

Caucasus Institute Research Papers
3, June 2011



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**NAGORNO-KARABAKH:
THE PARADOXES OF STRENGTH
AND WEAKNESS IN AN
ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT**

Caucasus Institute
Yerevan • 2011

UDC 341: 32.001

Science editing by **Alexander Iskandaryan**
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Design and layout by “**Collage**” Ltd. / www.collage.am

Deriglazova, Larisa and Sergey Minasyan
NAGORNO-KARABAKH: THE PARADOXES OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS IN AN
ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT. Caucasus Institute Research Papers, # 3, June 2011. –
Yerevan: Caucasus Institute, 2011 – 104p.

This third CI Research Paper analyzes the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh from the standpoint of the concept and phenomenon of asymmetric conflict. The asymmetry of the conflict is rooted in the non-identical statuses of the principal parties to the conflict, and in the military and security aspects of the confrontation in the Azerbaijan-Nagorno-Karabakh-Armenia triangle. The asymmetry of the players' potential figured importantly during the military phase of the conflict in the first half of the 1990s and continues to be obvious in the current stage. By applying the concept of asymmetric conflict and analyzing the phenomenon of asymmetric conflict, the authors take a fresh look at the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and propose possible symmetric and asymmetric scenarios for its development. The paper is targeted to reach a broad range of readers as well as political scientists.

ISBN 978-99941-2-536-4

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This paper was published with the support of the EU and the Open Society Think Tank Fund

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INTRODUCTION

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is one in a series of ethno-political confrontations triggered by the demise of the Eastern Bloc and the USSR. In terms of formal logic, this conflict can be analyzed by applying the asymmetry concept, alongside conflicts in Kosovo, Transdnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. The conflict's asymmetry is manifested through the unequal statuses of the principal parties in conflict, whereby Azerbaijan is an internationally recognized sovereign state, while Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) is an unrecognized state entity which in the past was a part of Soviet Azerbaijan. In other words, we observe the phenomenon of an *asymmetric conflict* between unequal-status parties.

The asymmetry of the conflict is also related to the military strength of the actors in the Azerbaijan-Nagorno-Karabakh-Armenia triangle. The asymmetry of their potential figured prominently during the military phase of the conflict in the early 1990s, when, in full accordance with the theory of asymmetric conflict, the formally "weak side" (Nagorno-Karabakh), directly assisted by Armenia, defeated the numerically dominant side – Azerbaijan – whose army was several times larger than those of Karabakh and Armenia combined. This asymmetry of potential is again evident in the current stage of the unresolved conflict. The "no war, no peace" situation survives against the backdrop of a continuing arms race and the inability of the parties to change the existing *status quo* in the region.

The findings of several investigations and empirical observations demonstrate that at this moment in history, clashes between opponents of unequal status are considerably more frequent than "classical" interstate conflicts. Analyses of data on different armed conflicts further prove that in more than 80 percent of armed conflicts that have occurred since World War II, one of the parties was represented by a non-state actor or by an entity whose international legal status was not identical to the status of

its opponent. Incidentally, more than 75 percent of all armed conflicts were either internal conflicts or started as internal conflicts.¹ More and more often, the results of asymmetric collision interfere with the habitual expectation of a victory by the “strong,” or by the state that, in addition to all other factors, can rely on the legitimacy of resorting to force. The American political scientist Ivan Arreguin-Toft, for example, calculated that between 1800 and 2003, the stronger parties were victorious in 71.5 percent of asymmetric wars. However, comparing 50-years spans, he found a significant decrease, from 88.2 percent in the first half-century to 48.4 percent in the last.² Moreover, the trend was on the rise after the WWII.

An interdisciplinary scientific journal, *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, has been published in the US since 2008. The editors defined the subject matter of their journal as seeking “to contribute to understanding and ameliorating conflict between states and non-state challengers,” which is the “predominant form of conflict in the world today, and will be the predominant source of violent conflict in the twenty-first century.”³ The concept of asymmetric conflict is actively used for the purposes of military-strategic analysis in the US, Israel, UK, Australia, and Canada. Politicians attempt to take into account the logic of the struggle between asymmetric adversaries when making decisions in response

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1. See Deriglazova, Larisa V. *Asymmetric Conflicts: Equation with Many Unknowns*, Tomsk, 2009, pp.71-72 (in Russian). Calculations have been performed using two databases: the database on armed conflicts compiled by the University of Uppsala, Sweden, in collaboration with the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Norway (Uppsala Conflict Data Program – http://www.pcr.uu.se/publications/UCDP_pub/Conflict_List_1946-2006.pdf); and the database of national and international conflicts created within the COSIMO project at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, led by Professor Frank Pfetich (COSIMO 1. Database on National and International Conflicts from 1945 to 1999 – http://www.hiik.de/en/kosimo/data/codemanual_kosimo1b.pdf).
 2. Arreguin-Toft, Ivan. *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, Cambridge; N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.18, 3–4.
 3. “Editors’ Welcome to the Inaugural Issue of Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict (DAC).” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, Vol.1, # 1, March 2008, p.1.

to international and domestic conflicts, in terms of the forms, scale, control and legitimization of the use of force, while experts in the field of conflict resolution pay special attention to the specifics of resolving contradictions between asymmetric opponents. For their part, military theorists work on integrating the tools of asymmetric conflict into the classical science of military strategy.

By applying *the concept of asymmetric conflict* and studying the *phenomenon of asymmetric conflict*, we can better understand the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and make more accurate predictions concerning the future of this ethno-political conflict along the lines of a symmetric or asymmetric scenario. Another factor making this conflict particularly interesting for researchers is that it is superimposed by another phenomenon that occurs in international political and legal practice and that has been actively discussed in political science in recent decades: the phenomenon of unrecognized but *de facto* existing states, which is also related to the relationship between status and sovereignty in the post-bipolar and post-Westphalian world.

CHAPTER 1

A BIT OF THEORY: THE CONCEPTS OF ASYMMETRY AND ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT

1.1. THE CONCEPT OF ASYMMETRY

The concepts of symmetry and asymmetry are fairly common in science but not in the humanities and social sciences, where the need for them has only arisen in recent decades. Asymmetry is defined as “lack of symmetry, balance, equality, harmony,” or a “relationship between two entities that have no common measure (measure for comparison).” In logic, “asymmetry” describes “a non-interchangeable relationship between two entities in which the former relates to the latter in a way in which the latter cannot relate to the former” (e.g. father and son).

For centuries, symmetry was seen as a manifestation of harmony, balance, order and norms in the outside world and in scientific knowledge; asymmetry, on the other hand, was regarded as a manifestation of disorder and anomaly. In the 19th century, French scientist Louis Pasteur, a physicist, chemist and microbiologist, proved that asymmetry was in fact the norm, constituting one of the main features of nature. Now seen as a special way in which organic and inorganic worlds are organized, the principles of asymmetry gradually became elements of arts and humanities.

In social science, the concept of asymmetry is most often applied to various levels of conflict, from confrontation between small groups to global collision. Christopher Mitchell, a leading expert in conflict management, emphasized that “the concept of asymmetry embraces far more than the customary conception of a ‘power imbalance’ between parties of a conflict.” He defined asymmetry as a “dynamic as well as multidimensional phenomenon, consisting of a differential distribution

of relevant resources and salient characteristics between adversaries in a conflict system.”⁴

Political scientists, lawyers and sociologists use the concepts of symmetry and asymmetry to analyze relations between subjects in a particular system, whether social, political or legal. This approach assumes that asymmetry is an essential characteristic of the relations between the interactive participants; these relations can be equal vs. subordinate, horizontal vs. vertical, pluralistic vs. hierarchical, etc. Typically, struggle is initiated by the subordinate party, aimed at changing the situation and achieving symmetry/equality, while the actions of the dominant party are aimed at restoring “order” and maintaining the status of asymmetry/hierarchy.

Analysts use the concept of asymmetry to characterize individual elements of a conflict⁵ or to treat a phenomenon as a combination of asymmetric characteristics within a holistic approach. The abovementioned journal, *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, emphasizes the statuses and resources of the adversaries as determinants of the phenomenon, and analyzes the opponents’ behavior from a psychological perspective. Political and military analysis gives priority to tactical and strategic aspects of asymmetry.⁶

We can identify and emphasize the consistent use and application of *the concept of asymmetry* within conflict analysis in several ways, including:

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4. *Cooperative Security: Reducing Third World Wars*. Eds. William Zartman and Victor A. Kremenjuk. N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.26.
 5. Conflict theory singles out the structural (stable) and dynamic (changeable) characteristics of those conflict situations which affect the results of the struggle. The structural elements include participants, their spheres of interaction, the causes of conflict, nature of the interaction and consequences of conflict. Characteristics regarded as dynamic are the duration and intensity of conflict interaction between the parties, as well as strategies and tactics.
 6. See, e.g. the web portal of the Center for Asymmetric Warfare (CAW), Naval Postgraduate School, CA, (<http://www.cawnps.org>).

Analyzing confrontation between adversaries having unequal status within one legal system – the politico-legalistic approach;

Characterizing the inequality of the opponents' power and resources – the traditional approach;

Explaining the political defeat of the dominant opponent in armed conflict – the paradoxical approach;

Elaborating the tactics and strategies which compensate for inequality between the opponents' power and resources – the tactical and strategic approach;

Identifying the parties' non-identical interests and attitudes to conflict – the subjectivist approach;

Assessing the parties' motivation to maintain confrontation – the mobilization approach, or psychological approach.

The common aspect of conflicts that are analyzed in terms of the *concept of asymmetry* is found in terms of the *incommensurate strengths and statuses of the opponents*, and the “system” can be understood as a state or a system of international relations within the existing hierarchies of power and capabilities of different countries.

1.2. PHENOMENON/THEORY OF ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT

It is important to distinguish between the *phenomenon of asymmetric conflict* and the application of *the concept of asymmetry* while analyzing the clash between opponents of unequal power and status, especially given the fact that in this paper we apply both concepts. The concept of *asymmetry* was used for analyzing *relations* between parties of unequal international legal and political status (Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan). The phenomenon of *asymmetric conflict* helps to reveal the *causes of victory and defeat* in the military phase of the conflict, and to understand the regularities of the continuing power and military confrontation of parties with unequal power and resources (Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia). At the same time, both the *concept of asymmetry*

and the *phenomenon of asymmetric conflict* reflect the commonly shared features of confrontations between opponents with significantly unequal status and power.

An integrated model of *asymmetric conflict* was suggested in the mid-1970s in order to identify the causes of political defeat suffered by developed countries in Third World wars in general, and the war fought by the US in Vietnam in particular.⁷ Political scientist Andrew Mack defined asymmetric conflict as the “political but not military defeat of great powers against weaker opponents,” when “conventional military superiority is not merely useless, but may actually be counter-productive.”⁸ Mack proposed a theory of asymmetric conflict based on a set of asymmetries which dictate the course and completion of wars of this sort. The main asymmetry is the resources-and-power asymmetry which often accompanies the status asymmetry. These basic asymmetries stimulate the nonlinear development of events through asymmetric forms of struggle (e.g. protracted guerrilla wars employing terrorist actions). Nonlinear development of events helps to intensify the asymmetry in the relationship between the warring parties (mobilization capabilities) and in the attitudes towards the conflict (the will to fight and win the war), all of which lead to the political – and not necessarily military – defeat of the stronger adversary and the victory of the weaker side (the paradoxical manifestation of asymmetry).

Andrew Mack, stressing the holistic approach, applied Aristotle’s axiom in his argument that “the asymmetries described in this paper – in the interests perceived to be at stake, in mobilization, in intervention capabilities, in ‘resource power’ and so forth – are abstracted from their context for the sake of analytical clarity. But the whole remains greater than the sum of its parts, and it is the conflict *as a whole* which must

7. The US in Vietnam, France in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Indochina, the United Kingdom in Cyprus and Aden, the Netherlands in Indonesia.

8. Mack, Andrew. “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict.” *World Politics*, Vol.27, # 2, 1975, p. 175-179.

be studied in order to understand its evolution and outcome.”⁹ *The phenomenon of asymmetric conflict*, as originally defined by Mack, stands for the political defeat of a strong opponent, something which becomes a certainty only after the end of the confrontation. However, policy and strategy analysts use the *concept of asymmetric conflict* to assume the possibility of illogical developments, which run contrary to existing military, resource and numerical strength, or status-related dominance of one of the parties. In the latter case, the theory of asymmetric conflict loses some of its obvious paradoxical sharpness because in reality, any conflict inevitably includes elements of inequality of the adversaries and can be characterized as asymmetric.

In view of the paradoxical results of asymmetric conflicts, however, the concept of asymmetric conflict is used as a set of asymmetric characteristics of the conflict next in importance to the basic ones – the resources-and-power and status asymmetries. The weaker opponent will always strive to upset the balance of power and relations within the system in favor of increasing its own power and resources, of enhancing status and, most importantly, of using its adversary’s weakness and vulnerabilities, of which, by definition, the stronger opponent has more. It is this fact that needs to be taken into account when analyzing specific examples of armed conflicts between asymmetric antagonists in order to understand the logic of the confrontation and to predict its results.

1.3. FACTORS LEADING TO VICTORY OR DEFEAT IN AN ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT

Contemporary military theorist Martin Van Creveld, discussing the expansion of the perimeters of asymmetrical or, in his terminology, “subconventional” wars, insisted that “from Peru to Azerbaijan, and from Philippines to the territories occupied by Israel, subconventional

9. Mack, Andrew. “Why Big Nations Lose ...,” p.188.

war – often waged by a handful of ragged men and women – is steadily marching from one triumph to the next.”¹⁰

In his analysis of the evolution and conclusion of the Vietnam War, Andrew Mack proposed several hypotheses about the causes of victory or defeat in asymmetric wars:

1. A weak opponent wins because of an unbending will to win, and the loss of such will by the more powerful opponent. Reflecting the dichotomy of the “small war” waged by the more powerful opponent vs. the “total war” waged by the weaker side, this hypothesis draws attention to the differences between states and political elites in their ability to mobilize society's resources (human, material and intangible) for achieving victory, in proportion to the importance placed by society on the war.
2. The victory is the result of fatigue of a strong opponent and unwillingness to continue to expend resources and suffer loss of lives in the name of victory. Such a victory is not a pure military victory but a result of exhaustion of the stronger player, or, to quote Prussian general and theorist Carl von Clausewitz, a strategy aimed at achieving a “negative political aim.”
3. Victory by a weak opponent comes from predominant use of asymmetric strategies and tactics: a) guerrilla war, b) acts of terrorism, and c) protracted war.
4. Victory results from non-military factors; an important place among these is held by anti-war public opinion in the more powerful country, and by broadcast media that cover and discuss the course of the war.
5. The defeat of the stronger opponent is a consequence of sharp discords among the political elite and the strengthening stance of anti-war groups, which play an especially prominent role during political elections.

10. Van Creveld, Martin. “Technology and War II: Postmodern War?” *The Oxford History of Modern War*. Edited by Charles Townsend. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p.359.

6. How the struggle unfolds is largely determined by the actions of external forces, rather than by the participants themselves. This may include interference by other countries, or the provision of military, technical and/or economic assistance to one party.
7. The defeat of the stronger side is caused by the cumulative effect of pressure and condemnation by a significant portion of the international community.

In each of the above hypotheses, the outcome can assume one of two opposite values: defeat of the stronger party or political victory of the weaker party in the armed conflict. The very fact of defeat or victory is not always easy to identify but, in most cases, one can achieve this by comparing the goals pursued by the opponents and the situation in which they find themselves when the conflict ends.

The following can be mentioned as factors leading to the defeat of the strong adversary:

1. Absence/loss of will to fight and win.
2. Protracted war without end or clearly definable success.
3. Great complexity in organizing resistance to guerrilla or terrorist forces, or classical warfare in mountainous, jungle or forest-covered terrain against well-armed mobile units of the regular army (including personnel continually recruited by universal conscription) of the weaker side, which possesses attributes of statehood.
4. Negative public opinion and elite attitudes towards the war (public opinion polls, deserters, role played by the media, etc.).
5. Discord within the political elite coming to the surface during elections.
6. Other strong opponents deciding to support the weaker opponent.
7. Negative attitude of the international community toward the war, disapproval of the stronger opponent, condemnation of the purposes and means of warfare.¹¹

11. A graphic representation of the model is given in *Appendix 1*.

Carl von Clausewitz identified indicators of victory/defeat in his famous book “On War” written in the first quarter of the 19th century.¹² He was convinced that the goal of any war is to achieve *political ends and that the use of force is but a means to achieving these ends. Indicators of victory/defeat in a war include the following three elements:*

- “1. The greater loss of the enemy in physical power.
2. In moral power.
3. His open avowal of this by the relinquishment of his intentions.”

Clausewitz *emphasized that “the only real evidence of the victory” is the “the giving up the contest” because the data “on losses were never exact, seldom truthful, and in most cases, full of intentional misrepresentations” while “of the loss in moral forces there is no reliable measure.”*¹³

*Consequently, the defeat in the war can be defined as the inability to achieve the formulated goals and unilateral cessation of hostilities. The ongoing war fought by the US in Iraq in many ways proves that the theory of asymmetric conflict is correct.*¹⁴ *The continuing war waged by the international coalition in Afghanistan, just as a similar war initiated by the Soviet Union two decades earlier or the United States’ Vietnam war, are examples in the same category.*

Clausewitz wrote about “the *positive* and *negative* character of the political end.” He pointed out that victory in a war was a product of “two factors which cannot be separated, namely, the sum of available means and the strength of the will.” The failure to achieve a decisive victory – a *positive political action* – can be compensated for by the drive to undermine the will to win through “the wearying out of the enemy” – a *negative political action*. Clausewitz listed the following “*peculiar means of influencing the probability of the result without destroying the enemy’s*

12. The book was written in the 1820s but first published after von Clausewitz’s death in 1832.

13. Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War (Book VI, Defence)*. The Complete Translation by Colonel J.J. Graham, published by N.Trubner. London, 1873.

14. Deriglazova, L.V. “Perfect Failure: the U.S. War in Iraq Through the Prism of the Theory of Asymmetric Conflict.” *Svobodnaya Mysl’*, # 3, 2010, pp.5–16 (in Russian).

army,” namely, “expeditions which have a direct connection with political views”: “the complete subjugation of the enemy is not essential in every case, ... the destruction of the enemy's military force, the conquest of enemy's provinces, the mere occupation of them, the mere invasion of them—enterprises which are aimed directly at political objects—lastly a passive expectation of the enemy's blow, are all means which, each in itself, may be used to force the enemy's will just according as the peculiar circumstances of the case lead us to expect more from the one or the other.”¹⁵

The model of asymmetric conflict introduces a matrix of factors *which undermine the will and fighting spirit of the stronger opponent and make him give up the fight, against his own interests*. The weaker party may be represented by various actors: an unrecognized state or a state institution, a political group or movement, a dependent territory or terrorist group. The common element of all these categories is that they confront regular armed forces of the state and pursue a specific political goal; the goal, as a rule, is to create an independent political entity – a state or autonomy within the existing state.

Therefore, the main factors that make it possible for the weaker to defeat the stronger include:

- unflinching will to win which manifests itself in the capacity for the mass mobilization of resources for a long-duration fight;
- protracted war as a manifestation of “non-defeat” in the struggle against the dominant opponent;
- predominant use of guerrilla and terrorist strategies and tactics, or warfare in mountainous, jungle or forest-covered terrain by highly mobile units of regular or semi-regular troops of the weaker opponent which has the status, attributes and the capabilities of a state actor;
- support by the population (active support of guerrilla and terrorist groups, participation in the armed struggle);

15. Clausewitz, C. *On War*.

- consolidation of the political elite and society around the struggle, cessation of domestic disputes for the unified effort to fight the enemy;
- material, military, technical or other assistance from external forces, first of all from great powers;
- appeals to the international community to support one's just cause and to condemn the enemy's immoral aims and methods of warfare.¹⁶

On the whole, the military phase of the 1992-1994 conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh complies with the theory and logic of asymmetric conflicts; there were, however, specific factors that contributed to victory. One of these can be defined as inverse asymmetry in the quality of the military training of personnel. In 2010, the Rand Corporation published a monograph "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency"¹⁷ plus an additional volume with detailed results of the study, including a brief characterization of thirty anti-insurgent operations.¹⁸ Using case studies and comparative and qualitative methods, US experts examined the most significant asymmetric conflicts from 1978 to 2008. The analysts expressed the opinion that the Karabakh conflict had its own quite specific attributes and features.

Unlike many other local conflicts of recent time, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) – the formally "weak party" in the Karabakh

16. A graphic representation of the model is given in *Appendix 2*.

17. Currently, the term "COunterINsurgency operations" (COIN) is often used as a synonym of asymmetric warfare. Along with this term one also encounters the terms "guerrilla," "small war," "irregular warfare," "unconventional wars" etc. Units of regular army do take part in anti-insurgent operations, in non-direct forms of warfare against non-state adversaries. For details see: Deriglazova, Larisa V. "On the Evolution of the Phenomenon of Guerrilla Warfare." *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*. # 4, April 2009, pp.95–103 (in Russian).

18. Paul, Christopher, Colin P. Clarke and Beth Grill. *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers. Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2010; Paul, Christopher, Colin P. Clarke and Beth Grill. *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers. Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2010.

conflict (numerical strength- and status-wise) – has demonstrated during combat clashes its superiority over the “strong party” (Azerbaijan) in the preparation and operational capability of its troops. Experts from the US RAND Corporation pointed out that, “the case of Nagorno-Karabakh is interesting because the insurgents were the more professional, better-trained and better-equipped force while the COIN forces were more of a rag-tag group of fighters.” The authors also remarked that one possible explanation of this situation may lie in the fact that “in terms of skills, the scales were tipped from the beginning. Because of discrimination against Muslims in the Soviet army, Azerbaijanis were likely to have held positions as builders or cooks. Conversely, there were thousands of Armenians in the officer corps and with frontline training.”¹⁹

Another explanation is that this situation stemmed from specific features of the process of state-building and formation of military institutions in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite the presence of incomplete attributes of statehood during the Soviet period, Azerbaijan had no significant institutional military power resources, not any experience of repelling the Karabakh forces at the beginning of the active military phase of the conflict. On the other hand, by the time the regular Azerbaijani army was formed (approximately in the summer of 1992), Nagorno-Karabakh had already formed a semi-regular army and had extensive experience of opposition to Soviet troops which, from the moment they were brought to the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) in 1988 and roughly until the fall of 1991, mainly supported by the Azerbaijani side and its communist authorities.

19. Opt. cit., *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers. Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*. p.224–225.

1.4. INTERSTATE CONFLICT: TAKING ASYMMETRY INTO ACCOUNT

An incentive to take into account the specificity of asymmetric conflict was evident in international politics throughout the second half of the 20th century. To begin with, states attempted to modify the strategy of military operations, taking into account the prospects of confronting a relatively weak opponent. There was a tendency towards a more cautious and incremental use of military power, avoiding direct military interventions in the internal conflicts of foreign countries, and towards a more vigorous use of non-military pressure.²⁰

Approaches to negotiations also had to be adjusted. Attitudes to the status aspect of negotiations had to become more flexible: it is easier for parties to sit down at the negotiation table on the basis of formal equality.²¹ More attention was now devoted to the interests of the weaker party and to seeking a “balance of interests” of the parties in conflict. On one hand, these changes reflected the experience of failed negotiations conducted “from the standpoint of dominance,” and on the other hand, they resulted from using methods of mathematical simulation. One of the fundamental ideas of the game theory approach was that “resolution of the conflict is possible *if and only if* its participants are in symmetrical relationship to each other.”²²

Leading American expert William Zartman holds that “studies of asymmetric negotiations without exception have focused on various

20. See e.g.: Kremenyuk, V.A. “Modern-times International Conflicts: Problems of Management.” *Mezhdunarodnye Protsessy*, # 1, 2003 (in Russian); Deriglazova L.V. “Asymmetry Paradox in an International Conflict.” *Mezhdunarodnye Protsessy*, # 3, 2005, c.89 (in Russian).

21. See Lebedeva, M.M. *Political Settlement of Conflicts. Approaches, Solutions and Technologies*. MOSCOW: Aspekt Press. 1997 (in Russian); Fisher, Roger and William L. Ury. *Getting to Yes. Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. NY, London: Penguin Books. 1991.

22. Svetlov, V.A. *Analyst Conflict. Tutorial*. St. Petersburg: “Rostok” Ltd, 2001, pp.304 (in Russian).

ways in which the weaker party improves its outcomes by reducing the asymmetry.” Zartman emphasizes that “negotiations under conditions of asymmetry (asymmetric negotiations) are a paradox, because one of the basic findings about the negotiation process is that it functions best under conditions of equality, and indeed only takes place where parties have some form of a mutual veto over outcomes.”²³

One of the factors which influence the outcome of asymmetric conflicts is the strengthening of the conventional and value-based approaches in international politics in the period after World War II. According to Nikolay Kosolapov, such concepts as justice and legitimacy were for a long time associated with a system of norms typical of a closed social organism; however, with time they evolved into basic concepts of international politics.²⁴ The organization of the post-war world was founded on democratic values and principles; their implementation gave rise to contradictions between the norms, principles and values, and the actual conditions in which the international system operated, bringing together diverse actors.²⁵

External forces – individual states and international organizations – play important roles in the outcomes of asymmetric conflicts. These forces may stimulate a “freezing” or suspension of the conflict but they may also favor an enforced solution. Peace enforcement may often (although not always) become a necessary condition for ending a military struggle and settling contradictions in a protracted internal conflict, frequently in favor of the weaker opponent. We see an example of this type during the 1990s

23. Zartman, William. *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution, 1995, p.8.

24. Kosolapov, N.A. “Legitimacy in International Relations: the Evolution and Current State of the Problem.” *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, # 2, 2005, pp.3-14 (in Russian).

25. A certain role in the spread of terrorist tactics in international conflicts was played by liberal and leftist-minded politicians and movements in developed countries when they declared as “just” the aims of the struggle for “liberation” and “self-determination,” leading to the political legitimacy of “freedom fighters.” For details, see: Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. Indigo: London, 1999, p.26.

Balkan settlement and especially in the case of the NATO “humanitarian intervention” to protect Kosovo Albanians.

Pavel Smirnov, analyzing the specifics of the “second-generation peacekeeping” in the post-Cold War world, stressed that the new paradigm of international intervention into conflicts, in some cases, results in external management and control by international institutions. This tendency has not materialized on the territory of the former Soviet Union, owing to the position taken by Russia. The coming to power of new political leaders in Moldova and Georgia at the beginning of the 2000s, as well as Ilham Aliev “inheriting” power in Azerbaijan after his father's death at the end of 2003, outlined a new stage in the evolution of unresolved ethnic conflicts in connection with attempts to “unfreeze” these conflicts and achieve favorable solutions.²⁶

The “unfreezing” of conflicts and changes in the *status quo* are more and more often initiated by leaders of internationally recognized post-Soviet states who had lost the fight in the ethno-political conflicts of the first half of the 1990s, leading to *de facto* secessions of a number of territories and creation of *de facto* independent states. For a number of reasons, all attempts to change the situation failed, and in the case of Georgia, an attempt to resolve the ethno-political conflict by military means in the case of the August 2008 “Five Day War” was disastrous for its initiator.

A close correlation with the phenomenon of unrecognized or *de facto* states often becomes an important feature of today's asymmetric conflicts. As the concept of sovereignty erodes, international recognition and effective statehood do not always march hand-in-hand. Thus, Somalia, Afghanistan and some other countries have had no control over parts of their territories for decades but remain recognized by the international community and represented in the UN. At the same time, Kosovo, Taiwan, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Northern Cyprus and Nagorno-Karabakh are

26. Smirnov, P.E. ““Flickering Mode” of Self-determination Conflicts in Eastern Europe.” *Mezhdunarodnye Protssessy*, # 2, 2006, pp. 25, 27-28 (in Russian).

partially recognized or unrecognized by the international community while possessing an efficient governance system. The phenomenon of unrecognized or *de facto* states confirms the logic of the theory of asymmetric conflict and provides additional basis for scenarios that may bring closure to the conflicts.

CHAPTER 2

ASYMMETRY IN THE KARABAKH CONFLICT

The Karabakh conflict can be analyzed by using the concepts of *asymmetry* and *asymmetric conflict*. It is necessary to emphasize that these are not identical constructs but partially overlapping sets of hypothetical and actual relations between parties in conflict. To facilitate understanding, we shall clarify that the concept of *asymmetric conflict* shall be used primarily to indicate the totality of the conflict between the parties having non-identical international legal and political statuses (Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh), while the concept of *asymmetry* will be used to analyze the individual characteristics of the conflict, including the military confrontation of the parties (Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia).

According to Christopher Mitchell, we need to consider “clusters of asymmetric attributes” which will help in better understanding and typifying “certain subtypes of regional conflict.” Mitchell defines several important “points of asymmetry as an emergent property of a conflict system: 1) status or legal asymmetry; 2) resource or capabilities asymmetries (containing but not confined to the asymmetry of coercive potential usually known as a ‘power imbalance’); and 3) behavioral asymmetries of tactics.” In addition, he singles out “moral and structural asymmetries and asymmetries of interdependence and commitments.”²⁷ (A detailed analytical diagram of asymmetric relations and strategies composed by Mitchell can be found in *Appendices 3 and 4*.)

We shall separate and analyze the structural and dynamic characteristics of the Karabakh conflict, taking into account the logic of asymmetry:

- statuses of the opponents;

27. Mitchell, Christopher. “Asymmetry and Strategies of Regional Conflict Reduction.” *Cooperative Security: Reducing Third War Wars*, p.26-27.

- consequences of the conflict;
- available resources (tangible and intangible);
- military and political dimension and the balance of power;
- what the opponents are interested in getting;
- forms of conflict interaction and confrontation strategies;
- attitude of the local population and elites to the conflict, and the public discourse about the conflict;
- influence exerted by external forces.

2.1. STATUSES OF THE OPPONENTS

The assessment of statuses of the parties to a conflict is essential for finding the admissible range of compromises between them, the positions of parties dependent on the outcome, and options for the engagement of the international community. The statuses also play a role in determining possible forms of interaction between direct and indirect participants in the conflict. The results of the 1992–1994 military phase provide an example of defeat for the formally “stronger opponent,” namely the internationally recognized state actor – the Republic of Azerbaijan – in its confrontation with the unrecognized entity, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR). Factors that brought victory to the NKR and the chances of a subsequent settlement between the conflicting parties can be analyzed in terms of an asymmetric conflict.

The principal participants of the conflict are Azerbaijan, a sovereign state, and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), an unrecognized state entity which overthrew the control of Soviet Azerbaijan as a result of a mass movement of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh in the late 1980s, and proclaimed itself independent at the moment when the Soviet Union was collapsing.²⁸ There is no doubt that Armenia

28. The Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh was proclaimed on September 2, 1991 as a result of the session of the executive bodies of the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region (NKAO) and the contiguous Shahumyan region – the area with predominantly Armenian population. In accordance with the Soviet law in force at the moment,

was a direct participant in the conflict, as it assisted Nagorno-Karabakh in all possible ways to gain independence and continues to ensure the physical, economic and political existence of the NKR. The military phase of the conflict ended in May 1994 when the defense ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the commander of the defense forces of Nagorno-Karabakh signed the Bishkek Ceasefire Protocol and Ceasefire Agreement.²⁹

At the same time, in view of the non-recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh, this conflict is often treated internationally as a confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia conducts direct negotiations with Azerbaijan on the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict, and official Yerevan supports this by arguing that in negotiations, it also represents Stepanakert's interests.

Azerbaijan gained independence in 1991, joined the UN and OSCE in 1992, and the Council of Europe in 2001. Azerbaijan joined the

in particular, the Law of the USSR of April 3, 1990 "On the procedures required in connection with a Soviet republic seceding from the USSR," national autonomies and regions with compact habitation of ethnic minorities possessed the right (articles 3 and 6) to unilaterally decide what their statehood and legal status would be if the Soviet Republic into which they were incorporated left the USSR. On December 10, 1991, only a few days before the official dissolution of the USSR, Nagorno-Karabakh convened an independence referendum, and then elected a Parliament which formed the first NKR government. In view of this, Nagorno-Karabakh has never been *de facto* part of the independent Azerbaijani state, which only exercised control over NKAO territory in Soviet times. More significantly, the Azerbaijani Republic had no control over the NKR territory at the moment when Azerbaijan acceded the UN in March 1992. In July 1988, a ruling of the USSR President Gorbachev directly subordinated Nagorno-Karabakh to Moscow, establishing a Special Administration Committee (KOU) led by Arkady Volsky. The leader of Soviet Azerbaijan, and later president of independent Azerbaijan Heydar Aliiev acknowledged that this decision *de facto* removed Karabakh from subordination to Baku: "Karabakh was ripped out of Azerbaijan in 1988 ... the creation of KOU was a *de facto* removal of Karabakh from Azerbaijan. The committee headed by Volsky subordinated the NK directly to Moscow though it was *de-facto* controlled by Armenia." Quoted from: Hakopyan, Tatul. *Karabakh Diary. Green and Black, or No War No Peace*. Yerevan: 2010, p.78 (in Russian).

29. For details on the signing of ceasefire agreements with Moscow see: Kazimirov, Vladimir. *Peace to Karabakh*. Moscow, 2009 (in Russian).

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the fall of 1993, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in the spring of 1994. However, in 1999 Azerbaijan withdrew from the CSTO and instead, joined the GUUAM grouping, a regional bloc that included Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan (in 1999-2005) and Moldova, and that was widely seen as an attempt to rival the CSTO and the CIS.³⁰

Armenia declared independence on the basis of the September 21, 1991 referendum on independence. It joined the UN and OSCE in 1992, and the Council of Europe in 2001. Armenia has been a member of the CIS since December 21, 1991; it signed the Collective Security Treaty in Tashkent on May 15, 1992, and became a member of the CSTO once that grouping was reorganized to a genuine military and political organization in 2002.

Azerbaijan and Armenia both take part in the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and both coordinated and adopted, within six months of each other, the Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAP) within the NATO framework on May 27 and December 16, 2005, respectively.³¹ Since 2004, Armenia and Azerbaijan have participated in the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy and since May 2009, in the Eastern Partnership program, an EU cooperation format with some of the countries of the post-Soviet space.

The NKR is an unrecognized state with a democratic, republican form of government. Despite the presence of all attributes of a sovereign state,³² Nagorno-Karabakh has not received international recognition.³³

30. Bailes, Alyson J. K., Vladimir Baranovsky and Pál Dunay. "Regional Security Cooperation in the Former Soviet Area." *SIPRI Yearbook. 2007. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford University Press, 2007, p.179-183.

31. *Individual Partnership Action Plans, North Atlantic Treaty Organization*:

http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natolive/topics_49290.htm?selectedLocale=ru.

32. Important attributes of a sovereign state include the formation of the government through democratic elections, continuously functioning state institutions and social security system, efficient control over its territory, and regular armed forces formed by conscription and placed under control of civil authorities.

33. Contemporary international law holds no universally acceptable approaches or criteria

The status of Nagorno-Karabakh is the subject of official negotiations mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group.

Since the Karabakh conflict is also associated with contradictions between state actors possessing the same international legal status (Armenia and Azerbaijan), it can be interpreted as *asymmetric* in terms of the status of the conflicting parties in only one of its dimensions: Azerbaijan – Nagorno-Karabakh. The NKR, even though it remains unrecognized, is nevertheless a separate actor of the conflict, with its interests and priorities. The knot of contradictions between Azerbaijan and Armenia is in many ways a consequence of the Karabakh conflict, which makes settlement in the Azerbaijan-NKR-Armenia triangle extremely complex and calls for an integrated/package approach to problem solving.

Consequently, the Karabakh conflict warrants two dissimilar interpretations:

a) as *asymmetric* if its consideration is limited to only one dimension, that is, to the confrontation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the NKR. With this approach, the problem takes on the character of a dilemma under conflicting assumptions in existing international law: the right of nations to self-determination and the rights of states to preserve their territorial integrity. The situation becomes even more complicated because historically the forms of self-determination of Nagorno-

to the nature and international legal implications of the recognition of new states or state-like entities. According to some approaches, international recognition by other states is a necessary condition of its international legal personality. At the same time, the declarative theory of recognition became more widespread recently. It assumes that recognition only declares the emergence of a new subject of international relations, but does not create it. In any case, recognition is an act of goodwill on the part of another state which is guided by its own interests. At the same time, the fact of non-membership of a state in the UN is not an indication of its non-recognition or absence of international legal subjectivity. The UN is neither a state nor a government, hence, it cannot exercise the most important condition for recognition - to establish diplomatic relations. However, it is obvious that the membership of any state in the UN is an important symbol of its international legal subjectivity.

Karabakh were changing, as did the external forces which influenced the content and progress of change.³⁴

b) as *symmetrical*, i.e. the classic interstate conflict of actors equal in status. In this case, the two parties to the conflict – Armenia and Azerbaijan – have formally the same possibilities to influence the outcome and to choose the strategy, in accordance with the existing rules regulating international disputes and the resources available. Both countries are full-status participants in international and regional organizations (UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, etc.) which they use to help solve the problem and for information and propaganda. Conflict settlement is mediated by the great powers within the OSCE Minsk Group created in 1992 under the auspices of the CSCE/OSCE co-chaired by the US, Russia and France. At the same time, certain asymmetry also exists in this dimension, but this time we find it in military and resource potentials of the two internationally-recognized actors in the conflict – the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan (for details, see below).

Therefore, in terms of status, settlement of controversies proceeds simultaneously in two planes – asymmetric and symmetric, where the asymmetry itself is a complex system with many additional elements.

2.2. RESOURCES

We shall consider the key indicators of material and intangible resources of the parties which can be expressed as calculable quantities.³⁵ Resource analysis helps one to see the presence of real *capabilities* of the opponents for mobilization and for continuation of the struggle. It also helps

34. See Tsutsiev, Artur A. *Atlas of Ethnopolitical History of the Caucasus (1774-2004)*, Moscow, 2006 (in Russian).

35. In international relations theory, repeated attempts at quantifying were made, i.e. attempts to identify measurable indicators of qualitative states of participants in an international interaction. Thus the “national strength” is a complicated and qualitative concept that allows quantization. The level of development of the country is another qualitative state allowing quantization using measurable indicators.

recognize the stress lines and consequences of the conflict, and the possibility and conditions of achieving compromise.

Resource assessment of the parties to the conflict is a complex task as it requires a consideration of material and intangible resources, i.e. assessment of countable and uncountable indicators. Leading experts on international relations often turned to the methodology of assessing the national strength. One of the more famous classic American international relations strategists, Hans Morgenthau, singled out several indicators that can be used for this purpose: “geography; industrial capacity and military preparedness; natural resources and population, national character, national morale, the quality of diplomacy and government”.³⁶

In addition, the classic French political scientist Raymond Aron also made a distinction between two concepts: “strength” and “power.” The term “strength” for him was a potential, that is, a “complex of material, human and moral resources.” The term “power” concept signified the real strength, that is, activation of these forces under specific circumstances for achieving specific goals. “Power” with respect to states signified the application of the available resources for conducting foreign policies in times of war and in times of peace.³⁷ At the same time, Aron referred to uncertainties in assessing power³⁸. In recent years, researchers began to actively use the concept of “hard” and “soft” power, adding additional nuances to the interpretation of strength in international relations and the possibilities for its evaluation.³⁹

The US “Correlates of War” database project led by David Singer

36. Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1993, p.113-179.

37. Aron, Raymond. *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1966), p.98-99.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Kagan, Robert. *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, Alfred A. Knopf, NY, 2003; Zevelev, I.A. and Mikhail Troitsky. “Power and Influence in U.S.-Russian Relations. A Semiotic Analysis.” *Essays on Current Politics, Issue 2*. Moscow: Scientific and Educational Forum on International Relations, 2006 (in Russian).

gathered information on the material potential of many countries starting with the 19th century. For quantifiable indicators Singer et al used the data on military, industrial and demographic indicators of the country: its armed forces, military spending, population, urban population, the consumption of iron and steel, energy consumption. The participants of the project believed that these data subjects made it possible to correctly compare material potentials creating the national power of different countries. It was noted also that there is “the question of effective political institutions, citizen competence, regime legitimacy, and the professional competence of the national security elites. While these are far from negligible, they contribute to national power and the efficiency with which the basic material capabilities are utilized, but they are not a component of such capabilities.”⁴⁰ These indicators are difficult to represent in quantifiable form but they can be taken into account in specific case studies, which is especially important when analyzing asymmetric conflicts.

In an analysis of asymmetric conflicts, additional complexity of measuring strength of non-governmental or non-recognized entities arises among actors of unequal international legal status. Verifiable statistics is frequently unavailable and/or unreliable, and the double counting of human and material resources occurs, so that they could be counted as belonging to the recognized state on whose territory the struggle unfolds. It is a known fact that the opposition tends to overestimate the number of its supporters, while the state actor is inclined to underestimate the numerical strength of the opposition and its supporters. Another factor that complicates the resolution of this problem is how to take into account the amount of assistance provided by external actors.

In the case of the Karabakh conflict one can compare the indicators of national strength of Azerbaijan and Armenia, while the data on the NKR may evidently be unavailable, imprecise or incomplete (see *Appendix 5*).

40. Correlates of War Project. National Material Capabilities Data Documentation. Version 4.0. Last update: June 2010, p.4, http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/Capabilities/NMC_Codebook_4_0.pdf.

Official statistics shows that Azerbaijan has larger material and human resources as compared to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan's population is reported to grow although the migration coefficient both there and in Armenia is negative. According to data of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Azerbaijan's population in January 2010 was 8.997 million, inclusive of the population on the territories controlled by the NKR. This figure exceeds the data given in the table by 761 thousand. The January 2003 data on the population of Armenia is 3.210 million which is greater than in the table by 243 thousand.

Azerbaijan has a much better geographical position which ensures convenient and varied transportation links: the basin of the Caspian Sea, air, rail and road transport. After the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia is *de facto* under a communications and transportation blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey, which supports Azerbaijan.

The country's deposits of oil and gas also provided rapid and stable growth of Azerbaijan's economy and still increase the tendency of other countries to maintain friendly relations with it; however, this factor does not guarantee – far from it – a stable economic and political development of this post-Soviet country at an intricate stage of its history. Even the term “oil curse” was invented to characterize the set of problems faced by oil-producing states as a consequence of an uncontrollable flow of oil dollars which feed the dark backside of the façade of economic bliss. This situation haunts a number of countries, for instance even Russia, Mexico, Venezuela, Nigeria and others.⁴¹

A comparison of the opponents' resources shows that the consequences of the conflict affected the Armenian side to a greater degree. The negative impact of the global crisis was also higher for

41. For details see: Minasyan, Sergey. “The oil factor and the policy of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict. Foreign policy aspects of the Karabakh conflict.” *Policy Briefs of the Institute for Political Studies*, #3, Yerevan, 2009 (in Russian); Boonstra, Jos, Edward Burke and Richard Youngs. “The Politics of Energy: Comparing Azerbaijan, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia.” *FRIDE Working Paper* N.86, September, 2008.

Armenia's economy.⁴² The settlement of the Karabakh conflict is necessary for normal economic development of Armenia which, despite obvious progress, still faces serious challenges. The NKR also needs to restore normal economic life and to engage in regional and international cooperation.

Despite the negative impact of the unresolved conflict, Armenia has reached a rather high level of development compared to other countries in the region. According to UN data, for example, the level of human development in Armenia is at least as high as in the neighboring countries of the region – Azerbaijan (a major exporter of energy resources) and Georgia – a transit state whose territory is traversed by nearly every regional communication and energy project. According to the UNDP's 2009 Human Development Report, which contains data on living standards, social welfare, health, education and cultural development of the population, the situation with crime and environment, Armenia's rank was 84, while Azerbaijan's was 86, and Georgia's only slightly higher, at 89.⁴³ Turkey and Iran, two countries bordering the South Caucasus, rated 79th and 88th respectively.

Furthermore, in view of the current military technical and political balance, the resource superiority of Azerbaijan does not guarantee victory in the event of armed conflict. Taking into account the experience of military operations of the early 1990s, an escalation of the conflict may well proceed along an asymmetric scenario. For a clearer understanding of this phenomenon, we need to look in detail at the military-political dimension of the conflict and to analyze the power potential of the opponents.

42. Armenia – Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis: Follow-up Study. March 2010. <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp220215.pdf>.

43. For the sake of comparison: in the post-Soviet space, Russia is no 71, Kazakhstan – 82, Ukraine – 84, Moldova – 117. For details see: *Human Development Report 2009*. UNDP, New York, 2009.

2.3. POLITICAL AND MILITARY DIMENSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE POWER CAPABILITIES OF THE PARTIES

Quantitative and qualitative characteristics of weapons and military equipment are used to compare the strengths of opponents but in conflicts of this sort, assessment and comparison of these indicators is rather problematic. For an internationally-recognized actor – a participant of the conflict – these indicators are verifiable owing to the existing system of monitoring weaponry and procurement, the official statistics that states have to keep in view of commitments to international organizations, treaties and measures for monitoring armaments and military activities (such as the Conventional Forces in Europe or CFE Treaty, or the Vienna document on confidence-building measures and security). For the unrecognized actor, this indicator is poorly verifiable as there is typically no official statistics and no relevant international legal obligations.⁴⁴ It is possible, however, to form an idea of the presence and use of certain types of weapons by gleaning information on the supply of weapons by a third party to the zone of conflict. The same is valid for total military expenditures: more or less verifiable data is available for internationally recognized players, but for actor with a lower status, the data can be almost irrelevant. Nevertheless, an analysis of the military balance in the zone of the Karabakh conflict can be made by using official data and expert evaluations concerning the military capabilities of the parties.⁴⁵

As we see from the table in *Appendix 6*, Azerbaijan has numerical superiority in personnel, in combat and army aircraft, in tanks and light armored vehicles, large-caliber multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS),

44. For details see: Minasyan, Sergey. "Moratorium on the CFE Treaty and South Caucasus." *Russia in Global Affairs*, # 3, May - June 2008.

45. For details on the military and political situation in the zone of the Karabakh conflict and analysis of potentials of the parties, see: Minasyan, Sergey. "Nagorno-Karabakh After Two Decades of Conflict: Inevitable Prolongation of the Status Quo?" *Caucasus Institute Research Papers*, # 2, Yerevan, August 2010.

tactical rocket launchers and a number of other indicators. Karabakh and Armenia dominate in tactical missiles and 152-mm self-propelled artillery, and have significant superiority in anti-aircraft systems, including S-300P (SA-10 “Gramble”) long-range anti-aircraft missile systems and “Krug” (SA-4 “Ganef”) and “Kub” (SA-6 “Gainful”) mid-range anti-aircraft systems.

For its part, the Azerbaijan air force possesses a large number of combat aircraft and helicopters, approximately 100-120 planes (estimates vary) inclusive of combat-cum-trainer planes of the types L-29 “Maya” and L-39 “Albatross”.⁴⁶ In the case of war, Azerbaijan’s air force would have to overcome the joint depth-distributed anti-aircraft system of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh⁴⁷ which provides sufficiently reliable coverage of airspace and is compatible with Armenian air power and the anti-aircraft systems units of the Russian 102nd military base stationed on Armenian territory.⁴⁸

To be able to suppress the Armenian anti-aircraft defense systems, Azerbaijan purchased anti-radar missiles for installation on Su-24 “Fencer” tactical bombers and MiG-25 “Foxbat” fighters, as well as

46. This includes a considerable number of fighter-bombers SU-25 “Frogfoot” for firepower support of ground forces, and several SU-24 “Fencer” tactical bombers; both earned good reputation in numerous local conflicts. In recent years Azerbaijan procured upgraded MiG-29 “Fulcrum-A” fighter aircraft and L-39 “Albatross” fighter trainers from Ukraine; and SU-25 “Frogfoot” fighter bombers from Belarus. In addition, Azerbaijan has a number of Soviet-built MiG-25 “Foxbat” fighters of which about 10 to 12 planes are now combat-ready. Their design function is dog-fighting, which is not very significant in view of only a small number of fighter planes on the Armenian side.

47. The Air Defence system of Armenia and the NKR includes long-range anti-aircraft missile systems (SA-10 “Grumble”) and mid-range (SA-2 “Guidline,” SA-3 “Goa,” SA-4 “Ganef,” SA-6 “Gainful”) surface-to-air missile systems (SAM), short-range anti-aircraft-missile- and anti-aircraft-artillery systems (SA-8 “Gesko,” SA-13 “Gopher,” ZSU-23-4) and man-portable air defence rocket systems (SA-14 “Gremlin” and SA-16 “Gimlet”). Plans are in place to enhance it with new radar stations, manufactured by Armenian defence industry, based on upgraded Russian radar station P-18.

48. A squadron of MiG-29 “Fulcrum-A” fighters, two batteries of S-300B (SA-12A “Gladiator”/SA-12B “Giant”) SAM and one battery of SA-6 “Gainful” SAM.

Israeli-manufactured unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)⁴⁹, which can create problems for the Armenian defense due to increased capacity to reveal the positions of anti-aircraft missile launchers and greater number of real and false air targets in Karabakh's sky. Another danger for Armenian anti-aircraft missile defense comes from rocket and artillery strikes.⁵⁰ In view of the complicated mountainous terrain of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan will be able to employ its Mi-24 "Hind" combat helicopters, of which it now has about thirty.⁵¹ Most of them are being modernized to the Mi-24G modification adapted to night sorties and heavy weather.⁵²

The main striking force for Armenia is its army. Its air power is weaker than that of Azerbaijan even though in 2004 Armenia did acquire from

49. In 2008-2009, four sets of "Aerostar" UMAV and 10 sets of "Hermes-450" were acquired in Israel. Each set includes 4 to 8 unmanned drones. Additionally, Azerbaijan also has short-range "Orbiter" UMAVs.

50. In 2004-2005, Azerbaijan purchased from Ukraine 12 launchers for the 9A52 "Smerch" multiple-launch system and at least 144 9M55K missiles for them. The range of the "Smerch" MLRS is from 70 to 90 km (depending on missile type) but Ukraine could only supply cluster high-explosive 9M55K missiles with the range up to 70 km, left behind as a result of partitioning of the weapons of the former Soviet Army. In 2006-2009, Azerbaijan acquired from Israel six launchers of the "Lynx" multiple-launch system using three types of rocket missiles (122-mm "Grad," 160-mm LAR and 300-mm "Extra") and providing sufficiently high accuracy of hitting the target; 50 "Extra" 300-mm rockets were purchased, with nominal hitting range of 150 km, but there is no data available on successful training tests. In 2002 Azerbaijan acquired in Bulgaria 36 long-range 130-mm towed M-46 artillery systems, and in 2008-2009 acquired in Belarus 12 2C7 "Pion" 203-mm self-propelled guns (http://unhq-appspub-01.un.org/UNODA/UN_REGISTER.nsf). Furthermore, Azerbaijan acquired no less than 24 2A36 "Giatsint" long-range 152-mm guns when partitioning the remaining Soviet military asserts that belonged to the 4th army of the Soviet Armed Forces on the Azerbaijani territory.

51. According to the UN Register on conventional weapons, 11 combat Mi-24 helicopters were purchased in 2009 in Ukraine. For details see: http://unhq-appspub-01.un.org/UNODA/UN_REGISTER.nsf.

52. Upgrading of Mi-24 is carried out by Ukrainian experts on the "Super Hind Mk.3" and "Super Hind Mk.4" programs of the South-African ATE company. For details see: *South Africa and Ukraine Continue the Program of Modernization of Attack Helicopters of Azerbaijan Armed Forces*, <http://www.armstrade.org/includes/periodics/news/2010/0709/13005140/detail.shtml> (in Russian).

Slovakia a number of SU-25 “Frogfoot” fighter-bombers. Currently, Armenia possesses at least fifteen SU-25 of various modifications. In reality, the absence of efficient fighter cover makes effective use of attack aircraft difficult. Azerbaijan has more fighters (including MiG-29 purchased in Ukraine); there are plans to procure new planes and upgrade existing systems of anti-aircraft defense. Consequently, Armenian air power can be used only locally.

In reality, experience shows that even overwhelming superiority in air force cannot guarantee a successful offensive on the ground. This was conclusively demonstrated by Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 2006. The Israeli air force, the strongest in the Middle East, using the most modern aircraft and armed with precision weapons, failed to crush the resistance of irregular Hezbollah squads, whose anti-aircraft response relied entirely on portable SAMs. As for Azerbaijan, it is even hypothetically unable to achieve the kind of absolute and unchallenged air superiority that the Israeli air forces held during the Lebanon campaign of 2006. Azerbaijan’s air force possesses not more than 40 combat aircraft specialized for bombing strikes against selected ground targets (SU-24 and SU-25 planes, plus the obsolescent SU-17/SU-20 “Fitter”); modernized MiG-29 fighter planes can to some extent carry out such strikes. All factors considered, the likely outcome of war in Karabakh will be decided on the ground, similarly to the war of 1992-1994, with artillery and missile systems playing a very important role.

Even though Azerbaijan’s army has numerical superiority over Armenian and Karabakh forces, it is still unable to achieve the “classical” threefold superiority in armor which is required for breaking through depth-echeloned fortified defense of the Karabakh army. The factor of border configuration favoring Karabakh and depth-echeloned defense line are not readily quantifiable but it is obvious that it enhances the resistance potential of the defending side and thereby compensates, at least partly, for the quantitative superiority of the attacker in a number of parameters and the numerical strength of army personnel.

Even a superficial military and technical analysis shows that in

complete agreement with the logic of asymmetric conflict, the asymmetry in numeric indicators and resources makes improbable an indisputable victory of the quantitatively dominant actor. This conclusion is all the more plausible if we recall that the theory of the art of war does not yet offer “quantitative laws, satisfying a practitioner and having an appropriate mathematical expression, required for predicting the unfolding of the armed struggle with acceptable accuracy.”⁵³

2.4. CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARMED HOSTILITIES

The active military phase of the conflict ended in 1994 by a *de facto* victory of the NKR and Armenia. The post-conflict situation is characterized by a number of problems stemming from the war and its consequences.

2.4.1 *The problem of territories and status of Nagorno-Karabakh*

On the signing of the armistice, the Karabakh army had under its control a large fraction (more than 92 percent) of the territory of the former NKAO, plus – in total or partly – seven districts lying beyond its borders.⁵⁴ The authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh refer to these seven districts as the “security zone.” Azerbaijan claims that all territories controlled by the NKR put together make about 20 percent of the territory of the Soviet Azerbaijan. According to the International Crisis Group’s calculations, the NKR controls approximately 13.4 percent of the territory of the former Soviet Azerbaijan (about 11,722 sq. km.).

Azerbaijan controls approximately 7.5 percent of the territory of the former NKAO (eastern parts of Mardakert and Martuni districts) plus the entire Shahumyan district which was not a part of the NKAO but was inhabited mostly by ethnic Armenians and included in the NKR at the moment of its establishment in September 1991. Correspondingly,

53. Vakkaus, M.F. “Essence and Mechanism of Action of the Laws of Armed Struggle that Quantitatively Reflect Its Nature.” *Voennaya mysl*, # 3, 2008, p.71 (in Russian).

54. Keldbajar, Lachin, Zangelan, Jebrayil and Kubatly districts totally, most of Agdam and part of Fizuli districts.

the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh claim that Azerbaijan controls approximately 15% of the territory of the NKR⁵⁵.

Even now, significant areas in the conflict zone remain dangerous for life because of the mines, unexploded ordinance and ammunition scattered about since the time of war. There is also a large exclusion zone between the adversaries where normal peaceful life is impossible.

The leaders of the NKR claim that a transfer of the seven districts around the former NKAO to Azerbaijani prior to the settlement of the conflict (i.e. the signing of a peace agreement and determination of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh) would weaken the position of the Armenian parties and only increase the probability of a new war. For its part, Azerbaijan refuses to negotiate directly with the NKR or to discuss the status of Nagorno-Karabakh unless Armenian/Karabakh armies are withdrawn from these seven districts. Armenia and the NKR declare themselves ready to discuss the issue of withdrawal from these areas only on the condition of security guarantees (e.g. international status for the NKR which would rid Azerbaijan of stimuli for starting a new war) that would be at least equivalent to ones Karabakh has at the moment (including the current configuration of the borders and the existing fortifications). As a result, settlement attempts are deadlocked by the interrelated problems of status and territories.

2.4.2. The problem of refugees and displaced persons

Data on refugees and internally displaced persons⁵⁶ are also contradictory. By the data of the International Crisis Group (ICG), about 413 thousand Armenians fled from Azerbaijan and the border regions of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as a result of the conflict, and about 724 thousand

55. "Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground." *The European Report of the International Crisis Group # 166*, Brussels, September 14, 2005, pp.1-2.

56. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) – persons displaced within the borders of the country, or internally displaced persons is the term accepted in the international humanitarian law. For details see: *Refugees and displaced persons in international humanitarian law. Website of the International Committee of the Red Cross*, http://www.icrc.org/web/rus/siterus0.nsf/iwpList2/Humanitarian_law:Refugees_and_IDPs?OpenDocument.

Azerbaijanis fled from Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas.⁵⁷ After nearly 20 years, many IDPs still do not have normal living conditions (housing, stable income, employment, medical care, access to education for children, the possibility of family reunification); many suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome.⁵⁸

In addition to humanitarian concerns, these numerous and impoverished strata of the Azerbaijan and Armenian societies may constitute a source of revanchist feelings, similar to the Palestinian refugees in Arab countries. The refugee problem is raised by both sides (more by Azerbaijan, for obvious reasons), but the argument of impossibility of good-neighbor existence is voiced as well. On the other hand, the refugee problem has in fact undergone a certain transformation in the nearly two decades after the armed phase of the conflict, mainly due to, among other factors, gradual absorption of refugees on the new territories and new generations coming to the fore.⁵⁹

Note also that that the refugee problem, despite its obvious humanitarian importance, is extremely politicized and is still used to this day by all sides of the conflict as a resource of politics and propaganda, especially at the level of international institutions and organizations.

57. Ibid., p.2.

58. "Internal Displacement. Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2009." *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council*, p.55-56, [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/8980F134C9CF4373C1257725006167DA/\\$file/Global_Overview_2009.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/8980F134C9CF4373C1257725006167DA/$file/Global_Overview_2009.pdf); "Azerbaijan: UN Rights Expert on Displaced Persons Urges Progress in Peace Process." *UN News Centre*, 28.05.2010. URL: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34847>.

59. E.g. according to the information provided by the Azerbaijani *Turan* news agency, the Sigma Analytical Center presented in Baku on September 22, 2010 its report "Situation with forced refugees in Azerbaijan." The report states that only 10% of Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs expressed readiness to return to the places of their previous residence provided this would be possible (mostly middle-aged people). The overwhelming fraction of young people, plus those who live in Baku (making up about 30% of the total number), express sufficiently negative attitude towards returning to Karabakh territories. For details, see: *90% Azerbaijan's Forced Refugees Do Not Wish to Return to Previous Places of Residence*, www.panorama.am, 22.09.2010 (in Russian).

2.4.3. Regional instability and the need for economic cooperation

The transportation and communications blockade of Armenia implemented by Azerbaijan and Turkey greatly limits the communications capabilities and external access for Armenia. Prior to the Karabakh conflict, much of Armenia's foreign trade utilized the Moscow-Baku-Yerevan railway line, but these days the railway is limited to passing through the territory of Georgia. Road transport routes go through Georgia and Iran, while a considerable segment of commercial transport, especially small-dimension and valuable goods, relies on air shipment.

Turkey supports the trade blockade of Armenia and acts as the *de facto* ally of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict even though the EU and the US constantly pressure Turkey to terminate the blockade. In turn, Azerbaijan maintains severe pressure on the Turkish leadership not to open the Turkish-Armenian border.

Armenia is making efforts to break the communications blockade. In 2007, an Iran-Armenia gas pipeline was opened; negotiations are under way to build a railway line and a further pipeline from Iran to Armenia. There are also plans to reconstruct and open the automobile North-South transport corridor which will connect the Black Sea ports of Georgia to Iran via Armenia. Nevertheless, the current blockade visibly thwarts regional integration and economic cooperation.

The development of regional energy projects also suffers from the unresolved conflict. In the past, it was due to Azerbaijan's insistence that the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipelines were built across Georgia, bypassing Armenia. This made the pipeline routes much longer and increased construction costs. The pipelines were built in the immediate vicinity of South Ossetia which is highly risky because of the strained situation in this area. Furthermore, the very presence of an unresolved conflict creates danger for the functioning of globally significant energy projects in the South Caucasus since it is obvious that any "unfreezing" of the conflict will make the objects of oil and communications infrastructure the primary targets of rocket and artillery strikes.

At the same time, Azerbaijan refuses to engage in bilateral or regional economic projects with Armenia, with the exception of several environmental programs on the regional level. Baku is apprehensive that economic cooperation may improve the position of the Armenian parties and can be perceived as an indication of Azerbaijan reconciling itself with the *status quo*.

2.4.5. *The living standards of the population*

According to the information of the World Bank, the living standards in both Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2001 were low, with 50.9 percent of the Armenian population and 49.6 percent of the population of Azerbaijan living below poverty line.⁶⁰ According to CIA World Factbook data, 26.5 percent of Armenians and 11 percent of Azerbaijanis still lived below the poverty line in 2009.

Since 1993, Armenia has been a recipient of assistance from the World Food Programme (WFP); in 2008, approximately 110 thousand Armenians received food help from the WFP to the amount of about \$13.2 million.⁶¹ Azerbaijan was also receiving help from WFP for 12 years but in view of improvements in the economic situation in Azerbaijan this program was terminated in 2008.⁶²

The negative balance of migration reflects the situation in the economic, political and social lives of the two countries. The migration of work force from Azerbaijan is approximately 2-2.5 million people, mostly to Russia and Turkey (some sources estimate it as high as 3 million migrants). As for Armenia, between 800,000 and 1 million people left it since the 1990s.⁶³

60. The World Bank. Countries: Armenia. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/armenia>;
The World Bank. Countries: Azerbaijan.
<http://data.worldbank.org/country/azerbaijan>.

61. World Food Programme. Countries: Armenia.

<http://www.wfp.org/countries/armenia>.

62. World Food Programme. Countries: Azerbaijan.

<http://www.wfp.org/countries/azerbaijan>.

63. Savoskul, S.S. *Russians of the New "Abroad": Choosing the Fate*, Moscow: "Nauka."

The results of the military phase of the conflict can be regarded as the victory of the “weak side” – the NKR – in its struggle against Azerbaijan. However, this victory turned into a barrier that thwarted the genuine progress in the social, economic and political development of Armenia and the NKR. In fact, Azerbaijan also pays a heavy price for Armenia’s blockade in the form of raised costs of communication and energy transportation.

As for the arms race initiated by Azerbaijan, it forces both it and Armenia to spend enormous amounts of money on procuring weapons and military equipment and maintaining a powerful army at the expense of social needs. In fact, the arms race costs Azerbaijan much more than it costs Armenia, since in order to make its dreams of revenge come true, Azerbaijan has to procure huge amounts of expensive offensive weapons and aircraft. In contrast to Azerbaijan, Armenia and the NKR buy mostly defensive armaments which are not as expensive as offensive systems. The arms race in the conflict is therefore also asymmetric.⁶⁴ By spending enormous amounts of money on weapons, Azerbaijan limits its capability of addressing urgent social and economic concerns, puts off economic and democratic reforms, and smoothly drifts towards hereditary

2001, pp. 317 (in Russian). See also: *Migration in the Caucasus. Conference Papers*. Yerevan: CMI, 2003 (in Russian); *Caucasus-Russia: Legal and Illegal Migration*. Yerevan: CMI, 2004 (in Russian).

64. Military strategy analysis operates with the term “asymmetric” to characterize the selection of the means of counteracting an opponent’s actions (using the most efficient and least costly options). In the case in question, we use the term “asymmetric” to characterize the system of military and technical measures aimed at maintaining the military balance of one of the sides by getting hold of the “preventive weapon,” e.g. in response to Azerbaijan procuring combat aircraft and helicopters or armour, the Armenian side procures antiaircraft systems and antitank weapons. The ability of one of the sides to sustain and replenish the defence balance via supply of weapons on preferential terms by an ally country or through cooperation framework of a military and political alliance constitutes the military and political dimension of the asymmetric arms race. Armenia’s membership in the CSTO and Armenia-Russia bilateral military and technical collaboration and mutual security guarantees are such replenishing measures.

monarchy with more and more obvious classic signs of “the oil curse.” As a result – this was emphasized in the report of the International Crisis Group – “Azerbaijan could squander an historic opportunity to use its energy resources to build a more durable state system and a prosperous nation”.⁶⁵

It is thus clear that the Karabakh conflict in its current unresolved state continues to negatively affect the social and economic situation in the region, forcing unsatisfactory standards of life on the population of the all three parties to the conflict.

2.5. CONCERNS AND POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES

The Karabakh conflict is an example of a zero-sum conflict in which the victory of one side is perceived unambiguously as the defeat of the other. The central problem is whose structural component Karabakh is; the concerns of the parties are mutually exclusive. The parties manifest irreconcilable positions: neither Armenia, nor the NKR, nor Azerbaijan are ready to work on a real compromise. It is important that for two internationally recognized parties to the conflict – Armenia and Azerbaijan – the confrontation defines the content and landmarks for foreign policy and the dynamics of internal social and political processes. In contrast to this, for Nagorno-Karabakh the conflict with Azerbaijan is regarded as a matter of physical survival and the settlement of the conflict is the main problem of the Karabakh elite and Karabakh society. Ivan Arreguin-Toft remarked that “power asymmetry explains interest asymmetry.”⁶⁶

Azerbaijan insists on complete restoration of its territorial integrity in the borders of the last internationally recognized demarcation before the country gained independence in 1991. This means restoring the borders of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, which included the current

65. *Azerbaijan: Vulnerable Stability*, p.i.

66. Arreguin-Toft, Ivan. “How the Weak Win Wars. A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict.” *International Security*, Vol. 26, # 1 (Summer 2001), p. 95.

territory of the NKR. Assuming this approach, Baku regards Armenia as the aggressor country occupying part of the territory of Azerbaijan; as for the authorities of the NKR, Azerbaijan refuses to recognize them outright, regardless of their signatures on the 1994 tripartite ceasefire documents.

Another version of Azerbaijan's position is the recognition of the NKR as a party to the internal political conflict classified as a separatist movement. Azerbaijan's approach to settlement includes: 1) denunciation of Armenia as aggressor, 2) liberation of "occupied territories" as a condition for starting settlement negotiations, and 3) settlement in the format of normalization of relations between the state and the ethnic minority. In this framework, the NKR is offered various forms of autonomy as a mechanism of ensuring the rights of the Armenian population, the concept of "two communities" etc.⁶⁷

The position of Nagorno-Karabakh is based on the idea of legitimacy of its struggle for independence by analogy to other cases such as Kosovo, Northern Cyprus and Eritrea. In addition, Karabakh leaders insist that the principle of inviolability of borders should not be applied to Karabakh since the administrative borders of NKAO were established arbitrarily by Stalin and are thus mere vestiges of the Soviet regime. According to the leadership of Karabakh, two other principles of international law are decisive in this case: the right of nations to self-determination and non-use of force for resolving international disputes and conflicts. For Karabakh, the focus of negotiations is on the physical security of its population. In view of Azerbaijan's attempts to resolve the Karabakh problem in the first half of the 1990s by violence, and of calls for revenge constantly sounding from Baku, Karabakh wishes to receive guarantees which should at least be equivalent to the security level it currently enjoys, before it agrees to a compromise with Azerbaijan. The current guarantees of Karabakh's security are its well fortified and readily defensible borders, the transport corridor connecting it to Armenia and a "buffer zone" around

67. Tsutsiev, Artur A. *Maps of Ethnopolitical History of the Caucasus...*, pp. 91.

the administrative borders of the former NKAO. The inflexible position of Karabakh in the conflict stems from the argument that the withdrawal of its army from even a single district along the perimeter of its borders would weaken the line of defense and, in view of the absence of a final peace agreement, would increase the threat of resumption of hostilities, by tempting Azerbaijan to seek military revenge under more favorable conditions.

Armenia states that it will accept any solution which is acceptable to the NKR and ensures security and normal development to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia imposes three conditions: 1) no vertical subordination of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, 2) provision of a land borderline between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and 3) international guarantees of safety to the NKR. Armenia contests the legitimacy of the July 5, 1921 ruling of the Caucasus Bureau of VKP(b) that included Nagorno-Karabakh into Soviet Azerbaijan, and equally rejects the reference to the “fact” of Nagorno-Karabakh being a component of independent Azerbaijan, using the argument that the borders of the Azerbaijan SSR were abrogated by the Act of Restoration of the Independence of the Azerbaijan Republic of October 18, 1991. Armenia’s leadership insists that this document abolished the Soviet legal and constitutional foundation for inclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh into AzSSR. Under this approach, two states – Azerbaijan and the NKR – are identified as parties to the conflict, and a settlement strategy should assume their participation with equal rights in finding solutions to the existing territorial dispute. Armenia attempts to take part in this dispute as intermediary and security guarantor.

The mutually exclusive positions of the parties make the situation rather unsuitable for compromise settlement. The international community, while not inclined to stimulating secession, highly disapproves of attempts to resolve conflicts by violent means, especially in the light of the “Five Day War” between Russia and Georgia in August 2008.

2.6. FORMS OF CONFLICT INTERACTION/STRATEGIES OF CONFRONTATION

The statuses of the parties and their positions in the conflict determine the legal framework of the situation and the methods used by the opponents to achieve their goals. It is noteworthy that world powers and influential international organizations regard Armenia and Azerbaijan as important partners in the South Caucasus. The international community will not support any attempt at resolving the standoff by force – be it in a unilateral manner initiated by one of the participants of the conflict, or in a manner involving regional or international actors. Intricate relations with Iran and territorial problems in Turkey and Georgia force Western countries to tread very cautiously in dealing with this conflict. Neither is Russia interested in changes in the current *status quo* in the zone of conflict and therefore, attempts to conserve the military equilibrium and to prevent any resumption of hostilities. Against this background, the confrontation of the parties is manifest in the form of political and economic pressure and dissemination of information and propaganda.

Given this backdrop, Armenia and Azerbaijan behave, at least on the official level, in impeccable compliance with international norms, and typically resort to indirect methods of pressurizing the opponent. Neither of the sides passes an opportunity to try and re-assert at the highest international level the unassailable truth carried by its position and use it as a resource in its political and propagandist campaign. The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh has not been specifically discussed at the sessions of the UN Security Council since the time when four relevant resolutions were passed in 1993. However, senior officials from Armenia and Azerbaijan keep raising this problem in the UN. Azerbaijan constantly demands that “the regime of occupation of part of the territory of Azerbaijan” by Armenia’s armed forces “be removed.” Armenia, on the other hand, stresses the right of nations for self-determination and argues that Azerbaijan was conducting “ethnic cleansing” and used violence

against the inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh, and that the NKR is a legally capable state-like entity⁶⁸.

In fact, the symmetry of interaction and confrontation strategies on the international informational and propaganda arena manifests itself only in the actions of two equal-status actors (Armenia and Azerbaijan). In all other areas all three parties to the conflict, both the two recognized ones and the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh, resort to various asymmetric strategies of confrontation.

2.6.1. Azerbaijan: oil, blockade and propaganda

Initially, the mainstay of Azerbaijan's Karabakh strategy in the post-war period was the blockade of Armenia and Karabakh using Turkey's support, and also diplomatic and propaganda efforts on the international arena. In recent years, the brunt of Azerbaijan's pressure on Karabakh, Armenia and world community shifted to military blackmail and intensification of the arms race. By raising the stakes in regional politics, Azerbaijan assumes that the threat of resumption of hostilities will force Yerevan and Stepanakert to make unilateral concessions, and that the international community, apprehensive of a new war and destabilization of the region, would exert additional pressure on the Armenian parties.

Azerbaijan uses its oil and gas resources to keep external actors interested and to receive their support in the Karabakh conflict. Doing this, Baku not only takes into account the need for European countries in an alternative energy-transportation corridor bypassing Russia but attempts at the same time to enlist Moscow's support in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, in exchange for Azerbaijan's possible refusal to take part in the Nabucco gas pipeline and in other anti-Russian energy projects.

In the framework of its strategy, Azerbaijan attempts to push through the UN General Assembly a resolution on the incompatibility of the current position on the territories around Nagorno-Karabakh with the

68. "Dialogue Vital to Resolving Nagorno-Karabakh Dispute, Armenia Tells UN." *UN News Center*, 28.09.2009; "Some Hope of End to Stalemate Over Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan Tells UN." *UN News Center*, 26.09.2009.

norms of the international humanitarian law. The main argument lies in the allegation that Armenians were committing “ethnic cleansing” of the Azerbaijani population of Karabakh and that violence was used.⁶⁹ Baku undertakes similar attempts in its relations with a number of other international and regional organizations: the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the PACE, the UN Parliamentary Assembly, the BSEC etc.

At the same time, Azerbaijan’s leaders constantly voice threats of resuming armed hostilities and maintain tension on the line of contact of the parties by using military intelligence and subversion units and snipers. This is Azerbaijan’s way of showing that the conflict is not frozen, that the threat of a new war is very real and that Baku shall not resign itself to the *status quo*. As an illustration, we can cite the recent reaction of Azerbaijan’s authorities to the call made by the UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon to pull snipers away from the line of contact of the adversaries. In response, Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Defense press spokesman Eldar Sabiroglu said that “it would defy logic to tie the strengthening of the ceasefire to pulling out snipers”.⁷⁰

As a result, the Karabakh conflict continues as a low-intensity conflict⁷¹

69. “General Assembly Defers Consideration of Draft Resolution Concerning Observance of International Human Rights Law in ‘Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan.’” *Sixty-fourth General Assembly, 119th Meeting (PM)*,

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10979.doc.htm>.

70. For details, see: *Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Defence Commented on the Proposal to Remove Snipers from the Frontline*, www.news.day.az/politics/230614.html, 27.09.2010 (in Russian).

71. The term “low intensity conflict” (LIC) is frequently used these days as a synonym of “asymmetric” guerrilla, rebel or unconventional wars and conflicts. Traditionally, this term is used in military strategy analysis to classify armed conflicts with low level of interaction between opponents, low level of losses and insignificant roles of large army units. Examples of military engagement during low-intensity conflicts are sniper shelling, raids by intelligence-gathering and subversion units and by small mobile units mostly armed with light and small arms, not leading to escalation and active operations by large units of regular army.

involving continued low-scale military encounters all along the frontline leading to casualties on all sides of the conflict.⁷²

2.6.2. Armenia: complementarism, diaspora and deterrence

In turn, Armenia uses the international arena to advance the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination and independent statehood. Armenia also attempts to restore the tripartite format of negotiations and to distance itself from the bilateral Armenia-Azerbaijan format. Meanwhile, Armenia takes it upon itself to guarantee the security of the NKR and to represent its interests in settlement negotiations and at the international level.

In its foreign policy, Armenia is guided by the so-called principle of “complementarism” which assumes that balance among various forces external to the region should be maintained, including the balance among antagonistic forces. It is by virtue of this complementarism that Armenia succeeds in receiving support from influential international actors involved in negotiations around Nagorno-Karabakh.

It is important to point out that the largest Armenian diasporas in the world happen to be in the three countries that co-chair the Minsk group and are permanent members of the UN Security Council. By experts' estimates, nearly 1.5 million Armenians live in Russia, nearly 500,000, in

72. In 2010, large-scale collisions on the contact line of Azerbaijan and Karabakh between forces including IGS and special-mission units occurred on July 18 (five Karabakh and one Azerbaijani servicemen killed), August 30 (up to seven Azerbaijani and two Karabakh servicemen wounded) and September 4 (three Azerbaijani servicemen killed). The two countries lose at least a hundred servicemen annually, killed on the line of contact as a result of skirmishes, fatal accidents and exploding mines; there are also victims among the non-combatant population of border settlements. According to Azerbaijan's media, 2800 Azerbaijani servicemen were killed in 1994-2006, i.e. during the 12 year period since the ceasefire. For the sake of comparison, data available to Azerbaijani military expert Yashar Jafarli indicates that during the Karabakh war, Azerbaijan's army lost about 24 thousand servicemen dead and 4.5 thousand captive or missing. For details, see: *2800 Servicemen of the Azerbaijan Army Killed in Times of Peace*, www.regnum.ru/news/778230.html, 06.02.2008 (in Russian).

France, and more than 1 million, in the US.⁷³ Influential Armenian communities abroad help Armenia to conduct its policies towards Azerbaijan and Turkey. Diaspora groups run campaigns trying to get parliaments, governments and local self-government bodies to adopt resolutions qualifying the 1915 massacres of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey as genocide. Even though these actions are directed first and foremost against Turkey, there is a connection between the recognition of the Genocide and the situation in the NKR. Armenia's position is that it is trying to prevent a reoccurrence of the Genocide, this time against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh. At the same time, Armenia is trying to normalize relations with Turkey so as to open borders and put an end to the transportation and communications blockade.

Deterrence plays an important role in Armenia's Karabakh strategy. The term "deterrence"⁷⁴ stands for prevention of undesirable military and political actions of one side against the other, typically less powerful one, by threatening to cause irremediable damage. In the times of the Cold War, deterrence implied the restraining potential of nuclear weapons while modern Armenia's deterrence strategy relies on conventional

73. In addition, about 250-300,000 Armenians live in Georgia and about 130,000 in Ukraine; there are large Armenian communities in Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Poland and Turkey. For details, see: Dyatlov, Viktor and Eduard Melkonyan. *Armenian Diaspora: Essays on Sociocultural Typology*. Yerevan: Caucasus Institute, 2009 (in Russian).

74. Two different terms are used in English-language political science literature to denote "restraining"— *containment* and *deterrence*, each with a specific usage. The word *containment*, allegedly introduced by the classic of American political science and diplomacy of the cold war period George Kennan, was used to characterize political and economic measures aimed at thwarting the opponent's implementation of its foreign policy. An example of *containment* was the American policy of restraining the Soviet Union and preventing the spread of communist ideology. The term *deterrence* was coined in the US at the beginning of the 1960s and was included as element of strategic planning by Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara. *Deterrence* implies restraining the opponent by inducing fear of unavoidable retaliatory action causing irreparable damage. Later the term *deterrence* was mostly in use in the area of military strategy.

weapons. Today's military-theory treatises refer to this type of deterrence as "nonnuclear" or "conventional" deterrence.⁷⁵

Deterrence in this conflict is also asymmetrical. From a military perspective, despite its richer arsenal of long-range missiles, Azerbaijan remains vulnerable to attacks on its energy and industrial facilities. In fact, using its large-caliber multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) WM-80⁷⁶ and tactical operational missile systems 9K72 "Elbrus" (or "Scud-B" in NATO classification),⁷⁷ the Armenian army can cause serious harm to industrial, infrastructural and communication facilities deep in Azerbaijan's territory, to the extent of affecting Azerbaijan's political and economic outlook. From a political perspective, Azerbaijan's retaliation options are restricted by Russia's and CSTO's commitments to Armenia's security.

2.6.3. Nagorno-Karabakh: in search of recognition and reliable security

Most of the steps taken by NKR authorities aim at ensuring, first of all, its legal status as independent entity in accordance with the norms enshrined in the international law, and secondly, its legitimacy – both internal legitimacy in the form of support by the population, and also external, in the form of recognition by the international community. The

75. For details, see: Minasyan, Sergey. *Mechanism of Sustainment of Peace in the Karabakh Conflict: Theory of Deterrence in Conditions of Asymmetric Arms Race*, http://noravank.am/rus/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=5105, 04.11.2010 (in Russian).

76. 8 WM-80 launchers of 273-mm MLRS of Chinese make (with maximum range, depending on missile type, from 80 to 120 km) were acquired by Armenia at the end of the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s. Later the media reported that Armenia was procuring modernized rockets with extended shooting range.

77. Inclusive of 8 9P117M launchers and at least 32 R-17 rockets transferred to Armenia from the arms and ammunition dumps of the 176th Rocket brigade of the 7th Guards army in the course of distribution of the Soviet military property in the mid-1990s. The range of R-17 rockets is up to 300 km with probable circular deviation of 0.6 km at large distances. As of December 2010, Azerbaijan's army possessed no antiaircraft capability (and of course no rocket interception capability) that would efficiently intercept such rockets in the case of rocket strikes against targets deep into Azerbaijan's territory.

NKR also insists on being a full-fledged participant of the settlement negotiations.

In the last few decades, the issue of unrecognized, or *de-facto*, states has brought about a crisis of international law, making it possible for the unrecognized states to argue their position in the legal field.⁷⁸ In traditional international law, the problem of unrecognized states is strongly linked to history. While states are the primary subjects of international law, major historical events, leading to the birth of a “new” or the disappearance of an “old” state, occur outside the legal field. In view of this, many experts in international relations hold an opinion that historic events generate a new legal system. The famed political scientist Raymond Aron argued that, while the creation and disappearance of states are not events of a metalegal (transitionally legal) nature, and the recognition of one state by another is a political act rather than a legal one, this implies that the legal existence of a new state is not determined by being recognized by other states but rather, by complying with conditions stipulated by international law for a state aspiring to recognition.⁷⁹

In their efforts to persuade the international community that the NKR has all the basic attributes of statehood, its authorities say that the NKR has a practice of free democratic elections and is in this respect much more democratic than Azerbaijan. They point out that in 2007, President Arkady Ghukasyan stepped down after two terms in office and in 2004, an opposition candidate was elected mayor of the capital, Stepanakert.

The confrontation between the NKR and Azerbaijan on the level of international politics and international communication is also based on asymmetric strategies. In this realm, Azerbaijan relies on the support of a number of Muslim countries, on Islamic solidarity and on the inertia of international law. The NKR relies primarily on support given it by

78. Karabakh's position received additional support as a result of the decision by the UN International Court of July 22, 2010, on the unilateral declaration by Kosovo of its independence being within the international law.

79. Aron, R. *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1966.

Armenia and the Armenian diaspora; it also makes some propagandistic use of whatever international contacts it is able to make. Every time Nagorno-Karabakh is visited by a public official from a foreign country, or an official from the NKR goes abroad and meets with a public official there, a sharp response ensues from the Azerbaijani authorities, ranging from notes of protest to declaring foreign officials who traveled to the NKR *persona non grata* in Azerbaijan. This way, Azerbaijan damages its relations with the officials' countries of origin, which are in some cases important actors of international politics.⁸⁰

2.7. MUTUAL PERCEPTION AND THE DISCOURSE OF THE CONFLICT

The readiness of the sides to accept the inevitable compromises depends on the perception of the conflict by the elites and the population. In the Karabakh conflict, a key role is played by public perceptions of the results of the war. One of these results was increased ethnic homogeneity: people belonging to the same ethnic group as the opponent in the war were forced to leave. In Artur Tsutsiev's opinion, "the deportation and the war of 1990-1994 resulted in the 'ultimate' territorial demarcation of the Armenian and Azerbaijani populations in the sub-region into ethnic zones of control and thereby completed the formation of the nation-

80. One of the last actions of this type was Note of Protest from Azerbaijan's MFA to the US in connection with the meeting between the speaker of the Karabakh parliament Ashot Gulyan and the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the US Congress Howard Berman. Azerbaijan also declared *persona non grata* five parliamentarians of Russia's State Duma for their participation in the parliamentary elections in Nagorno-Karabakh on May 23, 2010. For details, see: *Azerbaijan's MFA Presented a Protest Note to US Chargé D'affaires ad Interim*, <http://news.day.az/politics/231402.html>, 01.10.2010 (in Russian); *Azerbaijan Declared Russia's Parliamentarians Persona Non Grata for Attending Elections in Nagorno-Karabakh* www.newsru.com/world/26may2010/karabakh.html, 26.05.2010 (in Russian).

states and correspondingly of two political/civil nations following the rigid ethnic, rather “mutually exclusive” scenario.”⁸¹ We can say that in accordance with Ernest Gellner’s classical theory⁸² the armed phase of the Karabakh conflict completed the ethnic homogenization of borders between Azerbaijan, the NKR and Armenia, involving mutual exchange of populations. Indeed, in the South Caucasus, ethnic homogenization ran parallel to nationbuilding:⁸³ it happened to Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Georgians and Abkhazians, Georgians and Ossetians. It polarized societal attitudes and radicalized domestic conflict discourses.

Azerbaijani society is nurturing the pain of losing a war; it is this pain that stimulates mobilization around the Karabakh cause, legitimizes military expenditures and justifies actions aimed at restoration of territorial integrity. President Aliiev and other senior officials regularly make belligerent speeches; Azerbaijan’s media, public activists and popular artists often mention the “occupation.”⁸⁴ Azerbaijan’s media, more centralized than Armenian media, efficiently mobilize society around the Karabakh problem; the presence of numerous refugees is an additional resource used for mobilizing opinion.

In Armenia, the Karabakh cause is a keystone of nationbuilding. The steps taken to settle the conflict, the positions taken by external actors and

81. Tsutsiev, A.A. *Atlas of Ethnopolitical History of the Caucasus...*, pp.90.

82. On Gellner’s approaches to problems of nationalism and building of nation states, see: Gellner, Ernest. *Nationalism*. London: Phoenix, 1997.

83. Nationbuilding in Western Europe was often accompanied with ethnic homogenization. This triggered numerous wars in the 19th and early 20th century. The fight for ethnic homogeneity continued in the course of the two world wars of the 20th century but was condemned by the international community when the wars ended. The final accord of the ethnic demarcation in Europe was the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, which led to the bloodiest ethnic conflicts in Europe during the entire post-war history.

84. E.g., an opera called “Intizar” (“Expectation”) was staged in Azerbaijan in May 2010; its plot uses a number of episodes of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh interpreted as the fight of good against evil. The opera, staged with help from some Russian theatre personalities, was invited to the Rostropovich International Music Competition in Moscow. For details, see: “The Good is Destined to Win,” *Vecherny Baku*, # 2, 2010, <http://www.vmdaily.ru/baku/articles/348/> (in Russian).

intermediaries, but most of all the actions of Armenia's authorities in this sphere are key topics of public debate. Depending on the state of affairs in foreign politics and the course of negotiations, political opposition either criticizes the authorities for inflexibility and procrastination (as e.g. from 2006 until August 2008) or accuses them of treason and inability to protect Armenia in the conflict (autumn 2008-2010). The victory in the war continues to be the source of national pride although weariness from the lack of a solution to the problem is also evident and leads to divergence of opinions about settlement in the political elite. Armenia's first president Levon Ter-Petrossyan was thus forced to resign in February 1998 as a consequence of having suggested a compromise in the Karabakh settlement.

On the whole, there is some similarity between conflict discourses in Azerbaijan and Armenia. In both countries, we can find elements of informational and psychological warfare, exaggerated enemy images, as well censorship and self-censorship in matters concerning the conflict.

The main manifestation of asymmetry in the public discourse lies in the fact that both in Armenia and in Azerbaijan, the Karabakh problem is perceived by society and elites as a matter of national prestige and resources rather than as a challenge to survival; contrastingly, in Nagorno-Karabakh the public discourse interprets it as a matter of national survival. The protracted unsettled conflict radicalizes the attitudes of Karabakh society, leading to an increasingly pronounced "besieged fortress syndrome," with elite centralization, political pluralism on the wane, and growing self-censorship when discussing prospects for peaceful settlement or compromise with Azerbaijan.

A very important element of the discourse is the perception of time. People in both countries are seeking an answer to a political yet almost existential question: "Who stands to gain from the continuation of the conflict?" or "What will the ultimate result be of the prolongation of the *status quo*?" Diametrically opposite opinions on the desirability of settlement circulate in the elites and societies of all three parties to

the conflict, reflected in the domestic political competition in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

One possible answer to this question can be drawn from the fact that Azerbaijan's officials are trying to speed up the Karabakh process and are fully justified in accusing Armenians of dragging their feet. Azerbaijan's society is suffering from an "hourglass syndrome": time ticks by, generations come and go, the prospects of returning Karabakh into Azerbaijan's fold grow more and more nebulous, the authorities do not fulfill their promises. Against this background, the belligerent rhetoric of Azerbaijani leaders only enhances the feeling of irretrievable loss. The history of wars for national liberation demonstrates that the asymmetry of wills and goals creates a situation in which, to quote Dov Lynch, "the *de facto* states are playing the long game, in which not losing means winning."⁸⁵ Nagorno-Karabakh might not win the next war against Azerbaijan (be it blitzkrieg or trench warfare or long-distance war of attrition), but it will not lose that war even if the outcome is uncertain. However, for Azerbaijan any outcome of hostilities short of gaining total control over the entire territory of Nagorno-Karabakh would translate into not only a political but also a military defeat with dire consequences for the country's ruling elite after nearly two decades of revanchist calls to the people.⁸⁶

85. Lynch, Dov. "Separatist States and Post-Soviet Conflicts." *International Affairs*. Vol.78, # 4, 2002, p.848.

86. Likewise, Henry Kissinger describes the situation of the asymmetric conflict between the US and Vietnam where not losing was sufficient for the "weaking" to win the Vietnam war. Small countries and peoples waging a war in the name of a significant common idea supported by certain political or moral factors are capable of sustaining mobilization of material and human resources for considerable lengths of time and be victorious against a stronger adversary (e.g., Finland in the course of the "Winter war" of 1939-1940, Algiers in the 1950-1960s., Vietnam in its wars against France and the US from the end of the 1940s to mid-1970s, Israel in Arab-Israeli wars of 1948-1982, unrecognized states of the post-Soviet space of the first half of the 1990s, etc.). For details, see: Deriglazova, L.V. "Asymmetry Paradox in International Conflict," pp. 87-88.

2.8. THE ASYMMETRY OF ENGAGING EXTERNAL ACTORS

The engagement of external powers is one of the most important factors in the dynamics of the conflict. The attention of other countries to the process and, more than anything, to the results of conflict settlement, stems from geopolitical (strategic) and economic interests. The position of the external actors is affected by a set of interrelations with the participants of the conflict and among themselves at the regional and international levels. We can follow the way the positions of these actors change in the light of global and regional developments.

Three main types of factors can be singled out as determining the positions of the third countries in the conflict:

- *Historical factors* stemming from interactions between the countries of a region that was shaped by a chain of events in the 19th and 20th centuries. The relations between Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Russia and Georgia are inseparable from the history of their current statehoods.
- *Geopolitical factors* dictated by the current context of regional security. The USA, having started the war against terrorism at the end of 2001, has initiated NATO military actions in Afghanistan and actions by the coalition of states in Iraq. Relations between Iran and the US add another vector of tension. The South Caucasus is a zone to which the European Union pays special attention, the Black Sea now constituting a common border between the two regions, and this zone is included in EU's cooperation programs implemented on the post-Soviet space and along the perimeter of its borders.
- *Economic and infrastructural factors* determined by the interest of regional and global actors in getting access to Caspian deposits of hydrocarbons, transit paths and communications traversing the South Caucasus and connecting the post-Soviet space with the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

The predominant format in which external forces get engaged in the

Karabakh conflict is the negotiation process mediated by influential regional and international actors. At the present moment, the negotiation process proceeds in an exclusive format of the OSCE Minsk Group⁸⁷, even though one of the parties of the conflict made attempts during the last two decades to wrest the negotiation format out of the OSCE or move it to other international structures. Some countries offered their own peaceful initiatives or wished to become intermediaries, often against the wishes of the conflicting parties. However, these attempts proved to be even less productive than the deliberations of the Minsk Group itself which at least keeps the conflict frozen and prevents it drifting towards resumption of armed collisions.

A specific feature of the operation of the Minsk Group OSCE is that the co-chairing countries forming it have chosen very similar approaches to the process of peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict even though they frequently disagree on other issues of international and regional politics. Moreover, the co-chairs worked out a consensus in the matter of preventing any possibility of hostilities in Karabakh. This policy makes it possible to sustain and continue the exceptionally difficult process of negotiations in the situation where neither the societies of the conflicting parties nor their elites are prepared to accept any realistic compromises at all.

It is only natural that the approaches pursued by the main external actors in the matter of the Karabakh conflict are dictated, among other factors, by their own interests in the South Caucasus and in the adjacent regions. These can be interests in energy production and infrastructures (which is especially true for the US and France), or security and geopolitical domination (in the cases of Russia and the US, and of the

87. International intermediaries take part in attempts to reach settlement of the conflict since spring 1992, in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. The institution of co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group was established by a decision of the OSCE Budapest Summit (December 6, 1994); Russia, US and France were nominated. The mandate of the co-chairs was adopted on March 23, 1995. The Personal Representative of the OSCE acts as a Permanent Representative of the OSCE in the zone of the conflict; one of its main functions is to monitor the maintenance of the ceasefire.

regional powers, Iran and Turkey). The approaches of the external actors to the Karabakh conflict may also be influenced by arguments of a different sort: ideals and principle of democracy and integration (reflected in the position taken by European countries); historical and cultural affinity towards the region (this is especially relevant in the cases of Russia and Turkey).

The Karabakh conflict is not in the centre of attention of the world community. Settlement efforts consist in a low-budget, small-staff engagement of international structures in negotiations under the auspices of the Minsk Group OSCE, several military observers and the personal representative of the acting OSCE chairman, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk.⁸⁸ This fact reflects not so much a lack of interest in finding a solution to the problem as the fact that the conflict is not considered so acute and so dangerous (in comparison with other conflicts and problems) as to deserve a high level of attention.

2.8.1. *Russia in the Karabakh conflict*

Russia's position vis-à-vis the Karabakh conflict is ambiguous. On one hand, Russia's economic and military assistance to Armenia cooled the relations between Russia and Azerbaijan in the first half of the 1990s. Azerbaijan refused Russia the right to keep military bases on its territory⁸⁹, although in 1994 Heydar Aliev signed the Collective Security Treaty for the sake of internal political stability, cherishing the hope that Russia's position in the Karabakh conflict would change with time. Having lost hope of receiving Moscow's help in the conflict, Azerbaijan pulled out of CST in 1999 and joined the GUUAM. However, several factors continue to force Azerbaijan and Russia to maintain good-neighbor relations. Azerbaijan's Russian minority numbers approximately 140 thousand, and about 621 thousand Azerbaijanis and 1 million 130 thousand

88. For details, see: De Waal, Tom. "Remaking the Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process." *Survival*, vol.52, M.4, August-September 2010.

89. The only exception is the lease of the Gabala Radar Station serviced by about 1400 Russian personnel.

Armenians live in Russia (according to the 2002 census).⁹⁰ The border regime between Russia and Azerbaijan and Russia and Armenia is visa-free, facilitating labor migration into Russia. By official statistics, labor migration to Russia in 2008 was 23.3 thousand from Azerbaijan and 35.2 thousand from Armenia.⁹¹

For Russia, Azerbaijan is also important as a regional player on the market of energy resources. The rivalry of the 1990s has now been replaced by a more close cooperation between Russia and Azerbaijan. On September 3, 2010, during an official visit of President Medvedev to Azerbaijan, the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan and the Russian Gazprom signed a contract on increased supply of Caspian gas to Russia. This fits very well into the logic of the strategy that Moscow uses to abort attempts by European countries to bypass Russia in the transportation of energy resources to Europe.⁹²

Russian-Armenian relations in the military sphere form the basis of Moscow's security policies in the region and the only element supporting the functioning of CSTO in the South Caucasus as a military and political bloc under Russia's auspices. Russia is Armenia's main investor and a close collaborator in the spheres of energy and infrastructure, despite the absence of a direct geographic link. Russia tries to appear unbiased in the negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh and seems to maintain its relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan carefully balanced. Moscow guarantees Armenia's security in regional format and helps with equipping the Armenian army with modern weapons and military technologies while at the same time expanding its military and technical collaboration with

90. "All-Russia Population Census 2002" *Ethnic Composition and Language Skills, Nationality, Vol.4*, <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=17> (in Russian). The actual number of migrants from Azerbaijan is considerably higher than quoted in this source, and the same is true for migrants from other post-Soviet countries.

91. *International Migration. RF*. Federal Statistical Service, 2008. http://ww.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/demo/demo42.htm (in Russian).

92. "Medvedev and Aliiev Sign Treaty on State Borders." *Novaya Gazeta*, 03.09.2010 (in Russian).

Azerbaijan.⁹³ In August 2010, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev paid a state visit to Armenia and signed, along with other documents, additional Protocol No 5 to the 1995 Treaty on the operation of the Russian military base on Armenia's territory. According to this document, the geographic sphere of responsibility of the 102nd Russian Military Base was extended to cover the entire territory of Armenia (not only the perimeter of the former borders of the USSR with Turkey and Iran, as stipulated by the previous version of the Treaty), and the lease for the base to stay has also been prolonged (from 25 to 49 years).⁹⁴ In addition, Russia took upon itself the responsibility, in the spirit of the Protocol, of supplying Armenia's armed forces with modern weapons.

Armenians are inclined to interpret the signing of this document as a guarantee of Russia's military assistance in the case of war with Azerbaijan. Formally, however, Russia's unilateral and bilateral obligations (imposed by its CSTO membership) in matters of security and mutual defense only cover the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Armenia, not the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. It appears very probable, meanwhile, that by virtue of the region's exceptionally high militarization and the radicalized positions of the parties to the conflict, the hostilities may overflow the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh and spill over the extended border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Moreover, the presence of Russian army units along the north-east borders of Armenia and on the Armenia-Nakhichevan border can free a large part of the Armenian armed forces, which can then be used in Nagorno-Karabakh; this would also be of considerable importance for the unfolding of possible hostilities.

93. Just in 2006-2010, Russia officially supplied Azerbaijani armed forces with 62 T-72 tanks, 70 BTR-80A armed personnel carriers, and a large amount of small arms and ammunition. Information also appeared in summer 2010 that Moscow and Baku were negotiating the purchase by Azerbaijan of two batteries of S-300 PMU-2 SAM.

94. This report has been composed since 1997, i.e. after the 1995 Treaty was ratified and came into effect. The deployment of Russian troops on the territory of Armenia was thus extended until 2046. See: *Complete Text of the Project Protocol on Russia's Military Base in Armenia*. <http://news.am/rus/news/28027.html>, 17.08.2010 (in Russian).

On the one hand, it is obvious that Russia does not wish to be involved in hostilities over Nagorno-Karabakh, and that military “defrosting” of the conflict may place Moscow in an uncomfortable situation. Russia’s direct military assistance to Armenia would immediately provoke Azerbaijan into breaking diplomatic relations and ties in the field of energy production. On the other hand, failure to meet its bilateral and multilateral obligations to accord Armenia due military assistance may damage Russia’s reputation as reliable partner and discredit the functioning of the CSTO as a military and political organization, resulting in the removal of Russia’s military base from Armenia’s territory and in the loss of Moscow’s only military and political ally in the South Caucasus. Should Moscow refuse to support Armenia in the event of war, this would pose a threat to further Armenian-Russian strategic cooperation and kill any stimulus Yerevan could have for accepting the presence of a Russian military base on its territory. Having lost Armenia, Moscow may simultaneously lose its political clout and levers of influence on Azerbaijan and on the entire South Caucasus.

Consequently, Russia is interested in maintaining the *status quo* and military balance and ensuring non-resumption of hostilities. This way, Russia maintains its military and political influence in the region. The attention to the region from the US and European countries slackened after the “Five Day War” in August 2008 and, hence, it became easier for Russia to control the situation and mediate between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

2.8.2. The United States and the Karabakh conflict

The US attitude toward the Karabakh conflict has undergone a serious transformation over the last twenty years. From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, the struggle of Karabakh Armenians to break away from Soviet Azerbaijan enjoyed the support and understanding of the US, as it was regarded as a part of the struggle of Soviet nations against the communist regime. This could have been the reason why the US recognized independent Armenia already in December 1991 while recognizing

Azerbaijan only in February 1992. In October 1992, the US Congress adopted Section 907 of the “Freedom Support Act,” which banned all military and other official US support to Azerbaijan until Azerbaijan “undertakes all necessary steps to remove all blockades and stops all offensive use of force against Armenia and NK.” However, the situation changed sometime in the late 1990s. With the engagement of Western oil companies in the mining of Caspian oil and the construction of oil and gas pipelines to the West, it became essential for the US to maintain friendly relations with Azerbaijan. The US switched to active support of large-scale Caspian energy projects which bypassed Russia; this brought Baku and Washington considerably closer together.

The US-Azerbaijan collaboration grew stronger after the events of September 11, 2001 when Amendment 907 was weakened in view of the global war on international terrorism; this allowed the US, based on presidential directive that waived the Section 907 restrictions on aid to Baku, to start active military collaboration with both Azerbaijan and Armenia. The significance of the region increased significantly, in large part due to the geographical proximity of the region to Afghanistan and Central Asia: the supply of American and NATO troops fighting in Afghanistan was now re-routed via military airfields in Azerbaijan which were urgently repaired and modernized at American expense.

While still prioritizing military and political relations with Georgia, the US also began to gradually intensify its military cooperation with Armenia and Azerbaijan. This was done both in the bilateral format (program of assistance and joint exercise) and multilateral format (enhancement of peace-making potential and participation of Armenian and Azerbaijani servicemen in peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan). The US seeks to maintain as closely as possible a balance in the amounts of American military assistance to Armenia and Azerbaijan. American military assistance in itself should not turn into a source of instability in the region: ideally, the US pursues the goal of modernizing the Armenian and Azerbaijani armed forces for active involvement in peace-keeping missions, including deployments to Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well

as participation in counter-terror and counter-proliferation programs alongside the US and NATO countries.

On the other hand, despite the increased interest of the US in the energy resources and geographical position of Azerbaijan, it is possible to identify key differences between American policies vis-à-vis Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armenia is the second-largest (after Israel) direct receiver of American aid per capita of population: in the last twenty years it amounted to approximately \$2 billion. It can be said that on the public front the US manifests an even greater favorable bias in support of Armenia, even greater than Russia, which is Yerevan's main military and political ally. In contrast to Moscow, Washington provides Nagorno-Karabakh with annual financial support of roughly \$10 million appropriated by the US Congress each year. So in reality, the US and Armenia are the only states in the world providing direct financial help to Karabakh. The US was also the main sponsor of the Armenia-Turkey reconciliation process, which was expected to normalize relations between Yerevan and Ankara and help free Armenia of the Azerbaijani-Turkish blockade.

Presumably, Washington's pronounced pro-Armenian stance in the South Caucasus is to a great extent a result of activities of the influential Armenian lobby in the US. The strength of the Armenian lobby lies in its excellent organization and experience of working within the American political field, and its ability to mobilize the numerous and well-organized Armenian diaspora.⁹⁵

In addition to this, the Armenian factor is a tool and a resource for the implementation of pragmatic American politics when dealing with Russia, Iran and Turkey. A decrease in attention to the South Caucasus by President Barack Obama's democratic-party administration affected US policies with respect to the parties to the Karabakh conflict. In contrast

95. Moreover, the post of U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan has been vacant for two years because the former co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group from the US Matthew Bryza was proposed as a candidate, and a number of senators with close ties to Armenian organizations in the U.S. prevent his nomination, blaming him of being pro-Azerbaijani. He was eventually posted to Azerbaijan in a "recess" appointment by President Obama.

to Republicans, Democrats are less inclined to conduct anti-Russian politics in the region and less driven to launch alternative energy projects bypassing Russia, including those traced across Azerbaijan. At the same time, the “reset” or “rebooting” of Russian-American relations in 2009-2010 gave Armenia a chance to conduct well-balanced complementary politics towards Moscow and Washington without provoking “jealousy attacks” among great powers.

Despite the specific features of American politics in the region, the United States try to be unbiased toward the process of negotiations and strive to prevent resumption of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh. For Washington, the importance of energy, transit and communications does not outweigh the influence of the Armenian lobby and the importance of using Armenia as a resource in regional politics; this makes of the US perhaps the most consistent and motivated intermediary within the format of the OSCE Minsk Group.

2.8.3. EU policy in the region and the Karabakh conflict

France is a co-chair of OSCE Minsk Group and a country with traditional historical ties with the Caucasus region. An active and influential member of the European Union, France expresses the interests and the position of the EU with regard to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. However, the EU does not have as much power in the region as the US and Russia, and displays less political determination to play a leading role in the post-Soviet space.

The European Union implements its policies through the inclusion of the region into its sphere of economic, cultural and political influence. The institutionalization of this influence is a rather slow process. Cooperation projects run by the EU in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership project still fall short of the expectations of the public in the region and do not ensure effective implementation of the political interests of the European Union. Nevertheless, the activities of the EU have already changed the regional background and the outlines of political reality in the South Caucasus.

Slow penetration of the European Union into the South Caucasus can have serious impact on the situation around regional conflicts through introduction of new rules of the game and new frameworks which “mitigate the differences between the countries of the region and in the future may give rise to a convenient mechanism for dealing with common problems.”⁹⁶

In everything concerning the Karabakh conflict, the EU and its member states have clear value priorities, especially in the matter of settlement formats. Their first priority is to rule out military escalation. This approach stimulates the conservation of the *status quo* in regional conflicts and is thus to the advantage of those actors which benefit from maintaining the current *status quo*, namely, the unrecognized states, and Armenia which supports Nagorno-Karabakh. The other priority of the EU in the South Caucasus lies in promoting regional integration. Meanwhile, regional cooperation, open borders and better communications will also help maintaining the *status quo* in the conflict. And finally, EU is also concerned about the security of regional energy projects; in this, it is driven by pragmatic reasons and by the desire to have alternatives to energy from Russia.

EU’s involvement in the region directly affects the situation in the conflicts. The humanitarian and economic projects of the European Union in the South Caucasus facilitate the rehabilitation of refugees, reduce poverty and social tensions, strengthen civilian control over the army, promote political institution-building and foster democratization. All this eases tension in the zones of conflict. EU projects implemented at civil society level help create new Westernized elite which, at least on the level of discourses, has a relatively constructive attitude towards the settlement of ethno-political conflicts. Narratives generated by the Europeanized elite increase the overall tolerance of discourses and

96. Shkolnikov, Vladimir. “Europe and the Caucasus in 2008: the Year of Irreversible Engagement?” *Caucasus-2008. CI Yearbook*. Yerevan: Caucasus Institute, 2010, p.200 (in Russian).

mitigate belligerent rhetoric, thus laying the foundation for networking and seeking compromises between societies in conflict.

2.8.4. Regional dimension of the Karabakh conflict

The regional context has a multidirectional influence on the Karabakh conflict. Regional actors pursue their own interests which are in some cases contrary to the logic of the negotiation process concerning Nagorno-Karabakh.

Iran offers a good example of pragmatism. Being an Islamist state and manifesting Islamic solidarity in ethno-political conflicts, Iran maintains a balanced position in the Karabakh conflict, actively cooperating with Armenia in the economic and communications fields.⁹⁷ Ever since an unsuccessful attempt of mediating the conflict in May 1992, Tehran has not shown any interest in the negotiations but monitors very attentively and jealously the political developments around Karabakh, with special focus on the fate of Karabakh-controlled territories contiguous to Iran. Although it has never publicly said so, Tehran would like these territories to remain under Armenian control, as a kind of buffer between Azerbaijan and the northern regions of Iran that have a large ethnic Azerbaijani and Turkic-speaking population. In view of this, Iran supports the preservation of the conflict and is against its revitalization or deployment of peacekeepers.

The position of Georgia vis-à-vis the Karabakh conflict is ambiguous, despite all the attempts of the official Tbilisi to keep an appearance of neutrality. The strained Russia-Georgia relations, the strategic partnership between Armenia and Russia, the fact that conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia are similar to the one in Karabakh, and that these two breakaway regions are supported by Russia, all influence the position of the official Tbilisi, causing it to take a pro-Azerbaijan stance in its assessments and actions. At the same time, Georgia reaps considerable

97. Shaffer, Brenda. "Is There a Muslim Foreign Policy? The Case of the Caspian." *Current History*, November 2002, p. 383-386.

economic dividends from the unsettled Karabakh conflict. The pipelines that transport Caspian oil and gas from Azerbaijan to Turkey were drawn across Georgia precisely because the conflict was not settled and Baku insisted that the pipelines bypass Armenia. The settlement of the Karabakh conflict would lower Georgia's regional significance and deprive it of its economic and political advantages which come its way in view of the conflict between its two neighbors in the South Caucasus. Many in Georgia are apprehensive that a change in the general background around the Karabakh conflict may negatively affect Georgia's monopolist regional position.⁹⁸

Ethnic, linguistic and religious affinity with Azerbaijan has always made Turkey support it in the Karabakh conflict: with weapons and military advisors during the war in 1992-1994, and then at the political and diplomatic level, as well as via military and technical cooperation.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, an attempt of rapprochement took place in 2008–2010 between Ankara and Yerevan, which is remembered as “football diplomacy.” One of the main factors which motivated Yerevan to try and normalize relations with Ankara was the wish to unseal the Armenian-Turkish border, which would nullify the effect of Azerbaijan's blockade of Armenia. Quite naturally, this caused sharp admonition from Azerbaijan, leading to the most serious crises between Baku and Ankara in the entire history of bilateral relations, and limiting the flexibility of Turkish policy towards Armenia. Turkey tried to mitigate the situation by making it clear that any improvement of relations with Armenia would depend on the settlement of the Karabakh problem in a combination favorable for Azerbaijan, despite the fact that neither of the documents signed by Turkey and Armenia during the attempted rapprochement – the Roadmap Declaration, or the Zurich Protocols – mentioned either Karabakh or Azerbaijan. Indeed, at the very start of the

98. Nodia, Gia. “How Much Has the World Changed? Implications for Georgia's Policies.” *CIPDD Policy Review*, April 2009, p.9.

99. For details, see: Demoyan, Hayk. *Turkey and the Karabakh Conflict*. Yerevan: 2006 (in Russian).

“football diplomacy,” Yerevan had ruled out any unilateral concessions on the Karabakh issue in exchange for normalization of relations with Turkey. As a result, the rapprochement stalled.¹⁰⁰

After the failed round of “football diplomacy,” Turkey reconciled with Azerbaijan’s position in the region and gave up the idea of playing an independent role on the Armenian dimension, since any step towards normalization of relations with Armenia leads to an exacerbation of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations. Turkey’s attempts to become an intermediary in the Karabakh settlement or change the format of negotiations (as e.g. in May-June 2010, after the Armenian-Turkish process was frozen) are doomed to failure as in view of the continuing blockade of Armenia by Turkey and the political and military cooperation between Ankara and Baku, Turkey is not perceived as an unbiased player either by Armenia or by the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group. Still, as a NATO member and a country aspiring to be a regional power, Turkey is not interested in renewed hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh, which could cause tensions with Russia and the condemnation of the EU and the international community. After all, Nagorno-Karabakh is by no means a foreign policy priority for Ankara.

100. For details on Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, see: Iskandaryan, Alexander, Minasyan, Sergey. “Pragmatic Policies vs. Historical Constraints: Analyzing Armenia-Turkey Relations.” *Caucasus Institute Research Papers*, # 1. Yerevan: January 2010.

CHAPTER 3

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS OF ATTEMPTS AT CHANGING THE ASYMMETRIES

The point of maximum interest for Azerbaijan lies in regaining the lost territories, reflecting a desire to restore the original asymmetry of *relations and statuses of the parties*. Azerbaijan will do its best to prevent the NKR from becoming an independent political entity, and will block initiatives aimed at: 1) recognition by states and international organizations of the right of the NKR to voice its interests; 2) treatment of the NKR as a *de facto* participant of the conflict, and 3) the upgrading of the status of the NKR.

The NKR strives to *reduce* or even “reverse”¹⁰¹ *the asymmetry of relations*, striving to achieve symmetric or equal relations with Azerbaijan. To reach this goal, Nagorno-Karabakh tries to enhance its separateness and legitimacy on all levels: tripartite (Azerbaijan–Armenia–the NKR), bilateral (Azerbaijan–the NKR), regional and international.

Armenia’s position in this conflict is ambiguous and contradictory. On one hand, Armenia acts on behalf of the Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiation format. On the other hand, Armenia continually declares that it will be happy with any outcome of the negotiation process as long as it suits Nagorno-Karabakh, in particular, the full international recognition of the NKR. However, despite the heavy dependence of Nagorno-Karabakh on Armenia, Yerevan has very little real leverage over Stepanakert’s position in the negotiations. This is clearly implied by the way relations between Armenia and the NKR have been unfolding in the past two decades.

101. This approach was highlighted by Christopher Mitchell. For details, see *Appendices 3 and 4*.

3.1. MILITARY POWER SCENARIO: POWER BALANCE, BENEFITS AND LOSSES FROM THE USE OF FORCE

In principle, Azerbaijan can benefit from the use of force. The military phase of the conflict ended in 1994 with the defeat of Azerbaijan; by resuming military operations, Azerbaijan can seek to restore lost control over Karabakh.

Neither Armenia nor the NKR have goals that require initiating war. However, the use of force may be necessary in self-defense or as a response. Azerbaijan's military move against the NKR can also be viewed as a "necessary evil" required for forcing the hand of the international community and driving it to act on the side of the "weak" in the conflict and to give it international security guarantees. In this case, we can discuss what behavior is rational for a "weak player" looking for support from strong allies. In fact, this scenario is very close to the one that way played in Kosovo.

Considering the possibility of a military solution to the problem, it is important to take the following circumstances into consideration:

- The moral aspect of an outbreak of hostilities (inevitably negative attitude to any party initiating a military conflict);
- The legal aspect of an outbreak of hostilities (violation of agreements and undermining the role of the international community which is trying to prevent a new war);
- The evolving military and political balance between the parties in conflict and the external actors involved in regional security;
- The negative experience of the "Five Day War" in the Caucasus in August 2008 as an unsuccessful attempt at restoring territorial integrity and solving an ethno-political conflict by force.

Georgia's attempt to restore its territorial integrity by force in August 2008 showed that this option may be very problematic. The military and economic superiority of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict does not guarantee victory in case of war. High commitment to their goals on the

part of Armenia and the NKR, as well as the involvement of influential and powerful players in the conflict (Russia, USA, Iran, Turkey, EU) makes such a development unlikely if at all possible.

On the other hand, the theory of asymmetric conflict has been applied to situations in which the “weak party,” whether a state or a non-state actor, can launch a military offensive against a stronger opponent. Thazha Varkey Paul, director of the Centre for the Study of International Peace and Security at the McGill University in Canada, identifies in his publications the factors which can explain the aggressive behavior of the “weak side” in a conflict. Paul assumed “the existence of at least four requisite conditions prior to war initiation by a weaker state”:

1. the presence of serious conflict of interests;
2. the weaker side values higher the issue in dispute;
3. the weaker side is dissatisfied with the status quo;
4. the weaker side fears a deterioration from, or change in, the status quo in the future.

Paul selected a number of variables which determine the aggressive behavior of the “weak side,” including “the variables that pertain to the initiator:

1. The politico–military strategy with limited aims/fait accompli strategy which is not tantamount to a complete defeat of the adversary.
2. The possession of offensive weapon systems.
3. Great power defensive support.
4. Changing domestic power structure.”¹⁰²

In terms of the relative significance of factors in explaining asymmetric war initiation, the two most compelling ones relevant to a majority of cases are limited aims/fait accompli strategy and the alliance support

102. Paul, TV. *Asymmetric Conflicts. War Initiation by Weaker Powers*. Cambridge, NY.: Cambridge University Press, 1994. P.20, 23–35.

from a great power. Another conclusion derived from this study is that a weaker power can initiate war in the awareness that it may lose on the battlefield but win in the realm of politics. Thus, a weaker power may rely on the popular axiom that “One may lose the battle but not the war.” Paul also wrote that “for some such states, the prospect of a limited defeat is better than living with an unbearable status quo.”¹⁰³

American political scientist Michael Fischerkeller believes that “the weaker state’s judgment of the target as culturally inferior results in a discounted capabilities evaluation of the quantitatively superior enemy.” He concludes that “classical realists and other power-determinists have written of such factors as national character and national morale in the conceptual discussions of power. Since these factors are actually derivative of subjective cultural judgments, they should be considered separate from conventional measures of power. This separation is not merely superficial, it has significant theoretical utility, as the deduced partial explanation for the ‘incongruous’ weak power behavior in asymmetric wars demonstrates.”¹⁰⁴

In the case of a military scenario, the conflict between the NKR, with Armenia supporting it, and Azerbaijan would develop along the lines of the paradoxical logic of asymmetric conflict. The NKR and Armenia regard this conflict as “all-out” while for Azerbaijan, this is an important problem which poses no threat to the existence of the nation as such. The issue of survival which is so acute for the society that faces an all-out war is perceived very differently by a nation involved in a “limited” war. An American theorist of asymmetric conflict with personal experience of military service remarked that “strong actors have a lower interest in winning because their survival is not at stake. Weak actors, on the other hand, have a high interest in winning because only victory ensures their survival.”¹⁰⁵

103. Ibid. P.168–170, 174.

104. Fischerkeller, Michael P. “David Versus Goliath: Cultural Judgments in Asymmetric Wars.” *Security Studies*, Vol.7, # 4, 1998. P.3, 43.

105. Arreguin-Toft, Ivan. “How the Weak Win Wars. A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict.” p.96.

An analysis of hypothetical military and political developments around Nagorno-Karabakh suggests that realistically, the following three scenarios, with some variations, can be expected to occur:

1. *Restoration of Azerbaijan's control over Nagorno-Karabakh.* The necessary condition for this scenario is an exceptionally rapid war – a Blitzkrieg – and lightning-fast capture of the territory of Karabakh, resulting in the exodus of the local Armenian population. This scenario can be compared with the “Lightning” and “Storm” operations of the Croatian Army in May-August 1995, which wiped out the unrecognized Republic of Serbian Krajina and restored Zagreb's control over these territories (it is worth noting that the success of these operations did not only depend on the Croats' military superiority but also on the support of Western countries and the non-participation of Serbia, in exchange for a promise to abolish economic sanctions against it).
2. *War for independence and international recognition of the NKR.* This scenario is possible in the event that Azerbaijan loses its “blitzkrieg” and that the Armenian parties sustain a successful defensive during protracted trench warfare. A version of this scenario may include the direct involvement of Russia and CSTO on the side of Armenia; this may change the entire military and political situation in the region.
3. *Protracted low-intensity conflict.* This scenario is possible in the event of rapid de-escalation of the conflict and failed offensive/counteroffensive actions, or of the approximate equality of the opposing armies' potentials. The fighting may transform into trench warfare along the current configuration of the boundaries, or slightly altered in one way or another, and then into protracted low-intensity conflict resembling the current situation on the front line. A similar situation may also arise in the event that Azerbaijan unfreezes the conflict but for some reason decides against further escalation and large-scale war.

When evaluating scenarios, it is important to take into account

the rationality of Azerbaijan's policies. Against the background of the continuing *status quo* in the Karabakh conflict, President Aliev is deliberately playing the card of impatience and intolerance in order to reap political dividends as compensation for his patience. His regular mentions of "Azerbaijan's occupied territories," rejection of the current conflict reality, appeals to the international community and regular threats of imminent war are all signs of President Aliev's active use of the leverage at his disposal but not necessarily signs of Azerbaijan's readiness to engage in large-scale hostilities.

3.2. PROBABILITY OF EXTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND/OR INTERNATIONAL PEACE ENFORCEMENT

The Karabakh conflict is the only ethno-political conflict in the post-Soviet space in which stability on the front lines and the relative truce have been sustained since the ceasefire without external assistance e.g. in the form of international peacekeepers. However, in the political discourse of parties in conflict, especially along the "government-opposition" lines, there is a popular opinion that the international community is extremely concerned with resolving the stalemate and may compel the parties to accept some quick arrangement imposed from the outside. This largely conspiracy-based discourse is widely accepted, despite the fact that the dynamics of the Karabakh conflict proves the opposite.

Considering the possibility of an external force imposing a resolution and international peacekeeping, one needs to take into account the complexity of such a scenario because of differing positions of actors in world politics on regional developments in the South Caucasus and at the same time, the low international priority of the problem. An obvious asymmetry exists between the readiness of influential actors to resist peacemaking initiatives of other mediators and their low interest in initiating, maintaining or imposing an external solution contrary to the positions of conflict parties. One must also take into account the

technical complexity of deploying a peace-enforcing mission in the zone of the Karabakh conflict.

In the current “no war, no peace” situation, the probability of an externally imposed solution is quite low. However, in the event of renewed hostilities in the zone of conflict or a humanitarian catastrophe, one cannot completely exclude a scenario in which the international community finds itself compelled to begin a peacekeeping operation. Should it perceive a threat to regional security, or grave humanitarian concerns, the international community can respond in the form of “classical” peace-enforcement, despite all the technical and institutional constraints. One can draw an analogy with the actions of the international coalition under the auspices of the US in 1991 in Kuwait, or NATO countries in 1999 in Kosovo, or with the unilateral involvement of Russia in the fighting in South Ossetia in August 2008. Hypothetically, in the event of a new war or humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh, an international operation to enforce peace is possible under the auspices of the UN, OSCE, EU, NATO or CSTO.

The UN is not directly involved in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. However, once the Cold War was over, the UN supported a series of peace enforcement operations in internal conflicts, often acting on the side of an unrecognized entity. Nevertheless, a peacekeeping operation under the auspices of the UN in South Caucasus is hardly probable because this touches on the interests of Russia, a permanent member of UN Security Council, as well as other colleagues in the mediation with the same status – the U.S. and France. Furthermore, regardless of all the United Nations’ achievements and important stabilizing role in world politics, it does not always have the opportunity to conduct peacekeeping operations on a global scale. Moreover, there are quite a few examples of unsuccessful or even catastrophic UN peace-enforcement missions. Therefore, despite the overall increase in the number of peacekeeping operations and troop strength of the UN peacekeepers, in the last few decades the UN has been delegating more and more of its peacekeeping

functions to regional organizations, military-political blocs and international coalitions.

Ideally, it is the OSCE that could effectively implement peacekeeping operations or peace enforcement in the area of the Karabakh conflict, especially taking into account that negotiations are conducted under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group. However, the very mechanism of its functioning hinders the execution of the OSCE's peacekeeping duties in the legal, political and practical sense, even though this organization has been actively involved in the settlement and post-conflict reconstruction of many armed conflicts in its area of responsibility in the past twenty years. The commitments of OSCE member states are political in nature, while the OSCE structure contains no clear-cut mechanism for implementation of decisions concerning member states. Its decision-making is consensus-based ("consensus minus one" is only used in exceptional human rights cases), making it difficult for the OSCE to respond rapidly and launch peacekeeping operations.

In its peacekeeping activities, OSCE stresses the political and humanitarian rather than the military aspect. The organization has no real experience of peacekeeping operations and even less, of peace enforcement. Its only attempt of a peacekeeping operation, which ended inconclusively before it began, was undertaken in 1994 precisely in the zone of the Karabakh conflict.¹⁰⁶ So far, unsuccessful attempts of

106. The plan proposed step-by-step sending of first 200, then 400 and then up to 600 military observers to Karabakh for the separation of conflicting parties. A High Level Planning Group (HLPG) was formed to deal with the practical organization of the peacekeeping operation in Karabakh. However, in the 1990s, the operation was not implemented for various reasons. The HLPG conducts periodical trips to the conflict zone, and in 2003 the OSCE acting chairman even issued a special directive relevant to this. No further steps have been taken, however, as there were no political preconditions for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation. As for the measures for development of trust and monitoring in the Karabakh conflict zone in the second half of the 1990s, the only implemented step was the creation of structures of the Personal Representative of the OSCE chairman, headed by Ambassador Kasprzyk and groups of military observers monitoring that the cease-fire was in place. A new round of talks with the parties about the conflict intensified in 2005, after the Minsk Group finalized its draft peace settlement plan. According to

launching peacekeeping operations in Nagorno-Karabakh conclusively demonstrate the OSCE's limited resources and lack of relevant experience of classical complex peacekeeping operations going beyond the format of conventional monitoring, preventive measures and observer missions.

This position is clearly illustrated by the declarations made by the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. Thus, Matthew Bryza, the then US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, remarked during a meeting with Armenian youth organizations in Tsakhkadzor in August 2009 that a peacekeeping force in the zone of the Karabakh conflict would more likely play an observer role: according to Bryza, the co-chairs suggested that the peacekeepers would be unarmed, act as observers and have no powers to enforce peace. In his opinion, the experience of Kosovo and Bosnia shows that peacekeeping forces are unable to prevent armed confrontation should one of the parties wish to initiate it.¹⁰⁷ It is obvious that the format of the mission of unarmed observers, in contrast to a full-fledged peacekeeping mission with the capacity for separation of the adversaries, seriously limits the options open to international community in its response in the event that one of the opponents violates the truce agreements or a decision is suddenly made to resume hostilities in the zone of conflict.

The European Union already has some experience of running a "proto-peacekeeping" operation in the South Caucasus or, rather, of crisis response within a restricted format. A mission of European observers was deployed in the zones of conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in accordance with the "Medvedev-Sarkozy Agreements" signed in August-September 2008. At the same time, EU legal documents and regulations not prescribe its participation in peace enforcement missions or in any

information leaked to the press, the possible format of the peacekeeping operation intended the separation of the parties in the buffer zone, deployment of a contingent of international peacekeepers and demilitarization of the zone of conflict. See "Survey of OSCE Field Operations." *Conflict Prevention Centre*, SEC.GAL/183/10, 29 October 2010, http://www.osce.org/documents/cpc/2009/10/3242_en.pdf.

107. "Nagorno-Karabakh : Peacekeeping Force in the Karabakh Conflict Zone Will Perform Observer Functions ." www.newsarmenia.ru, 07.08.2009 (in Russian).

other kind of high-intensity peacekeeping, and there is no mechanism in place to implement this kind of mission. EU's peacekeeping capacity consists of its response force (reinforced battalion-size tactical combat groups) and civilian crisis management structures. Despite the global nature of its declared crisis management activities, the EU limits the geographic scope of its mission, focusing on the European region and areas along its perimeter, with an emphasis on the Balkans, the Mediterranean and Africa. Special attention to Africa reflects the European countries' historical ties with the African continent¹⁰⁸ and their determination to avoid further humanitarian disasters, which could result, among other things, in a massive influx of migrants to Europe.¹⁰⁹

The slow implementation of the Eastern Partnership program and other EU projects involving the South Caucasus is another sign that the EU does not have the incentives or institutional resources needed for peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations in the Karabakh conflict. Moreover, EU's declared emphasis on "soft power" rather than on "hard power"¹¹⁰ suggests that it will help to resolve the conflict by non-

108. In the 20th century France, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Spain had colonies and dependent territories in Africa, with which these former metropolitan countries maintained economic, political and cultural ties. European countries provide assistance to African countries in the framework of "development policy" to address many issues encountered by these countries after gaining independence.

109. Blagoveschensky, A., Ryshkovsky, V. "Operations and Missions of the European Union." *Zarubezhnoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, # 7, 2008, pp.13-18 (in Russian).

110. The special position of European countries on the use of force provoked sharp disagreements between the EU and the US in late 2002-early 2003 over US preparations and diplomacy for the war in Iraq. These disagreements about the "soft" and "hard" power received their clearest expression in the article and then book by the American analyst Robert Kagan, "On Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order." Kagan compared the militarily weak Europe to Venus, and the US to Mars. He accused wrote that "Europe's greater tolerance for threats is its relative weakness," and that "The American security guarantee that Europeans enjoy and have enjoyed for six decades, ever since the United States took upon itself the burden of maintaining order in far-flung regions of the world – from East Asia to the Middle East – from which European power had largely withdrawn." Comparing the U.S. and European approaches to resolving conflicts, Kagan wrote that "Europeans ... try to influence others through subtlety and

military means. EU's strategy includes a long-term program of conflict transformation by means of joint economic projects and the creation of new ideology of regional unity as opposed to nation-building. The strategy envisages measures to overcome the isolation of conflict parties.

The NATO's participation in peacekeeping operations in the zone of the Karabakh conflict could have a chance of success in view of the Kosovo precedent, very similar to the Nagorno-Karabakh, and of the NATO's role in peace enforcement and post-conflict reconstruction in the Balkans. However, as Armenia and Azerbaijan are already involved in NATO programs and wish to continue taking part, any possible settlement by NATO forces will focus on non-military methods: consultative political mechanisms, modernization of the armies, joint exercises, etc.¹¹¹ In addition, it is necessary to take into account NATO's continued operation in Afghanistan and Turkey's negative reaction to the war in Iraq. Finally, Russia and Iran oppose the NATO's active engagement in the region. Correspondingly, peacemaking in Karabakh by NATO forces is currently almost out of the question.

The participation of CSTO countries in peacekeeping operations is also purely hypothetical. The CSTO does not have the institutional resources for deploying a peacekeeping operation. The formation of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF) and peacekeeping contingents of the CSTO is at a very early stage and is unlikely to be completed in the near future. Plus, it is very unlikely that CSTO member states will approve its involvement in a peacekeeping operation in the zone of the

indirection. They are more tolerant of failure, more patient when solutions don't come quickly. They generally favour peaceful responses to problems, preferring negotiation, diplomacy, and persuasion to coercion. They are quicker to appeal to international law, international conventions, and international opinion to adjudicate disputes. They try to use commercial and economic ties to bind nations together. They often emphasize process over result, believing that ultimately process can become substance." Kagan, Robert. *On Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. Vintage Books, 2004, pp. 5, 31, 33.

111. Olevsky, V. "The Activities of NATO in European Security." *Zarubezhnoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, # 5, 2010, pp.3-10 (in Russian).

Karabakh conflict. If, however, this extremely unlikely event does take place, it will be opposed by other external actors. And finally, the fact of Armenia's membership in the CSTO makes it virtually impossible for Azerbaijan to perceive a peacekeeping operation under the aegis of the CSTO as objective and impartial.

Consequently, the possibility of an externally imposed settlement or peace enforcement in the zone of the Karabakh conflict is low. The international community does not intervene in every conflict that needs a resolution. Intervention becomes much more likely if there is political pressure by leading world and regional powers that have interests in the area of the conflict and are ready to supply the military forces and to lead operations. Moreover, a lot depends on whether there are reasons to hope for a quick solution. There are a few successful examples of peacekeeping operations, mainly on the periphery of world politics, in fairly remote geographical regions where geopolitical and geo-economic interests of the world's leading players coincided, or almost coincided (e.g. operations under the auspices of the UN in Mozambique in 1992-1994 or in Cambodia in 1991-1993.).

Peacekeeping practice shows that if one or all parties to the conflict refuse to stick to previous agreements, or if uncontrollable armed groups operate on the territory of the conflict, there is very little that the international community can do. Procedures for making the decision to launch a peacekeeping operation are complicated, and after that, a lot of red tape needs to be cut before the actual operation begins. Sometimes peacekeepers arrive to the hot spot when it is too late. The US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group Robert Bradtke recently admitted that rapid delivery of a large number of peacekeepers to the Karabakh conflict zone would be impossible.¹¹² Furthermore, it is not unusual for an international peacekeeping operation to end in a total failure, e.g. renewed armed conflict and new outbreaks of violence (e.g., the Sinai Peninsula in 1967,

112. "It is Impossible to Deliver Large Numbers of Peacekeepers to the Zone of the Karabakh Conflict: Robert Bradtke," www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/armenia/1325655.html, 15.09.2010 (in Russian).

Lebanon in 1982, Somalia in 1992-1995, Rwanda in 1993-1994, and Srebrenica in 1995).

One can find examples of efficient operations that led to peace or stopped bloodshed in a conflict zone. Such operations were often the result of unilateral actions by a great power, an international coalition or a military and political bloc (e.g., the Balkans in 1990s, South Ossetia in 2008). However, unilateral actions are usually politically biased and cannot be accepted by all parties to the conflict and by the international community as fair and legitimate, and are by no means examples of compromise-driven and successful unilateral peace enforcement.

3.3. PROLONGATION OF THE STATUS QUO AS A MECHANISM FOR SEEKING COMPROMISE AND DE-ACTUALIZING THE CONFLICT

Obviously, negotiations are the best way to address an asymmetric conflict. However, the option of negotiations is often rejected by “strong opponents” or states that believe that negotiations would lend legitimacy to the secessionists’ existence and demands. A state actor will almost invariably attempt to: a) preserve the integrity of the country and maximize control, b) contain the conflict within the domestic jurisdiction and c) impede the internationalization of the conflict and equal participation by the aspiring country in the negotiations.

William Zartman wrote that “the government seeks to turn asymmetry into escalation, to destroy the rebellion and break its commitment, and force the rebels to sue for peace. The insurgents usually seek to break out their asymmetry by linking up with an external host state and neighbor, thus internationalizing the conflict. In so doing, the insurgents radically change the structure of the conflict from a doubly asymmetric dyad to a wobbly triad of great complexity”.¹¹³

113. Zartman, William. “Dynamics and Constraints in Negotiation in Internal Conflicts,” p.11.

In view of the complex nature of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, it can only be resolved on the condition that the contradictions are resolved in two separate dimensions: symmetric and asymmetric. Azerbaijan prioritizes its “state-based” approach, according to which Armenia is liable for the occupation of Azerbaijan’s territories. The position of the NKR and Armenia is that an unrecognized actor is eligible to receive the support of the international community for the implementation of the right of nations to self-determination, an approach instilled in international law after the World War II. The participation of the UN, OSCE, EC and EU in resolving such conflicts reflects efforts to take the position of ethnic minorities into account.

Currently, the Karabakh conflict is in the “wobbly triad of complexity,” locked into the “zero-sum conflict” formula. Possible solutions offered by external players are focused on its transformation into a “non-zero-sum conflict” in which the concerns of the parties are formulated as compatible and not mutually exclusive.

At present, it is impossible to reconcile all concerns, although in the medium- and long-term, one can hope for some convergence and overlap provided the parties will have acquired new goals, e.g., the need to find a compromise and to establish peace and stability in the South Caucasus in order to become eligible for EU accession. In public perceptions, gradual de-actualization of the conflict may occur with time, creating prerequisites for finding some common ground.

The situation in the conflict has remained “frozen” since the completion of its “hot” stage in 1994. The concept of “frozen conflict” implies that all structural elements of a conflict (objective and subjective) are there but parties refrain from steps aimed at achieving their goals. “Freezing of the conflict” implies its potential awakening and possible rapid escalation to full-scale war, should control over the situation slacken or the parties abandon voluntary or enforced self-restraint. Escalation can also be caused by short-sighted behavior of external players that have vested interests and influence in the region.

Many analysts predict that the Karabakh conflict will stay in the

conservation stage for a long time and will be under constant attention of regional and international players concerned with maintaining stability in the region.

Nevertheless, what seems impossible now may become a reality in the medium-term provided two most important conditions are met: 1) non-resumption of hostilities by the parties of the conflict and 2) preservation of the formal format of negotiations and active support and pressure on the part of influential external actors.

This way, even unwilling support to the *status quo* can pave the way to a compromise, which can be achieved when the parties are psychologically ready to accept a settlement, and more favorable external conditions arise.

CONCLUSION, OR WHAT THE THEORY OF ASYMMETRIC
CONFLICT ADDS TO OUR UNDERSTANDING AND TO PROGNOSIS
OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

An analysis of the Karabakh controversy through the prism of the theory of asymmetric conflict allows us to highlight the most significant features of the current situation and, thus, helps us to understand the past and to consider options for the future. The theory of asymmetric conflict treats the situation as a set of closely connected events at the level of domestic, foreign, regional and global policies, and assumes the possibility of nonlinear development, contrary to formal logic and to conventional strategic analysis.

The completion of the military phase of the conflict of 1992–1994 with a victory of the formally “weaker adversary” – the NKR – in its struggle against the “stronger adversary” – Azerbaijan – confirms the proposition of the asymmetric conflict theory that superiority in military power and resources does not guarantee a military and political victory. Factors that ensured the victory of the relatively weak in the conflict included, in this case: military and military-technical, economic and political assistance by other countries (Armenia); high morale and mobilization of Karabakh population; and pressure on the participants of the conflict to end the hostilities, exerted by regional and international actors (Russia, the US, European countries, the CIS/CSTO, OSCE, UN).

Currently, the NKR is striving to smoothen out its asymmetric relations with Azerbaijan and the world. During years of survival in the format of an unrecognized state, the NKR has built institutions of statehood in the military, political, economic and social realms. Separate existence from Armenia motivates the leaders of the NKR to insist on full international recognition, which would complete the ongoing creation of statehood. In this sense, for Nagorno-Karabakh the prolongation of the *status quo* is the *worst of the best* scenarios as it does not terminate the separate existence of the NKR. Contrastingly, for Azerbaijan the *status*

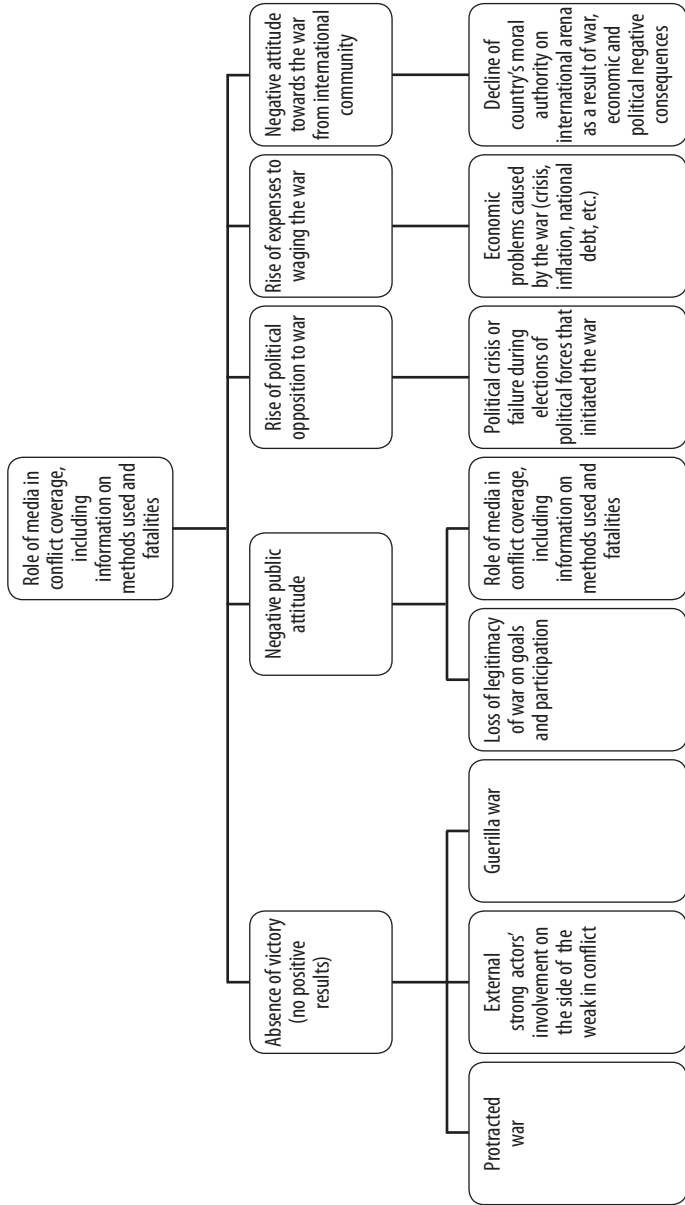
quo is the *best of the worst* scenarios since although the NKR is in fact a separate entity, other countries do not recognize its independence.

It would be unwise to exaggerate the readiness of the international community to provide military assistance in the case of renewed hostilities. This is a fact of paramount importance of which all players are well aware. Neither the NKR nor Armenia nor Azerbaijan can feel secure that their unilateral actions will receive approval and support from the international community. In fact, influential players of world politics are much more likely to regard patience and readiness for compromise as behavior worthy of encouragement.

Another conclusion that can be made from the numerous asymmetric conflicts of the last few decades is that there are no quick and easy solutions to complex problems of this kind.

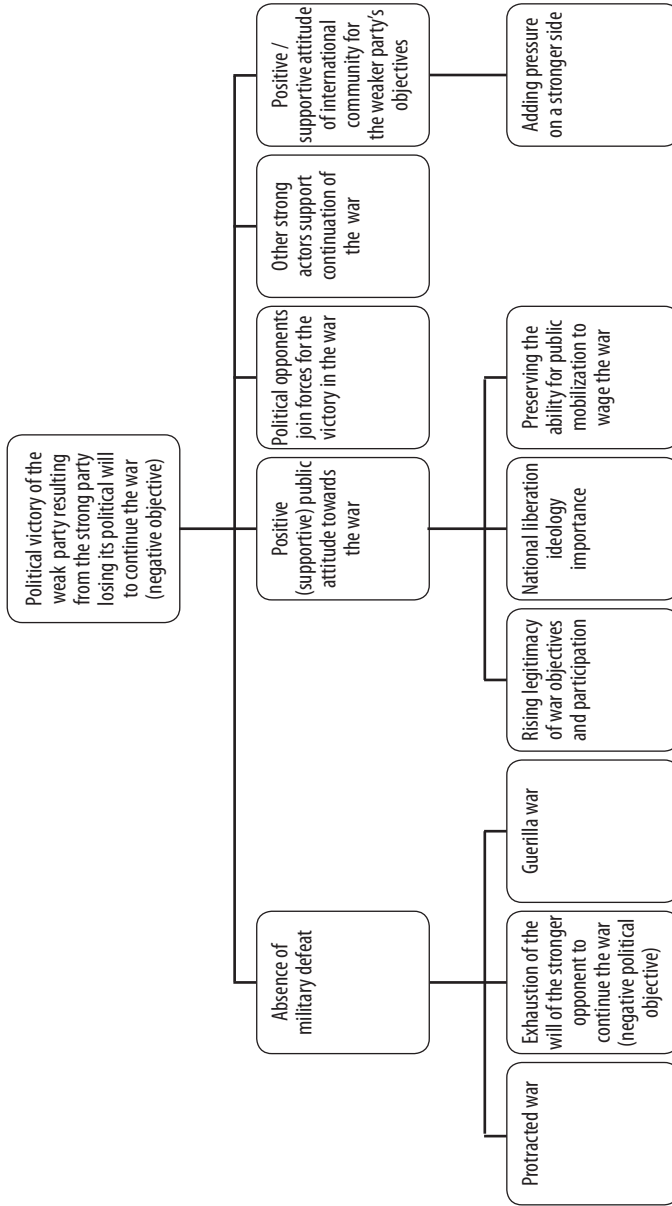
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
 A MODEL FOR ANALYZING FACTORS DETERMINING THE DEFEAT OF THE STRONG IN
 ASYMMETRIC ARMED CONFLICT¹¹⁴



114. Deriglazova, L.V. Asymmetric Conflicts: Equation with Many Unknowns, p.49.

APPENDIX 2
A MODEL FOR ANALYZING FACTORS DETERMINING THE VICTORY OF THE WEAK IN
ASYMMETRIC ARMED CONFLICT¹¹⁵



115. Deriglazova, L.V. Asymmetric Conflicts: Equation with Many Unknowns, p.51.

APPENDIX 3
KEY ASYMMETRIES IN PROTRACTED REGIONAL CONFLICTS¹¹⁶

Nature of Asymmetry Between Party 1 and Party 2	Definition
Capability	
Coercive ability	Degree to which P1 can coerce P2, and not vice versa
External Support	Level of help afforded P1 by external 3Ps
Access	Ability of P1 to have self/goals recognized as part of political agenda in relevant decision-making process
Visibility	Ability of P1 to be noticed in general public areas
Cost Experience	Level of loss experienced by P1 from conflict
Survivability	Ability of P1 to survive major setback of defeat
Bargaining Ability	Ability of P1 to conduct skilful negotiations
Structure	
Intraparty Cohesion	Number of significant cleavages within P1
Leadership Legitimacy	Extent to which leaders in P1 can claim to be rightfully in power
Leadership Insecurity	Degree of challenge to leaders' incumbency within P1
Constituent Mobilization	Degree to which rank and file in P1 are involved in conflict
Elite Entrapment	Extent to which P1 leaders have committed their political futures to success in conflict
Commitment	
Goal Salience	Importance of issues in conflict to P1
Constituent Commitment	Level of rank and file support for P1 goal
External Dependency	Degree to which P1 continuing conflict depends on support from external patrons
Commitment to Change	Degree to which P1 goals involve changes in status quo
Expectation of Success	Level of perception of probable success in conflict through current P1 strategies
Interdependence	
Isolation/Interdependence	Link of P1 to other salient conflicts
Parallelism	Degree to which conflict sets/follows precedents in other salient conflicts
Historical Justification	Degree to which conflict can be linked to historical precedents or exemplars
Legality/Status	
Representativeness	Degree to which P1 leaders' right/ability to represent P1 is generally accepted
Existence	Degree to which P1 right to exist as a party is generally recognized and accepted
Legitimacy	Legal standing of P1
Morality	

116. Mitchell, C. "Asymmetry and Strategies of Regional Conflict Reduction," p.28-29.

Existential Acceptance	Degree to which P1 accepts P2 right to exist and consent
Issue Acceptance	Degree to which P1 recognizes that P2 may have a case to be dealt with
Goal Acceptance	Degree to which P1 accepts the legitimacy of P2's goals
<i>Behaviour</i>	
Violence	Level of violence used by P1 against P2
Coercion	Level of coercion used by P1 against P2
Persuasion	Degree of persuasion used by P1 against P2
Conciliation	Degree of conciliation used by P1 with respect to P2
Avoidance	P1 efforts to avoid dealing with the dispute or with P2

P1 – Incumbent, a party that holds the power, government.

P2 – Insurgent organizations that challenge Incumbents.

APPENDIX 4
STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN OR PRESERVE KEY ASYMMETRIES¹¹⁷

Dimension		<i>Direction of Asymmetry</i>	
		<i>Positive (Maintain/ Exploit)</i>	<i>Negative (Reduce/ Reserve)</i>
Capabilities			
Coercive Capability	INC ¹¹⁸	Keep resource advantage	–
	INS	–	Increase resource base for struggle
External support	INC	Exclude other parties from further roles	–
	INS	–	Involve other Ps as patrons or as supporters
Access	INC	Maintain own access to key processes; deny INS access	–
	INS	–	Increase own access to relevant political process
Visibility	INC	Insulate as domestic issue and insist on non-interference	–
	INS	–	Publicize conflict and case; encourage discussion in all public arenas
Cost Experience	INC	Isolate effects of INS costs	–
	INS	–	Increase level of costs suffered by INC and knowledge of these
Survivability	INC	Minimize effects of INS strategy on political legitimacy	–
	INS	–	Insure key leaders and symbols against misfortune/failure
Bargaining ability	INC	Maintain own negotiating skills/structure; deny to INS	–
	INS	–	Develop negotiating skills/system to offset those of INC
Structure			
Intraparty Cohesion	INC	Maintain own unity but divide and rule INS by cooptation	–
	INS	–	Increase own unity while dividing INC supporters

117. Mitchell, C. "Asymmetry and Strategies of Regional Conflict Reduction," p.33-36.

118. INC for Incumbent; INS for Insurgent.

Leadership Legitimacy	INC	Maintain legitimacy by minimizing disruption	–
	INS	–	Increase own legitimacy by success in the field and undermine that of INC
Leadership (In)-Security	INC	Maintain against threat from within party re strategy against INS	–
	INS	–	Increase by success of efforts and by dealing with intraparty critics
Constituent Mobilization	INC	–	Keep appropriate, nonalarmist level in own followers, and undermine INS
	INS	Maintain high level through success	–
Elite Entrapment	INC	Follow strategies that fulfill public commitments	–
	INS	–	Equalize level of adherence to claims and goals
<i>Commitment</i>			
Goal Saliency	INC	–	Keep issues in dispute peripheral
	INS	Increase saliency of issues to INC	–
Constituent Commitment	INC	–	Undermine INS morale and commitment; increase own
	INS	Maintain high level of own morale; undermine that of INC	–
External Dependency	INC	–	Maintain own low level of dependency and deal with INS on own terms
	INS	Reduce own dependency on external support	–
Commitment to Change	INC	–	Increase commitment to level needed to undermine INS support
	INS	Maintain own commitment at level needed to optimize support	–
Expectation of Success Through Coercion	INC	Maintain anticipation levels	–
	INS	–	Undermine INC's expectation of early success
<i>Interdependence</i>			
Isolation/Interdependence	INC	Insulate conflict from others in which INC is engaged	–
	INS	–	Increase interdependence of own conflict with others offering promising models

Parallelism	INC	–	Maintain uniqueness of conflict being pursued
	INS	Emphasize parallels with many “similar” conflicts	–
Historical Justification	INC	–	As above
	INS	As above	–
<i>Legality</i>			
Representativeness	INC	Ensure that recognition of INS leaders is generally denied	–
	INS	–	Obtain general recognition of own leaders
Existence	INC	Ensure existence of INS as legitimate party is in doubt	–
	INS	–	Gain general acceptance of legitimate right of existence
Legitimacy	INC	Maintain own superior legal standing	–
	INS	–	Undermine INC legal standing
<i>Morality</i>			
Existential Acceptance	INC	Ensure that INC denial of INS right to exist continues	–
	INS	–	Obtain recognition of own existence, from INC
Issue Acceptance	INC	Maintain denial of INS case	–
	INS	–	Obtain acceptance of there being a case to be dealt with from INC
Goal	INC	Maintain denial of legitimacy of INS goals and objectives	–
	INS	–	Gain acceptance of legitimacy of own goals and objectives
<i>Activity Level</i>			
Coercion	INC	Maintain or reduce to low levels; deter and control	–
	INS	–	Escalate to new level

APPENDIX 5
INDICATORS OF NATIONAL POWER: AZERBAIJAN, ARMENIA AND
NAGORNO-KARABAKH¹¹⁹

Country	Azerbaijan	Armenia	NKR
Resources			
Territory	86 600 km ² (actually controls only about 74 800 km ²)	29 800 km ²	11 722 km ²
Borders	566 km – Armenia 221 km – Armenia (on the side of Nakhichevan Republic) 336 km – Georgia 9 km – Turkey 605 km – Iran 338 km – Russia	566 km – Azerbaijan 221 km – Nakhichevan Republic, Azerbaijan 164 km – Georgia 268 km – Turkey 35 km – Iran	–
Population	8.730 million, positive growth	3.2 million, negative growth	141 400
Life expectancy	66.66 years 157 th in the world	72.68 years 118 th in the world	–
Ethnic composition	90.6% - Azerbaijanis 1.8 % - Russians (141,000)	97.9% Armenians	98% Armenians
Literacy	98.9%	99.4%	over 99%
Urban population	52%	64%	–
Growth due to migration	–1.69/1 000	–4.56/1 000	– 1.4/1 000 (2007)
Economy			
GDP (PPP)	\$85.77 billion 73 rd in the world ¹²⁰	\$16.24 billion 132 nd in the world ¹²¹	~ \$305 million (estimate, 2009)
Real GDP growth in 2009	9.3% 3 rd in the world	–14.4% 210 th in the world ¹²²	13.1% (estimate, 2008)
GDP per capita (PPP)	\$10 400 102 nd in the world	\$5 500 138 th in the world	\$3 800 (estimate, 2009)
Poverty level	16 % - 2008 49% - 2004	26.5%	–
GDP distribution across economy sectors	Agriculture – 5.6% Industry – 61.4% Services – 33%	Agriculture – 15.6% Industry – 46.2% Services – 38.2%	Agriculture – 24.5% Industry – 34.3% Services – 34.4% (2007)
Exports	\$13.16 billion 75 th in the world	\$0.714 billion 159 th in the world	\$72.5 million (2007)

Export recipients	Italy – 20.69% India – 10.67% US – 9.24 % France – 8.15% Germany 7.62% Indonesia– 6. 63% Canada– 5.13%	Germany – 16.4% Russia – 15.45% US – 9.64 % Bulgaria– 8.6% Georgia – 7.57% The Netherlands– 7.48% Belgium– 6.71% Canada– 4.91%	Armenia, Russia, Ukraine, Spain, Iran
Imports	\$5.448 billion 106 th in the world	\$2.720 billion 142 nd in the world	\$204.8 million
Import providers	Turkey – 18.69% Russia – 16.98% Germany – 7.87% Ukraine– 7.3% China– 6.18% United Kingdom– 5.73%	Russia – 24% China– 8.72 % Ukraine– 6.15 % Turkey – 5.39 % Germany – 5.36 % Iran – 4 %	Armenia, Russia, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, UK, Iran, USA, UAE, Lebanon, Turkey
Electricity consumption	18 billion kW 70 th in the world	4.776 billion kW 109 th in the world	225.5 million kW (2007)
Production of electricity	18.6 billion kW 72 nd in the world	5.585 billion kW 109 th in the world	90.4 million kW
Oil consumption	136 000 BPD 70 th in the world	49 000 BPD 98 th in the world	–
Oil imports	2 848 BPD 170 th in the world	45 200 BPD 93 rd in the world	–
Crude oil exports	528 900 BPD 29 th in the world	0	–
Gas consumption	10.12 billion m ³ 47 th in the world	1.93 billion m ³ 81 st in the world	–
Gas imports	0	1.93 billion m ³	–
Gas exports	5.564 billion m ³ 25 th in the world	0	–
Domestic debt	5.1% GNP	–	–
External debt	\$2.411 billion 129 th in the world	4.47 billion \$ 106 th in the world	–

119. Statistical data on Armenia and Azerbaijan were taken from the Internet portals: RF FO, Russia – CIS member-states.

<http://www.mid.ru/ns-rsng.nsf/strana>; World Factbook. CIA. USA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>. Data for the NKR are presented according to the official website of the NKR President.

<http://www.president.nkr.am/ru/nkr/generalInformation/> (in Russian). We also used expert estimates provided by David Petrosyan, the expert on unrecognized /partially recognized states of the South Caucasus.

120. Note an almost 6-fold increase in GDP emerging from comparing the data for 2000 and 2010.

121. GDP and per capita GDP have nearly doubled (comparison of the data for 2000 and 2010).

122. In this rating table, Russia is 206th, Ukraine is 212th, Latvia is the last - 213th. Afghanistan is the first.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2003rank.html?countryName=Azerbaijan&countryCode=aj®ionCode=me&rank=3#aj>.

APPENDIX 6
MILITARY AND TECHNICAL EQUILIBRIUM IN THE KARABAKH
CONFLICT ZONE AT THE BEGINNING OF 2010¹²³

	Azerbaijan	Armenia	Nagorno-Karabakh
Size of regular armed forces ¹²⁴	~70 000 / ~100 000	~ 47 000 / ~ 50 000	- / ~ 20 000
Military spending ¹²⁶	3.8% of GNP (2008)	3.3% of GNP (2008)	-
Military spending ¹²⁶	\$1 434 million (2009)	\$405 million ¹²⁷ (2009)	-
Number of main battle tanks official data / estimate	320 (220 T-72, 100 T-55) / ~ 600 (T-80, T-72, T-55)	110 (102 T-72, 8 T-55) / ~ 150 - 160 (T-80, T-72, T-55)	- / ~ 371 (T-72, T-55)
Armored combat vehicles – ACV official data/ estimate	850 (295 BMD, BRM -1, BMP -1,-2,-3, 150 BTR -60,-70,-80,-80A, 11 – BTR- D, 393 MTLB) / ~ 1000 ACV	385 (202 BMD, BRM-1, BMP -1,-2, 85 BTR-152, -60, -70, -80, 100 MTLB) / ~ 450 ACV	- / ~ 459 (BMD, BMP -1, -2, APC-70, -80)
Artillery systems of calibre 120-mm and above official data/ estimate	~ 350 (including: 12 203-mm SPG 2S7 "Peony," ~ 12 152-mm SPG 2S3 "Acacia," 60 122-mm SPG 2S1 "Cloves," 26 120-mm SPG "Nona-S," 80 122-mm MLRS BM-21 "Hail") / ~ 600	250 (including: 28 152-mm SPG 2S3 "Acacia," 10 122-mm SPG 2S1 "Cloves," 47 122-mm MLRS BM-21 "Hail") / ~ 350 (including: 54 152-mm SPG 2S3 "Acacia," 50 122-mm SPG 2S1 "Cloves," 80 122-mm MLRS BM -21 "Hail")	- / ~ 280
Large-calibre MLRS launchers official data/ estimate	18 (12 300-mm "Smerch," 6 300-mm "Lynx" – "Extra" / 18	4 283-mm WM-80 / 8 283-mm WM-80	/ ~
Launchers of tactical and operational missile systems official data/ estimate	4 TP 9K79-1 "Tochka U" (SS-21 "Scarab-B") / 6 TP 9K79-1 "Tochka U" (SS-21 "Scarab-B")	- / 8 OTR 9K 72 "Elbrus" (SS-1C "Scud-B")	-
Combat aircraft official data/ estimate	78 (14 MiG-29 "Fulcrum-A/B," 35 MiG-25 "Foxbat," 5 MiG-21 "Fishbed," 14 SU-25 "Frogfoot," 5 SU-24 "Fencer," 5 SU-17/20 "Fitter") / 72 (14 MiG-29 "Fulcrum-A/B," 12 MiG-25 "Foxbat," ¹²⁸ 4 MiG-21 "Fishbed," 2 MiG-23 "Flogger," ~ 25 SU-25 "Frogfoot," 8 SU-24 "Fencer," 6 SU-17/20 "Fitter")	16 (1 MiG-25 "Foxbat," ¹²⁹ 15 SU-25 "Frogfoot") / 17 SU-25 "Frogfoot"	-

Attack helicopters official data/ estimate	26 Mi-24 "Hind" / 35 Mi-24 "Hind"	8 Mi-24 "Hind" / ~ 12 Mi-24 "Hind"	- / 4 Mi-24 "Hind"
Antiaircraft systems	~ / S-200 (SA-5 "Gammon"), S-125 (SA-3 "Goa"), S-75 (SA-2 "Guideline"), "Buk" (SA-17 "Grizzly"), "Krug" (SA-4 "Ganef"), "Cube" (SA-6 "Gain- ful"), "Osa" (SA-8 "Gecko"), "Strela-10" (SA-13 "Gopher"), ZSU-23-4 "Shilka MANPADS," ZU-23-2	~ / S-300 PT/PS (SA-10 "Grumble"), S-125 (SA-3 "Goa"), "Krug" (SA-4 "Ganef"), "Cube" (SA-6 "Gainful"), "Osa" (SA-8 "Gecko"), "Strela-10" (SA-13 "Gopher"), ZSU-23-4 "Shilka," MANPADS, ZU -23-2	~ / S-300 PT/PS (SA-10 "Grumble"), S-125 (SA-3 "Goa"), "Krug" (SA-4 "Ganef"), "Cube" (SA-6 "Gainful"), "Osa" (SA-8 "Gecko"), "Strela-10" (SA-13 "Gopher"), "Tun- guska" (SA-19 "Grison"), ZSU-23-4 "Shilka," MAN- PADS, ZU -23-2
Foreign military bases and military assistance	The Gabala Radar Station (Russia), military, technical and political assistance from Turkey, cooperation with U.S. and NATO bodies, participation in international peacekeeping operations	102 nd Russian military base, the "Armenia" Border Group of Russia's Federal Security Ser- vice, membership in the CSTO, military-technical cooperation with Russia, military coop- eration and assistance from Greece, U.S. and NATO bodies	Armenia's military- technical and military- political assistance

123. Based on The Military Balance 2009/2010. IISS. London: Oxford University Press, 2009; SIPRI Yearbook 2010: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. SIPRI: Solna, Sweden, 2010, and expert estimates.
124. "Moscow Plays Both Sides on Nagorno-Karabakh." Strategic Comments, September 2010. London: IISS, <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-16-2010/september/moscow-plays-both-sides-on-nagorno-karabakh/>.
125. Military expenditures in money terms are calculated using the techniques and the database of one of the most influential centres in the world in military & political studies – the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). For details, see: <http://milexdata.sipri.org/>.
126. In monetary terms and in constant numbers of 2008, according to the method used at the SIPRI. For details, see: <http://milexdata.sipri.org/>.
127. According to SIPRI estimates and taking into account costs of military retirees, the official sum total of Armenia's military spending is 15-20% higher. For details, see: <http://milexdata.sipri.org/>.
128. Combat-ready aircraft and aircraft in flying condition.
129. Hijacked in 1993 from the Azerbaijan AF, in non-flying status.

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Caucasus Institute Research Papers
3, June 2011

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Caucasus Institute
Yerevan • 2011