

# ARMENIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: BASIC PARAMETERS OF THE TER-PETROSIAN AND KOCHARIAN ERA

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## 1. Introduction

Armenia became independent in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Unlike some other former Soviet Republics, in Armenia there was a movement, which was eager for independence and struggled for it during the process to lead the independent Republic of Armenia.

On 31<sup>st</sup> of January 1991, Armenia's Supreme Soviet voted to boycott all actions taken by Moscow. As a result Armenia boycotted the Union referendum, which took place on 17<sup>th</sup> of March 1991.<sup>1</sup> Armenia showed her will for independence even earlier. The Armenian Pan-National Movement (ANM), whose roots back to the Karabakh Committee, played a crucial role in the independence process. Levon Ter-Petrosian, who was one of the leaders of the Karabakh Committee and the ANM, became the first President of the Republic of Armenia.

Armenia's foreign policy was dominated by the developments of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its impacts. Besides the conflict, Armenia's relations with its neighbours and Russia, the successor of the Soviet Union, was Armenian administrations' priority in conducting Armenian foreign policy.

In this article, the basic parameters of Armenian foreign policy will be analysed in the periods of Armenia's two presidents. In this context differences and similarities of Ter-Petrosian's and Kocharian's foreign policy and Armenia's strategic priorities will be discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict Causes And Implications*, (London: Preager, 1998), p. 40. In contrast to Armenia 92 % voted yes for the new Union Treaty in Azerbaijan.

## 2. Armenia's Foreign Policy In The Ter-Petrosian Era

Levon Ter-Petrosian was elected as the first President of Armenia on 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1991. He graduated from the Oriental Studies Department of Yerevan State University in 1968. He completed his postgraduate studies at the Leningrad Oriental Studies Institute. Ter-Petrosian became well known in Armenian politics with his leadership of the Karabakh Committee, which aimed to put Nagorno-Karabakh under the jurisdiction of Armenia. He was arrested together with other members of the Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1988. In 1989, he was elected as a member of the Board of the ANM and then he became the Chairman of the Board.<sup>2</sup> When Ter-Petrosian became the President of the Republic of Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was the major issue in Armenian foreign policy. Before discussing Armenia's Karabakh policy under his presidency, factors, which affected Armenia's foreign policy orientation and decision making process will be discussed.

Being a land lock state and the lack of natural resources Armenia cannot be considered as one of the strategically important regional states. Armenia's economic progress and political stability depended on its ability to establish good relations with its neighbours and to manage to get economic aid from outside. However, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenia's policy towards it affected Armenia's relations with its neighbours and also the regional stability. Russia played an important role in Armenia's foreign policy. As it will be discussed below, although both Ter-Petrosian and Kocharian tried to reduce Armenia's dependency on Russia, they were not successful and Armenia became Russia's client state. Relations with the US were also important for Armenia, particularly for its economy, since Armenia became the second largest recipient of the US aid on per-capita basis after Israel.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.president.am/eng/folder>

<sup>3</sup> Between 1992-1996 Armenia received 350 million US Dollars aid from the USA. Svante O. Cornell, 'Undeclared War', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 20, No. 4, Fall, 1997, p. 7

**The Armenian diaspora and the diaspora parties are forces, which try to influence Armenian foreign policy and they were in conflict with Ter-Petrosian during his presidency.**

Armenia has presidential system and the President appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister and the President can also dissolve the National Assembly and designate special elections consulting with the National Assembly's President and Prime Minister.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it can be argued that Armenia has a very strong presidential system. Also in terms of foreign policy making the President appears to be the most powerful figure and shapes Armenia's foreign policy. However, there are also forces, which influence Armenia's foreign policy making process and they might restrict the President's movement regarding foreign policy matters. The Armenian diaspora and the diaspora parties are forces, which try to influence Armenian foreign policy and they were in conflict with Ter-Petrosian during his presidency. Besides organized diaspora groups, individual diaspora members played an important role in Armenia's foreign policy. Particularly at the beginning of the independence of Armenia, there was severe shortage of skilled foreign policy personnel and specialist. In that atmosphere diaspora Armenians took part in the foreign policy making process. For example, Gerard Libaridian, who was born in Beirut and is a US citizen, was a senior presidential adviser to Ter-Petrosian and he has been a key architect of Armenian foreign policy and played an important role during the negotiations for the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. Rafii Hovanissian, who was the first Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the present Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian are also diaspora members.<sup>5</sup>

### **2.1. Foreign Policy of the ANM And Ter-Petrosian**

Ter-Petrosian was aware of the fact that land-locked Armenia needed to establish good relations with its neighbours for economic recovery and political stability. He described the aim of

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<sup>4</sup> Stephan H. Astourian, "From Ter-Petrosian To Kocharian: Leadership Change In Armenia", *Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series*, 2000-2001, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Hratch Tchilingirian, "Armenia's Foreign Relations", *Armenian News Network/Groong*, <http://groong.usc.edu/ro/ro-1997>

**Ter-Petrosian argued against putting genocide claims in the document of "Declaration of Independence of Armenia".**

his policy as normalization of Armenia's foreign policy. To reach this aim Armenia had to establish normal diplomatic relations with Turkey and Armenia also had to reach a certain understanding with Azerbaijan. Normalization of Armenia's relations with Turkey required to call off the genocide claims and to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. For the former, the ANM and Ter-Petrosian showed signs of taking steps. Ter-Petrosian argued against putting genocide claims in the document of "Declaration of Independence of Armenia". However, majority of deputies voted in favour of the paragraph, which stated that *"Republic of Armenia would support efforts to achieve international recognition of the Armenian Genocide"*.<sup>6</sup> Ter-Petrosian and the ANM came under heavy attack from the diaspora parties, the Armenian Revolutionary Front (Dashnaks-ARF) and the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADP-ADL). Besides these diaspora parties the Armenian Communist Party (ACP) also criticised Ter-Petrosian. These parties had also territorial ambitions and they inclined not to recognize territorial integrity of Armenia's neighbours like Turkey. For example a leader of the ADL stated that

*"We have always maintained that the territory of this Republic of Armenia is the nucleus of tomorrow's Greater Armenia. In this respect, we expect the newly formed government to commit itself to the restoration of our historic rights. More specifically, the new Republic must include in its on-going agenda the recognition of the Armenian genocide and our historic territorial claims by the international community."*<sup>7</sup>

Ter-Petrosian and the ANM had to confront with the strong opposition to implement their foreign policy, particularly regarding Armenian's relations with Turkey and Armenia's policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Ter-Petrosian aimed to normalize

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<sup>6</sup> Stephan H. Astourian, "From Ter-Petrosyan To Kocharian: Leadership Change In Armenia", *Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series*, 2000-2001, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Edmond Y. Azadian, "Address to the Parliament of Armenia: On Independence and the Future of the Republic", in Edmond Y. Azadian and Agop J. Hacikyan (eds.), *History On The Move: Views, Interviews and Essays On Armenian Issues*, Wayne State University Press, 2000, p. 6

**Although Ter-Petrosian expressed his will for normalization of Armenia's relations with Turkey, Armenia's policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict prevented any improvement in the relations between the two states.**

Armenia's relations with Turkey. Ter-Petrosian argued that Turkey did not pose any threat to Armenia and normalization of Armenia's relations with Turkey is beneficial for Armenia.<sup>8</sup> Ter-Petrosian's senior adviser Gerard Libaridian also argued that

*"... what if having normal diplomatic and economic relations with Turkey is in the interest of Armenia as well as*

*of Karabakh? Would not improved Armeno-Turkish relations weaken the Azerbaijani negotiating position, the rigidity of which is based on a policy of struggling the Armenian economy? Should the answer to these questions be positive... then the normalization of relations with Turkey would facilitate Armenia's role as a transit route of Caspian Sea hydrocarbon resources."*<sup>9</sup>

Although Ter-Petrosian expressed his will for normalization of Armenia's relations with Turkey, Armenia's policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict prevented any improvement in the relations between the two states. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started in 1988 before the independence of Armenia. When Armenia became independent in 1991, the Nagorno-Karabakh administration also declared "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic". Armenia's foreign policy was based on giving the impression that Armenia was not a part of the conflict and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was the internal affairs of Azerbaijan. Armenia did not recognize the "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic". Ter-Petrosian stated that:

*"We want to make every effort to ensure that the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh is not regarded as a conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is wrong to say that Armenia has territorial claims on Azerbaijan. But if we officially recognize the*

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<sup>8</sup> Shireen T. Hunter, *The Transcaucasus in Transition: Nation Building and Conflict*, Washington D.C. : Center For Strategic and International Studies, 1994, p. 30.

<sup>9</sup> Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood. Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, (Blue Crane Books, Watertown:1999), p. 116.

**Armenian foreign policy during Ter-Petrosian era was heavily criticized by the diaspora parties and Armenian diaspora.**

*'Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh', we could be accused of interference or even provocation.'*<sup>10</sup>

Despite Ter-Petrosian's effort to give the impression that Armenia had nothing to do with the conflict, it would not have been possible for Karabakh Armenians to occupy the territory of Azerbaijan without the support of Armenia. Especially after the Khocali massacre where 1000 Azerbaijani were killed, the government of Armenia was concerned about the possible international criticism and tried to hide its active support for Karabakh Armenians in the conflict. However, international observers indicated that Armenian military forces did take part in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.<sup>11</sup> Besides, the government of Armenia did not denounce her decision to consider Nagorno-Karabakh as a part of Armenia and Ter-Petrosian appointed Serge Sargisian as a Defence Minister in August 1993. Serge Sarkisian was a member of parliament in Armenia and Karabakh.<sup>12</sup>

Armenian forces' occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan made it impossible to normalize Turkey's relations with Armenia. Ter-Petrosian's aim to improve relations with Turkey contradicted his foreign policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. With his policy towards the conflict, Ter-Petrosian could not satisfy the diaspora and diaspora based parties either. Armenian foreign policy during Ter-Petrosian era was heavily criticized by the diaspora parties and Armenian diaspora. Diaspora involved the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through its efforts in the US. Armenian diaspora in the US played an important role in the US Congress' decision of Freedom Support Act section 907, prevented the US government from sending humanitarian assistance to Azerbaijan.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict Causes And Implications*, London: Preager, 1998, p. 70.

<sup>11</sup> *Azerbaijan: Seven Years of War* (Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, New York, 1994), 67-73

<sup>12</sup> Joseph R. Masih and Robert O. Krikorian (eds.), *Armenia at the Crossroads*, (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999) p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> See Kamer Kasım, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, Caspian Oil and Regional Powers", in Bülent Gökay (ed.), *The Politics of Caspian Oil*, (London: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 194-195. Kamer Kasım, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict From Its Inception To The Peace Process", *Armenian Studies*, June-July-August 2001, pp. 183-184.

**Besides diaspora arranged protest demonstrations against Ter-Petrosian in front of the Armenian embassies in some countries.**

Conflict between Ter-Petrosian and diaspora based parties, particularly the ARF, reached a new stage when Ter-Petrosian administration banned the ARF to operate in Armenia on 28th of December 1994.<sup>14</sup> After that all Dashnak organizations around the world started a campaign against the Ter-Petrosyan administration. The ARF could not participate in the 1995 elections. After the Presidential elections of 22nd of September 1996, Ter-Petrosian was re-elected as President of Armenia. Diaspora campaigned that the election was rigged by Ter-Petrosyan. This allegation affected Ter-Petrosian's image in the US. Besides diaspora arranged protest demonstrations against Ter-Petrosian in front of the Armenian embassies in some countries.<sup>15</sup>

This criticism substantially increased in 1996 when the peace process in the Nagorno-Karabakh problem entered a new stage. Peace process was conducted under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group. At the OSCE Lisbon Summit in December 1996 a set of principles was accepted which recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Following the Lisbon Summit, Minsk Group co-chairmen initiated a peace proposal, which called the withdrawal of all occupying Armenian armed forces from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas of Azerbaijan, and the return of all refugees to their homes.<sup>16</sup> Lisbon Summit was considered as a failure of Ter-Petrosian's foreign policy by the Armenian opposition. In 1997 OSCE Minsk Group made a new peace proposal, which was identified as 'step by step' solution for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. According to this proposal, Armenian forces first would withdraw some of the territories that they occupied outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region and then the process would enter the new phase. Ter-Petrosian gave the impression that he might agree

<sup>14</sup> See, Richard Giragosian, *Transcaucasus: A Chronology*, Washington: Armenian National Committee of America, 1992-1997.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph R. Masih and Robert O. Krikorian (eds.), *Armenia at the Crossroads*, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999, p.112-114.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Goble, "Caucasus: Analysis from Washington - Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict Risks Recognition" *RFE/RL*, 8 May 1998.

to the OSCE's proposal.<sup>17</sup> After that diaspora based parties put pressure on Ter-Petrosian and he resigned in 1998.<sup>18</sup>

The normalization of Armenia's relations with Turkey was one of the aims of Armenian foreign policy during the Ter-Petrosian era. However, Armenia's foreign policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was a major obstacle for the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey. Even during the peace process Armenia did not take necessary steps for the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. Armenian foreign policy makers faced difficulty to explain Armenia's Karabakh policy to the international community. While Armenia was supporting Karabakh Armenians during the conflict, the government of Armenia considered the conflict as an internal matter of Azerbaijan. Armenia's support and strong linkages with the Nagorno-Karabakh administration were obvious. Controversially, while Ter-Petrosian's Karabakh policy prevented normalization of Turkey's relations with Armenia, his same policy also attracted heavy criticism from diaspora and the diaspora based political parties, which were the main obstacle for the normalization of Armenia's relations with Turkey.

Ter-Petrosian was also not successful regarding the aim of reducing Armenian dependency on Russia. At the beginning of his presidency, for this objective Ter-Petrosian wanted to diversify Armenia's foreign relations and to establish good relations with the other regional states including Turkey. In fact the ANM's ideology was also against the dependency on Russia.<sup>19</sup> However, instability in the region, which was created mainly by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict increased Armenia's caution regarding its security and Armenia became even more depended on Russia in each passing year of the conflict. Armenia became a state where Russia could keep its military bases without any problem. With the agreement signed between Russia and Armenia on 30th of September 1992, Russian soldiers were deployed in Armenia's border with Turkey.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> 'Armenia Agrees In Principle to Karabakh Peace Plan', *RFE/RL Newswire* 1, 8 October 1997. 'Ter-Petrosyan Holds Press Conference', *Asbarez*, 4 October 1997.

<sup>18</sup> See Kamer Kasım, "Diasporanın Ermenistan Dış Politikasına Etkisi" (Diaspora's Effect on Armenia's Foreign Policy), *2023 Dergisi*, 15 Nisan 2002, pp. 42-46.

<sup>19</sup> Stephan H. Astourian, "From Ter-Petrosyan To Kocharian: Leadership Change In Armenia", *Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series*, 2000-2001, pp. 17-18.

<sup>20</sup> Rouben Adalian and Joseph Masih, (ed.), *Armenia and Karabagh Factbook*, Washington D.C.: Armenian Assembly of America, July 1996, p. 19-20.



Armenia's relations with Iran also played an important role in Armenian foreign policy. During the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, economic relations between Armenia and Iran were important for Armenia's economy. The main concern for Iran was the refugee problem, since during the climax of the conflict Azerbaijani refugees flooded to Iran from the territories, which was occupied by the Armenian forces. Like the other regional powers, Iran also tried to be a mediator in the conflict, though it was not successful. On 8th of May 1992, Rafsanjani, Ter-Petrosian and acting Azerbaijani President Yakup Mamedov came together and later an agreement was signed in Tehran according to which cease-fire would come into effect within one week. However, the Armenian occupation of Shusha ended the Iranian mediation and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister stated that Nagorno-Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan and Iran opposed to any change of borders.<sup>21</sup>

Political analyst Rasim Musabeyov blamed Russia for the failure of the Iranian mediation. He stated that

*"In 1992, while Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati was visiting Karabakh, a Russian motorized regiment, together with Armenian forces, committed the Khodjali massacre. Weeks later, on the very day Ter-Petrosyan and Mamedov signed a joint communiqué (on the need to restore stability in the region) in Tehran, Armenia seized Shusha with the help of Russia. This shows that Russia was not at all interested in letting Iran seriously mediate (in the peace talks) and strengthen its influence in the region."*<sup>22</sup>

Iran generally followed pragmatic policies towards Armenia. Although Iran supported Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, its economic relations with Armenia improved and Iran continued to be an important state for Armenia even after the cease-fire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

### **3. Armenia's Foreign Policy In the Kocharian Era**

After the Presidential elections took place in April 1998, Robert Kocharian became the President of the Republic of Armenia. He was the former "Prime Minister" of the "Nagorno-Karabakh

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<sup>21</sup> Gareth M. Winrow, "Azerbaijan And Iran", Alvin Z. Rubinstein and Oles M. Smolansky (eds), *Regional Power Rivalries In The Eurasia, Russia, Turkey, And Iran*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>22</sup> Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Caucasus: Iran Offers To Mediate In Nagorno-Karabakh Dispute", *RFE/RL*, 25 July 2001.

**Radical elements in Armenian politics tried to prevent any compromise, which would be beneficial for Armenia and for the regional stability as well.**

relations with Turkey. In fact, in the first year of his presidency, Kocharian did not want to come together with Haydar Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and he argued that Aliyev should contact with the Nagorno-Karabakh administration. Kocharian also put genocide claims against Turkey on the agenda. Moreover, Kocharian demanded the reduction of the number of the Turkish officials who worked as inspectors in the military stations in Armenia according to the CFE Treaty (Conventional Forces In Europe).<sup>24</sup> When Kocharyan became President, the ARF also was activated in Armenia.<sup>25</sup>

Contrary to his earlier stance regarding the peace process in the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, Kocharyan later met with Aliyev to discuss solution for the problem.<sup>26</sup> However, Kocharian's close ties with the Nagorno-Karabakh administration and increasing effect of diaspora on the Armenian politics were the main obstacles for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and the development of Armenia's relations with Turkey. Even the rumors that Kocharian bargained with Aliyev for the Armenian withdrawal of the territories which were occupied by the Armenian forces during the conflict caused reactions of the Nagorno-Karabakh administration and Yerkrpah, which is a political party established by the persons who fought in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.<sup>27</sup> Radical elements in Armenian politics tried to prevent any compromise, which would be beneficial for Armenia and for the regional stability as well. On 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1999, there was an

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Kocharyan was also a member of the Karabakh Committee and he was appointed as Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia in March 1997.

<sup>24</sup> BBC-SWB, 1 June 1998.

<sup>25</sup> Uğur Akinci, News Analysis, *Turkish Daily News*, 26 November 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Kocharyan and Aliyev came together to discuss the solution for the Nagorno-Karabakh problem 4-5 March 2001 in Paris and 3-7 April 2001 in Florida.

<sup>27</sup> Emil Danielyan, 'Kocharian's Karabakh Strategy Challenged By hard-Line Rivals, RFE/RL, Vol. 4, No. 34, Part 1, 17 February 2000.

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attack on the Armenian Parliament, where 8 members of the Parliament including Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and Speaker of the Parliament Karen Demirciyan were killed. This attack had also an effect on Armenian foreign policy.

Despite the fact that Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian was against Ter-Petrosian's Karabakh policy, he gave the impression that he was ready for compromise and Vazgen Sarkisian would be the person who might support Kocharian, in case Kocharian was ready for the settlement.<sup>28</sup> However, his assassination ended this possibility and it indicated the fact that violent nature of the Armenian politics pressured Armenian President in order to influence on his foreign policy.

During the Kocharian era the diaspora's impact on Armenia also increased. Diaspora parties, particularly the ARF, which was legalized by Kocharyan, started to play an important role. Diaspora and diaspora parties even interrupted Armenian administrations' opinion about the civilian initiative between the Turks and the Armenians. For example, Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission was established on 9th of July 2001 with 4 Armenian and 6 Turkish members.<sup>29</sup> The Armenian Foreign Ministry welcomed the establishment of the Commission. However, the ARF and Dashnaks' organizations in the diaspora were against the Commission, which affected the relations between the Armenian government and the ARF.<sup>30</sup> After diaspora's and Armenian political parties reaction against the Commission, Armenian Foreign Ministry changed its opinion about the Commission and distanced itself from the work of the Commission.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Gerard Libaridian, 'Armenia In The Wake of Assassination', BCSIA Documents, <http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/BCSIA/Library.nfs/pubs/ArmeniaTalk>, 8 November 1999

<sup>29</sup> For the details of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission See, Kamer Kasım, "Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission: A Missed Opportunity Opportunity", *Armenian Studies*, Issue 4, December 2001-January-February 2002, pp. 256-273. Kamer Kasım, "Türk-Ermeni Barışma Komisyonu: Kısa Süren Bir Diyalog Girişimi" (Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission: A Short-lived Attempt for Dialogue) *Stratejik Analiz*, Vol. 2, No. 22, February 2002, pp. 30-36.

<sup>30</sup> The ARF, which generally supported the government, voted against a bill about privatization of the electricity distribution network. Harut Sassounian, "President Kocharian Must Intervene to Prevent Further Damage by Turkish Commission", *California Courier Online*, 2 August 2001.

<sup>31</sup> "Foreign Ministry Respond Reconciliation Grouping", *Asbarez Online*, <http://www.Asbarez.com> 2 August 2001.

**Kocharian attended the celebration for the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the establishment of the NATO.**

Like his predecessor, Ter-Petrosian, Kocharian also tried to reduce Armenia's dependency on Russia. Strong relations with the US might provide the means to lessen the Russian influence on Armenia. Kocharian attended

the celebration for the 50th year anniversary of the establishment of the NATO. The celebrations were held in Washington, during NATO's operation in Kosovo when the relations were tense between Russia and the West.<sup>32</sup> Besides his aim to reduce the Russian influence on Armenia, Kocharian also had a reason from domestic politics in his foreign policy towards the US. The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), one of the biggest diaspora organizations in the US, was a strong supporter of Kocharyan and the ANCA tried to establish close ties between the US and Armenia. However, Russia's influence on Armenia continued and even increased with Putin's presidency in Russia. The main reason for this was the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and Russia's new national security doctrine. Armenia needed to normalize its relations with its neighbors in order to reduce Russia's influence. But the Nagorno-Karabakh problem prevented normalization of Armenia's relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Occupation of Azerbaijan's territories and situation of ceasefire without a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, created also insecurity in Armenia. Armenia's uncompromising stance in the dispute made it even more depended on Russia and Russian military stations on its territory. The idea that Russian support of Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh problem is indefinite is made Armenian administration not to consider other alternatives. Russia's new national security concept and Putin's idea to revive Russia's role in the Caucasus was also forced Armenia for close ties with Moscow.<sup>33</sup> Putin's visit to Armenia on 14-15 September 2001 and the agreements signed during the visit indicated the special relations between the two states.<sup>34</sup> Terrorist actions in the

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<sup>32</sup> Harry Tamrazian, 'Armenia Seeks Complementary In S Caucasus', *Asia Times online*, <http://www.atimes.com>, April 2000.

<sup>33</sup> Jyotsna Bakshi, 'Russia's National Security Concepts and Military Doctrines: Continuity and Change', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXIV, No. 7, pp. 1278-1281.

<sup>34</sup> For Putin's visit to Armenia See Vladimir Socor, 'Armenia's Reliance on Russia Increase After Putin's Visit', *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, Vol. VII, Issue 171, 19 September 2001. Nazmi Gül ve Gökçen Ekici,

US on 11th of September 2001 and its implications on the Caucasus region had also influence on Armenia and particularly Armenia's relations with Russia. After 11th of September, the US influence increased in the Caucasus and the US troops were stationed in Georgia. Moreover, Azerbaijan's relations with the US was also improved due to the Azerbaijan's support of the US's efforts against terrorism. These developments increased Armenia's importance for Russia in the Caucasus. Russia's military stations in Armenia stand as the major indicator of Russia's strategic role in the region.<sup>35</sup>

Armenia's relations with Iran continued to be important in economic terms for Armenia during the Kocharian era.<sup>36</sup> In the Kocharyan era, the main focus in Armenia's relations with Iran was the cooperation in the field of energy and trade. Kocharian's visit to Iran in December 2001 resulted in an agreement on softening the trade regime between the two states. The speeding up of the construction of Kajaran tunnel, which would provide the shortest route for Armenia-Iran gas pipeline, was also discussed during the Kocharyan's visit.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

Armenia joined the international community as one of the newly independent states in 1991. Since then she became a part of the regional instability in the Caucasus. Both Ter-Petrosian and Kocharian tried to break Armenia's dependency on Russia but they were unsuccessful in their efforts. Ter-Petrosian's foreign policy towards Turkey might be considered realistic in terms of Armenia's capacity and Armenia's need for political and economic stability. However, he was not successful and the reason for this

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"Stratejik Ortaklar Arasında Bir Sorun mu Var? Putin'in Ermenistan Ziyareti ve Moskova-Erivan İlişkileri", (Is There any Problem Between the Strategic Partners Putin's Visit to Armenia and Moscow-Yerivan Relations) *Stratejik Analiz*, Vol. 2, No. 19, November 2001, pp. 32-38.

<sup>35</sup> For the effect of the 11th of September terrorist actions on Russia's Caucasus policy see, Kamer Kasım, "11 Eylül Terör Eylemlerinin Rusya'nın Kafkasya Politikasına Etkisi", (Sept. 11 Terror Attacks's Effect on Russia's Caucasus Policy) *Selçuk Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 9, No. 3-4, 2001, pp. 53-64.

<sup>36</sup> Trade volume between Armenia and Iran was 80 million US Dollars in the first nine months of the year 2000. Iranian export to Armenia was 58 million US Dollars and Armenia's export to Iran was 22 million US Dollars. <http://www.azg.am/-RU/20020205/20020020503.shtml>

<sup>37</sup> "New Page In Armenian-Iranian Relation Opens, President Kocharian Says", AZG Armenian Daily, <http://www.azg.am/>, 240, 28 December 2001. Haroutiun Khachatryan, "Iran-Armenia Ties Look Promising, Though Obstacles Remain Steep", Eurasia Insight, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav022002.shtml>, 20 February 2002.

**While he was accused of being a dictator by the diaspora, Ter-Petrosian might have presented himself as a man of peace.**

was particularly the external factor, which influences the Armenian foreign policy, namely, Armenian diaspora. Another reason for his failure was Ter-Petrosian's lack of courage in terms of finding solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. If he took necessary steps for the solution, he might be able to curtail the influence of diaspora with the support from other regional states as well as the US. During the criticism against Ter-Petrosian, which was conducted by diaspora, particularly in the US, Ter-Petrosian's supporters were lack of "weapon" to defend him. While he was accused of being a dictator by the diaspora, Ter-Petrosian might have presented himself as a man of peace. However, he did not take initiative for the peace and he did not have enough courage either.

With Kocharian's election Armenian foreign policy showed the sign of change in terms of Armenian-Turkish relations and the peace process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Diaspora's support strengthened Kocaryan's hands in domestic politics as well as foreign policy. Despite his early attitude towards Turkey and peace negotiations of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, later Kocharian softened his line. Kocharian also met with Aliyev to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh. However, he is supported by radical elements and they put pressure on Kocharian not to compromise in Nagorno-Karabakh and also Armenia's relations with Turkey. It is difficult to expect that Armenia will take necessary steps for regional stability under Kocharyan because of the groups, which support him.

It would be Armenia's economic and political interest to normalize its relations with Turkey and other neighbors and to manage this Armenian administration should be free from the heavy influence of diaspora and other radical elements.