the EU’s position in the accession talks insists that Turkey must maintain good neighborly relations. It commits Turkey to “resolving tensions that could exist with its neighbors and to abstain from initiatives which may harm good neighborly relations and conflict resolution”. The same document notes that “the border between Turkey and Armenia is still closed and (the EU) hopes that, through dialogue, bilateral relations will improve.”²⁶⁵

As mentioned here, the EU promotes the improvement of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia that opening the borders between the two would be a concrete step that should be taken.

Secondly, Armenia is in the scope of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) which supports high-budget projects to establish democracy and market economy in the country. In the same way, Turkey supports the Caucasian states ‘integration with the international organizations especially NATO to provide security for its eastern borders and counteract Russian dominance in the region.’²⁶⁶ So both Armenia and Turkey are driven by the EU to establish diplomatic relations subsequently opening the borders.

Thirdly, from the perspective of Armenian economy, opening the borders with Turkey would ensure Yerevan substantial economic gains. Due to its challenging location as a landlocked country bordering Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey concurrently holds one of the primary issues for Armenia.²⁶⁷ The long-lasting

²⁶³ Anna Hakobyan, “Overtures”, *Transitions Online*, May 9, 2005.

²⁶⁴ Zulfugar Agayev, “Azerbaijan: Could Turkey Spoil Nagorno-Karabakh Peace?”, *2nd Annual Central Asian Microfinance Forum*, 18-19 October, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 2012.

²⁶⁵ Inside Europe, “Turkey’s Accession Negotiations: Where Armenians Fit In”, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.insideeurope.org/eu-policies/enlargement/turkeys-accession-negotiations-where-armenians-fit-in/>

²⁶⁶ Aybars Görgülü, *Turkey-Armenia Relations*, TESEV Publications, 2008 pp.34.

²⁶⁷ Brenda Schaffer, “Foreign Policies of the States of the Caucasus: Evolution in the Post-Soviet Period”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 2010 pp.52-65.

conflict in Nagorno Karabakh resulted in the blockade of Azerbaijan and the collapse of old Soviet central planning system contributed to an economic decline in Armenia in the early 1990s.²⁶⁸ The industrial production that compromised two-thirds of Armenia's GDP in the 1970s and 1980s shrunk to 29 per cent GDP in 1997.²⁶⁹ A high rate of unemployment along with the emigration problem is also a result of deteriorated economy in Armenia.²⁷⁰ In addition, the earthquake that struck the country in 1988 led to economic loss around \$14.2 billion and devastation of 40% of Armenia's industrial capacity along with the closure of the Medzamor nuclear power plant put Armenian economy in a vulnerable situation.²⁷¹ As previously noted, due to its geographically landlocked location, Armenia depends on neighboring transit states and imports most of its energy fuel from Russia. Given the fact that Armenia imports almost all of its refined petroleum products through Georgia, in case of a conflict, the disruption of fuel and food imports as in the case of previous Russian-Georgia conflict in 2008 would put Armenia into a difficult situation.²⁷² Such an emergence condition that will emerge in the transit states is perceived to be a threat to national security of Armenia as indicated in Armenia's National Security Strategy.²⁷³ Secondly, from the point of pipeline routes, Armenia missed out the largest economic opportunity Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan bypassing Armenia.²⁷⁴ In the light of these economic factors noted, in case of opening the borders with Turkey, the reconstruction of Armenian economy would be easily materialized. So, on the

²⁶⁸ CIA, The World Fact Book, Armenia, 2007, Accessed September 2012 at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/am.html>

²⁶⁹ Miller Donald E., Berndt Jerry, Miller Lorna Touryan, *Armenia: Portraits of Survival and Hope*, University of California Press, 2003.

²⁷⁰ The Economist, "Art of Levitation, How Armenia Copes With Its Isolation In The Combustible Caucasus", Vol. 381, Issue 8504, 2/3p, November 16, 2006 p53-53.

²⁷¹ Miller Donald E., Berndt Jerry, Miller Lorna Touryan, *Armenia: Portraits of Survival and Hope*, University of California Press, 2003.

²⁷² Background Notes: Armenia, State Department Press Releases and Documents, Federal Information & News Dispatch, 2010.

²⁷³ Republic of Armenia, National Security Strategy, p:3, 4, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.mfa.am/u_files/file/doctrine/Doctrineeng.pdf

²⁷⁴ Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, *For Kin or Country*, Columbia University Press, 2008 pp.90.

ground of normalizing relations, both countries on governmental and non-governmental level initiated bilateral relations. NGO projects fostered cooperation that the prominent one was the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC)²⁷⁵ which pursued non-governmental, person to person diplomacy to close the gap between the two countries.²⁷⁶ The commission aimed at enhancing the cooperation and communication that it might contribute to establishing diplomatic relations in the future.²⁷⁷ Although high expectations and the visible enhancement in the field of civil society, the commission could not materialize a policy working group due to the opposition from both countries and was disbanded in April 2004.²⁷⁸ Moreover, prominent scholars from both countries held spectacular conferences to discuss 1915 events. Some of them were held successively at the University of Chicago in 2000, in Michigan in 2002, and at the University of Minnesota in 2003.²⁷⁹ In parallel to the positive developments in cordial relations between the two states, re-opening of the historical Akdamar Church in Turkey after a laborious restoration process in 2007 posed a remarkable importance.²⁸⁰ Finally, the “soccer diplomacy” named after Sarkisian invited Abdullah Gül to Yerevan to watch the football match gave signals of opening a new era.²⁸¹

After a long and tangible progress, Armenia and Turkey had a deal on a “roadmap” for a comprehensive framework for the normalization process in April

²⁷⁵ Diba Nigar Göksel, “The Rubik’s Cube of Turkey-Armenia Relations”, *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, May 2010 pp.1-14.

²⁷⁶ M. Gunter and D. Rohtus, “Special Report: The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement”, *Middle East Critique*, 2010 pp.161.

²⁷⁷ Douglas Frantz, “Unofficial Commission Acts to Ease Turkish-Armenian Enmity”, *New York Times*, July 10, 2001, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/10/world/unofficial-commission-acts-to-ease-turkish-armenian-enmity.html>

²⁷⁸ Paul Glastis, “Armenia's History, Turkey's Dilemma”, *Washington Post*, March 11, 2001, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.ahmp.org/wpcglast.html>

²⁷⁹ Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey, A Disputed Genocide*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 2005 pp.269-270.

²⁸⁰ Hürriyet, “Armenian historian: Akdamar Church re-opening a ‘peace-offering’ from Turkey”, April 9, 2007, Accessed September 2012 at <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=6298039>

²⁸¹ The Economist, “Turkey and the Caucasus Waiting and Watching A large NATO Country Ponders a Bigger Role in the Caucasus”, August 28, 2008, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.economist.com/node/11986092>

2009.²⁸² Subsequently, Armenia and Turkey signed the protocols on “The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey” and “Development of Relations between The Republic of Turkey and The Republic of Armenia” in Zurich with the mediation of Switzerland in October 2009.

From some perspectives, the protocols included some clauses that conflicted with themselves. These clauses and articles in both protocols have primary importance in terms of evaluating Turkey-Armenian relations that are mainly driven by an entrenched issues based on 1915 events and Armenian’s territorial claim in Turkey. For instance, the clause “Reiterating their commitment to refrain from pursuing any policy incompatible with the spirit of good neighborly relations” in the protocol of “The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between The Republic of Turkey and The Republic of Armenia”, contradicts with the “genocide” claim which is explicitly cited in Article 11 in the Declaration of Independence of Armenia:

“The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia.”²⁸³ The most spectacular point here is that the functions of the 1915 events in our contemporary politics are of paramount importance rather than their validity and reliability according to the historical records.²⁸⁴

Secondly, the clauses, “Reconfirming their commitment in their bilateral and international relations to respect and ensure respect for the principles of equality, sovereignty, non-intervention in international affairs of other states, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers” and “Confirming the mutual recognition of the existing border between the two countries as defined by the relevant treaties of international law” in The Protocol on “the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey” are also not in compliance with the border dispute between the two countries that has existed as a problematic issue ever since. After the ratification of The Treaty of Lausanne as was

²⁸² BBC News, “Turkey and Armenia set ‘roadmap’”, April 23, 2009, Accessed September 2012 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8014008.stm>

²⁸³ Declaration of Independence of Armenia, History of Armenia, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.armenica.org/armenia/doi.html>

²⁸⁴ Einar Wigen, “Never Mind the Gap: Turkish-Armenian Relations Past the Crossroads”, *Noref Policy Brief*, No. 5, May 2010.

the successor of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk Union (March 1918), the Treaty of Moscow (1921) and the Treaty of Kars (1921)²⁸⁵, the eastern border of Turkey was defined.²⁸⁶ During the period as of the Treaty of Kars, Armenians have not recognized the existing borders and at times demanded the repatriation of the “Armenian lands in Turkey”. Bearing in mind, the ratification of the protocols by the Armenian Constitutional Court in January 12, 2010 bore no fruit as Armenia would not abide by the protocols that designated the mutual recognition of the existing border between the two countries by the Treaty of Kars.²⁸⁷

From the perspective of Azerbaijan, the protocols had strong repercussions in Baku. Upon the protocols signed between Armenia and Turkey, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan got strained. The Azerbaijani media considered the move as ‘the betrayal’ to Azerbaijani interests. Furthermore, as an indication of their displeasure, Ilham Aliyev rejected to attend “The Alliance of Civilizations Summit” in Istanbul in April 2009.²⁸⁸ As well as the requests of Abdullah Gül and Tayyip Erdoğan, Hillary Clinton’s insistence on Aliyev to attend to the summit proved ineffective.

The reaction of Azerbaijan to the process also revealed itself in energy issue that soon after the signing of the protocols, Ilham Aliyev gave signals of applying sanctions to Turkey in energy trades.²⁸⁹ Aliyev implied the rise in the price of oil that is sold to Turkey less than a week after the Zurich ceremony. Furthermore, it was announced that Baku would seek for other options to transport the gas of the Shah Deniz field excluding Nabucco Pipeline.²⁹⁰ It also bears to mention that, signing a

²⁸⁵ Frederic P. Miler, Agnes F. Vandome, John McBrewster, *Armenian National Awakening*, Alphascript Publishing, 2009 pp.33.

²⁸⁶ Erel Tellal, “1919-1923: Sovyetlerle İlişkiler”, *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*, Ed. Baskın Oran, cilt 1, 6. Baskı, İstanbul, İletişim yayınları, 2002.

²⁸⁷ Nona Mikhelidze, “The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement at the Deadlock”, *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, Document IAI 10, 05, March 2010.

²⁸⁸ Rasim Musabayov, “Will Ankara Cross the border?”, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.regionplus.az/en/articles/view/278>

²⁸⁹ Nona Mikhelidze, “The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement at the Deadlock”, *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, Document IAI 10, 05, March 2010.

²⁹⁰ RFERL, “Azerbaijan Threatens Turkey Over Armenia Agreement”, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, October 21, 2009, Accessed September 2012 at http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijan_Threatens_Turkey_Over_Armenia_Agreement/1857198.html

deal with Gazprom to export 500 million cubic meters of Azerbaijani natural gas annually to Russia could be interpreted as a reaction of Azerbaijan²⁹¹ as the date of the deal coincided with a World Cup soccer match, which rendered the meeting of Sarkisian and Abdullah Gül on October 14, 2009.

More importantly, in a session of the Security Council in Baku at a time when the US-Turkish talks on opening the Turkish-Armenian border in Istanbul, Aliyev emphasized Azerbaijan's policy on peace, stability and security in the region making reference to the Nagorno Karabakh issue, further underlining the prominence of the Nagorno Karabakh settlement in accordance with the interest of his country.²⁹²

In pursuit of these developments, The Prime Minister of Turkey, Erdoğan contended the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh issue as a precondition for the ratification of the protocols although in the original documents, both parties did not propose any pre-conditions making reference to the Nagorno Karabakh²⁹³ dispute. In the light of these developments, Armenia unilaterally ended the process for the ratification of the protocols on April 22, 2010. Sargsyan and Nalbandian in their public statements made emphasis on their desires for the maintenance of the process without any preconditions.²⁹⁴ However, Turkey's stance in the process paved the way for Armenia to require the recognition of "the Genocide" as a precondition to the negotiations with Turkey. Namely, it was obvious that Armenia would use the 'genocide' issue as leverage in normalization process²⁹⁵ at the same time not deteriorating the relations with Armenian Diaspora groups who strongly defend 'genocide' recognition.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Eurasianet, "Azerbaijan: Moscow and Baku Conclude Gas Export Deal", October 14 2009, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/news/articles/eav101509.shtml>

²⁹² Azeri Report, "We Will Take Required Measures", April 7, 2009, Accessed September 2012 at http://azerireport.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1168&Itemid=53

²⁹³ F. Stephen Larrabee, "Turkey's Eurasian Agenda", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2011 pp.108.

²⁹⁴ Interfax, "Turkey dragging out normalization of relations with Armenia-Armenian Foreign Minister", *Military News Agency*, 2010.

²⁹⁵ Sergey Minasyan, "Prospects for Normalization between Armenia and Turkey: A View from Yerevan", *Insight Turkey*, 2010 pp.24.

²⁹⁶ Vladimir Socor, "Armenia Suspends US-Backed Normalization of Relations with Armenia", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 2010.

In general meaning, it is expected that Turkey's involvement in the South Caucasus by opening the borders with Armenia would contribute to economic prosperity, stabilization and peace in the region. However, the rapprochement without a parallel process on the Nagorno Karabakh settlement is perceived by Azerbaijan as a move to alienate Azerbaijan on the international arena, subsequently, consolidating the status quo in Nagorno Karabakh.²⁹⁷ If Turkey opens its borders with Armenia, Baku could lose its leverage in talks on the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Azerbaijani territory. Without Turkey, Azerbaijan would be the only state maintaining a blockade of Armenia over Yerevan's ongoing occupation of Azerbaijani territory captured during the Nagorno Karabakh war. But Azerbaijan has protested over the potential thaw between Turkey and Armenia, fearing the loss of its leverage over Armenia through its alliance with Turkey.²⁹⁸

All in all, holding as a primary security challenge in Azerbaijan, the Nagorno Karabakh has occupied the agenda of Ilham Aliyev tenure in domestic and foreign policy too. The increased defense spending of Azerbaijan-from \$175 million in 2004 to 3.1 billion in 2011²⁹⁹- combined with the rhetoric of military solution for the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict³⁰⁰ undermines the peace process that Minsk Group has conducted. Although the rhetoric of Ilham Aliyev partly aims at assuaging the Azerbaijani public it also reveals the uneasiness of Azerbaijan on the process.³⁰¹

To sum up, the peace efforts during the Ilham Aliev period has not yielded positive results yet. The divergent policies of each party in the conflict as well as co-chairs make the peace process difficult to implement. Bearing in mind, although as one of the primacy for the Ilham Aliyev government is the heavy expenditure on the military accompanied by his rhetoric of military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh

²⁹⁷ Elhan Mehtiyev, "Turkish Armenian Protocols: An Azerbaijani Perspective", *Insight Turkey*, 41, March 22, 2010.

²⁹⁸ BBC News, "Turkey Demands Karabakh Progress", May 13, 2009, Accessed September 2012 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8048823.stm>

²⁹⁹ International Crisis Group, "Armenia and Azerbaijan: Preventing War", *Europe Briefing*, No.60, February 8, 2011.

³⁰⁰ Azerbaijani and Armenian Presidents to Meet on November 22, Accessed September 2012 at <http://www.turkishpress.com/news.asp?id=346815#.UFncPFHAHvY>

³⁰¹ Country Monitor, "An Armed Solution?", *Eastern Europe*, July 14th, 2008.

conflict are indicator of the deadlock in the process, the conflict still preserves its unique status in Azerbaijan policy.

4.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, Azerbaijan-Turkey relations combined with the dynamics of major powers that have impact on Azerbaijan policy-making were evaluated. It underscores the fact that regional developments influence the internal and foreign policy-making process of Azerbaijan that in this context, from the perspective of Azerbaijan-Russia relations, Russian-Georgian war could be a good example of it that in this chapter, the impact of the war and its dimensions on foreign policy of Azerbaijan were investigated.

In terms of Azerbaijan and the US relations, the security paradigm comes into prominence. Especially after the September 11 events, the security interests of the US in the South Caucasus has grown and in parallel to southern orientation of NATO operations, the US and Azerbaijan have cooperated in war on terror. In this chapter, the US-Azerbaijan relations were elaborated making reference to bilateral relations in security and economy.

From the perspective of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, energy issue was under scrutiny in this chapter. The prominent oil and gas projects were touched upon and their impacts on the relations were investigated. Secondly, the bilateral relations were elaborated in terms of the Nagorno Karabakh issue which is the core element of Azerbaijan politics. The efforts to restore diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey culminated in signing protocols in Zurich 2009. The protocols which were based on reopening the borders which has been sealed since 1993, did not include the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as a pre-condition to establish diplomatic relations. So such development had negative impact on Azerbaijani stance towards Turkey that, in this chapter, the background of the path to protocols and the developments in the aftermath of the signing of the protocols were investigated in detail.

More importantly, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict was also evaluated in terms of the peace process that was conducted by Minsk Group. A number of sessions and meetings held in Ilham Aliyev period were touched upon. The prominent one was Madrid Principles which put a new dimension in the resolution of the conflict. As

well as its legal frameworks, the political outcomes of the Madrid principles were under investigation to make an accurate evaluation in the peace process of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the role of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is examined in Turkey-Azerbaijan Relations. Regarding this, the previous and existing issues related to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict were analyzed. This work tested the assumptions of some scholars who consider that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is losing its importance in shaping Azerbaijan-Turkey relations. The findings of this thesis supported the main argument which highlights that contrary to the views of some scholars who claim that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has become relatively less important vis-à-vis the economic and energy issues in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey, this thesis argues that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict still maintains its centrality in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. The impasse in resolving the conflict does not mean that its importance is diminished in Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan.

With the end of Cold War Era, the threat perception stemming from the contention between the East-West blocs ended. In this sense, the geo-strategic importance that Turkey preserved during the Cold War Era disappeared and Turkey's role as a "flank state" of the NATO and the West faded away. In this sense, with the emergence of newly independent states, Turkey, in a new political order, sought for opportunities in terms of cultural, economic and political perspectives. In a narrower sense, compared to other Turkic states, Turkey pursued closer relations with Azerbaijan and it was the first country to be recognized by Turkey. In the framework of cultural and linguistic affinity as well as security issues, Azerbaijan holds a spectacular value for Turkey. In this sense, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict which shaped and continues to shape internal and foreign policy of Azerbaijan has a substantial impact on Azerbaijan-Turkey relations.

In Chapter Two, the role of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan-Turkey relations is evaluated within the framework of Abulfaz Elchibey period. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, unlike many independent states, Azerbaijan gained its independence with a territorial dispute which erupted in 1988.

With the escalation of the events, Turkey played an important role in taking attention of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the international level afterwards bringing the issue to the agenda of OSCE.

In May 1992, the Armenian offensive in Nakhichevan acquired a new dimension to the Azerbaijan- Turkey relations. Given the fact that Nakhichevan is under the protectorate of Turkey in terms of the 1921 Kars Treaty, Turkey threatened Armenia to send troops to Nakhichevan. These developments critically pose great importance from the perspective of the seriousness of Turkey attitude towards the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Given the Russian foreign policy of “the sphere of influence”, any challenge, namely, external intervention to “the near abroad” would antagonize Russia. So, in part, for the sake of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Turkey risked a presumable Turkish-Russian confrontation in this sense. Finally, following these events, Turkey closed its borders and put an embargo on Armenia thereby terminated its diplomatic relations since then.

In Chapter Three, Turkey-Azerbaijan relations primarily focused on the peace process of Minsk Group, the cooperation between the two countries in the fields of military under the aegis of NATO, and economic and cultural aspects of the relations and their effects on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. In the short-run, the pan-Turkist policy and a quick destruction of the links with regional powers, Russia and Iran rendered a disaster for Azerbaijan which was also suffering from a long-lasting territorial dispute with Armenia. Regarding the drawbacks of Elchibey period in that sense, Heydar Aliyev reserving strong centralized leadership within the state, by means of “multi-vectoral” policy he had adopted, managed to prevent domestic and external threats to some extent. In line with his multi-directional security policy, he welcomed the cooperation with the West through NATO, OSCE and so on, at the same time, for the purpose of political thaw, he joined the CIS. Bearing in mind, although Heydar Aliyev initially distanced from Turkey by leaving pro-Turkish stance of Azerbaijan, the move mainly stemmed from his pragmatic policy mentioned. For Turkey and Azerbaijan as the security issue poses a great importance, the two states supported each other through international organizations. In this respect, Turkey backs Azerbaijan in its integration into Western community. Thus Azerbaijan would have a voice in expressing itself in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict thereby would gain international support for the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in its favor. In this framework, one of the most protracted organizations is

the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) which has been a key regional and institutional structure since its foundation in 1992. As well as economic perspectives, the organization also brings the security issue foreground. Secondly, signing membership to NATO's Partnership for Peace Plan (PfP) in 1994, Azerbaijan had a new dimension as being a part of a Euroatlantic structure which served as one of the primary channels to build military and security ties between Azerbaijan and the West. In this respect, Turkey plays vitally important role in materializing military assistance to Azerbaijan in the framework of the Council on Military Cooperation. Finally, it bears to mention that Minsk Group which was established within the OSCE in 1992 holds a vital importance. As a member of the group, Turkey has always contributed to works of Minsk Group to defend the interests of Azerbaijan. Regarding this, in Lisbon Summit in 1996, Turkey was highly effective in issuing of a notice on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Given the international law of treaties which set forth the territorial integrity of a state as a priority rather than self-determination, the unilateral independence of the region is not binding without the consent of the state, i.e. Azerbaijan. In this respect, in accordance with the international treaties, Turkey promotes Azerbaijan's stance on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and emphasizes the fact that the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

In Chapter Four, the energy factor and its effects on Turkey-Azerbaijan axis were evaluated in a way that Azerbaijan's global profile as an energy hub has also spectacular influence on Turkey-Azerbaijan relations. Emerging as a vitally important state that owns vast energy resources and as a transport corridor between Europe and Central Asia enhances Azerbaijan's geo-strategic importance on international level. According to 2009 data by the Oil and Gas Journal, Azerbaijan's proven crude oil reserves are about 7 billion barrels. Bearing in mind, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline which was inaugurated in May 2005 in Sangachal, has the capacity of 1 million bbl/d and the majority of Azerbaijan oil exports pass through it. The second pipeline -Baku-Novorossiysk-exports oil approximately 29.000 bbl/d and the other Baku-Supsa pipeline has an estimated capacity of 145.000 bbl/d of oil. In addition, according to data given in 'Country Analysis Brief' Azerbaijan has proven natural gas reserves of about 30 trillion cubic feet as of 2009. As a natural gas field in Azerbaijan, the new Shah Deniz by which Azerbaijan has become a net exporter of natural gas is claimed to be one of the world's largest natural gas field discoveries. In addition, there are other promising projects that

would increase Azerbaijan's status globally. Regarding this, in this chapter, the staunchest alliance of Turkey and Azerbaijan in terms of energy dimension and its effects on the relations were analyzed.

Another issue bears to mention related to the chapter is the pragmatic policy of Azerbaijan that designates multi-directional security paradigm. In this context, the US and Azerbaijan cooperated on war on terror after the September eleven events in line with the increasing primacy of security issue of the US policy. Under NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan and Wider Middle East, Azerbaijan contributed as granting its air bases to the flights. In parallel to peace operations, Azerbaijan's contingent that served within Turkish military since 2002 for ISAF (NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan) was doubled in 2007. More importantly, in the framework of the Individual Partnership Action Plan adopted in 2005, in 2008 and the draft that was signed in 2011 for the third PfP, the process for the integration of Azerbaijan into the Alliance gained momentum in the context of "road map" which involves military and civic military reforms. To sum up, sharing the mutual interests, in terms of the security perception, Turkey promotes the stability and sovereignty of the South Caucasian States, namely, Azerbaijan. Aside from bilateral relations, Turkey also serving as a member state of NATO, contributes to Azerbaijani military reforms and defense planning. Bearing in mind, against the security threats, Turkey has adopted common action with Azerbaijan.

Thirdly, the chapter pays special importance to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict from the perspective of Turkey-Armenian axis and their outcomes. Armenia-Turkey relations which halted in 1993 by Turkey's closing borders as a reaction to Armenian aggression and its occupation of the Nagorno Karabakh, the disruption of diplomatic relations along with the long-lasting blockade have existed since then. Apart from the Karabakh conflict as a major factor, the already existed animosity due to the "genocide" issue which originally derived from the loss of Armenians lives during the First World War in the Ottoman Empire cast a shadow on Armenia-Turkey relations. However, as of 2001, in line with the EU accession talks and the foreign policy of Turkey based on "zero problem" with neighboring states, Justice and Development Party took initiatives to normalize the relations with Armenia. In turn, the closure of borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey worsened Armenian economy along with impeding economic returns of the giant energy projects that Georgia and Turkey enjoy. In the background, balancing Russian influence, with the

enhancement of its economy, Armenia would be able to remove its burden and connect with Europe. In this respect, the five-day Russian-Georgian war in 2008 has two dimensions that in the aftermath of the war, the vulnerability of the Armenian economy came to surface as it depends on the transit routes via Georgia, secondly, in terms of the security paradigm, the war accelerated the normalization process. Subsequently, Turkey and Armenia signed the protocols which designate the opening of the borders if the parliaments of each party ratifies. However, given the reason of the closure of borders with Armenia, Azerbaijan responded to the protocols with harsh statement as they did not include the resolution of the Karabakh conflict as a precondition for opening the borders. In this sense, the ratification of the protocols suspended to an indefinite future. The process strained the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey until the agreements were signed between the two countries respectively in 2010 and 2012. From the point of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations in this respect, the chapter makes emphasis on the primary importance of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Along with advantages from many aspects, opening the borders with Armenia would mainly contribute to the geo-strategic importance of Turkey. More importantly, given the resurgent policy of Russia, opening the borders would decrease the Russian dominance over the region. In this sense, being the biggest obstacle to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict preserves its primary importance and is perceived as a common problem by Turkey and Azerbaijan. In broader perspective, due to the security gap that emanates from the ongoing conflict, the entire region faces the threats of crime, illegal trafficking and high levels of migration. Given its proximity to the South Caucasus, Turkey undoubtedly promotes the stability and the peaceful settlement of the conflicts especially the Nagorno Karabakh dispute which is the most pressing obstacle to the stability of the entire region.

All in all, in this thesis, the priority of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan-Turkey relations is analyzed. Contrary to the views of some scholars who claim that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has become relatively less important vis-à-vis the economic and energy issues in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey, this thesis argues that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict still maintains its centrality in the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

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APPENDIX

TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜFen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☒Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐**YAZARIN**

Soyadı : EFE

Adı : ALMULA

Bölümü : AVRASYA ÇALIŞMALARI (EURASIAN STUDIES)

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : THE NAGORNO KARABAKH CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE
RELATIONS BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND TURKEY
.....

..

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora



1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın. ☒
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.) ☐
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.) ☐

Yazarın imzası

Tarih 11 Ekim 2012