

DIASPORA DESIGN VERSUS HOMELAND REALITIES: CASE STUDY OF ARMENIAN DIASPORA

Bahar Baser and Ashok Swain*

Abstract

Recently the concept of “diaspora” has become a popular subject and two polarized views dominate the study on diaspora behavior: the categorization of the diaspora as good or bad, conflict or peace promoter, spoiler or peace-maker. The majority of the research on diaspora politics places emphasis on its conflict-promoting character. Researchers argue that a diaspora may even act against its homeland’s interests. This paper aims to further explore this behavior of diaspora groups and try to locate the reasons behind this phenomenon. The focus is the Armenian diaspora and its policies, particularly targeting the foreign policy of the host country. Some of the critical issues are the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh and Turkey-Armenia relations, which includes the issues of “genocide” recognition, normalization of diplomatic relations and opening of the borders. With the help of theoretical frameworks, the Armenian diaspora’s positions will be analyzed in this paper.

Keywords: *Armenian Diaspora, Armenia, Karabakh, Conflict Resolution, Homeland, Hostland, Diaspora*

Introduction

In the last few decades the concept of “diaspora” has become a popular subject for researchers and policy makers. Numerous papers and reports have tried defining the “diaspora” concept, and a number of them have focused on its impacts in the hostland or homelands’ socio-economic life and politics. Recently, the interest on investigating the diaspora has shifted to another level, and “diaspora’s role in conflict and conflict resolution” has become the focus of research. This topic has become especially important after the Cold War and, more recently, after 9/11.

Up until now, it seems like two polarized views dominate the study on diaspora behavior; in other words, categorizing the diaspora as good or bad, conflict or peace promoter, spoiler or

* **Bahar Baser** is a PhD. candidate at the Department of Social and Political Sciences, European University Institute, Italy. **Dr. Ashok Swain** is a Professor at the Department of Peace and conflict Research, Uppsala University, and the Director of the Uppsala Centre for Sustainable Development, Sweden.

peace maker.¹ In fact, it is not so simple to tag any diaspora group with one of the labels. Assuming that one diaspora group has one common point of view is problematic since diasporas are not homogeneous groups, and they have their own factions. However, this has not deterred some from perceiving diasporas as irresponsible and unaccountable long distance nationalist groups, with more marginal ideas than homeland policy makers, and that they are stubborn when it comes to making compromises on sensitive issues. On the other hand, some argue that diasporas may act as bridges between their hostland and homeland and make it easier to bring a peaceful resolution to homeland conflicts, since they have the leverage to lobby the both sides and they have the potential to be highly effective on post-conflict reconstruction.² It should be noted that examining diaspora behavior and coming up with a universally applicable framework is extremely hard. However, the bulk of the studies on diaspora politics put emphasis on its conflict promoting character. Researchers argue that diasporas may even sometimes act against their homeland interests.³ This paper aims to further explore this behavior of diaspora groups and try to locate the reasons behind this phenomenon.

The focus here is the Armenian Diaspora and its policies, particularly targeting the foreign policy of the host country towards the conflicts in the homeland. Recently, it has been argued that in a number of cases, the Armenian diaspora has been taking positions which are not necessarily favoring Armenia's interest. Some of these critical issues are the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh and Turkey-Armenia relations, which includes the issues of "genocide" recognition, normalization of diplomatic relations and opening of the borders. Especially after the Turkish President Abdullah Gul's recent visit to Armenia, these issues have been confirmed as the main points in bilateral relations. With the help of theoretical frameworks, the Armenian diaspora's positions will be analyzed in this paper. Whether the Armenian diaspora is acting as a 'good' or 'bad' diaspora is not important here, rather the focus is on the critical stages when the diaspora's behavior goes against the homeland's or other diaspora member's interests.

Theoretical Framework: Diaspora as a Level of Analysis

The term 'diaspora' is frequently used to describe any immigrant group. Today it is commonly argued that the term "diaspora" is losing its meaning since it became so much of a broad concept that it can no longer be used to identify specific communities. In the past, Jewish, Greek or Armenian groups were only referred as diasporas. In the recent diaspora literature, one may see numerous definitions of diaspora emphasizing some features and then eliminating or adding new ones to the definition. It raises confusion about the whole process of which

¹ Hall, Jonathan and Swain, Ashok, "Catapulting Conflicts or Propelling Peace: Diasporas and Civil War", in: Swain, Ashok, Amer, Ramses and Öjendal, Joakim, (eds.) "Globalization and Challenges to Building Peace" (London, New York & Delhi: Anthem Press, 2007); Swain, Ashok (ed.), "Diasporas, Armed Conflicts and Peace building in their Homelands", Uppsala University, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Report No. 79, 2007.

² Baser, Bahar and Swain, Ashok, "Diasporas as Peacemakers: Third Party Mediation in Homeland Conflicts", *International Journal on World Peace*, vol. 25:3, September 2008, pp. 7-28.

³ Bercovitch, Jacob, "A neglected relationship: Diasporas and conflict resolution", in: Hazel Smith and Paul Stares, (eds), "Diasporas in Conflict: Peace-Makers or Peace-Wreckers?" (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2007).

immigrant group is a diaspora and according to which criteria they are distinguished from other transnational networks and immigrant groups. Here we are not going into this debate on definition; rather the focus is on the common features that are elaborated by existing research in this area. Additionally, those debates do not necessarily apply to the Armenian diaspora since they can be taken as non-normative starting points for a discourse that is traveling or hybridizing in new global conditions,⁴ and the Armenian diaspora is one of the transnational communities that practically fits all of the diaspora definitions given by numerous authors up until now. Forced separation from the homeland, the evolution of national sentiments over time, an idea of return, and concerns about the homeland's future are just some of the various issues that are attributed to the concept of diaspora and it appears that the Armenian diaspora fits all most all the criteria.

Shain defines the diaspora as “a people with common national origin who reside outside a claimed or an independent home territory. They regard themselves or regarded by others as members or potential members of their country of origin (claimed or already existing) a status held regardless of their geographical location and citizen status outside their home country.”⁵ When it comes to studies on diaspora involvement in homeland conflicts, one may observe that most of the current research on diaspora is primarily focused on examining its role as a peace wrecker rather than peace maker. To many, diaspora groups are obstacles to conflict resolution and peace building. Some authors, such as Anderson, describe the diaspora as an extremist, long distance nationalist community, which pursue radical agendas taking advantage of the freedom and economic opportunities that the host land provides them.⁶ Skrbis adds to the long distance nationalism question;

“As a global phenomenon, long-distance nationalism has two important repercussions that make it worthy of study. In terms of domestic politics, this issue boils down to nation-states now having to reckon with the non-responsible (in Anderson’s term) political participation of often unrealistic co-nationals living outside their political borders; this participation can reach toxic levels or assume corrosive forms in the modalities of money for certain political figures, nationalist propaganda, and weapons, although it can be restricted to the more benign activities of lobbying and fund-raising for humanitarian undertakings.”⁷

⁴ Brubaker, Rogers, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora”, in: *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.28, No.1, January 2005, pp.1-19. p. 2.

⁵ Shain, Yossi, “Ethnic Diasporas and US Foreign Policy”, in: *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 109, No 5, Winter 1994-1995, pp. 811-841. p. 813.

⁶ Spear, Joanna, “The Potential of Diaspora Groups to Contribute to Peace Building”, A Scoping Paper, p. 2. <http://www.research.plymouth.ac.uk/twe/mainframe.html>

⁷ Skrbis, Zlatko, “Long-distance Nationalism: Diasporas, Homelands and Identities”, Research in Migration and Ethnic Relations Series, (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1999), p. 201. http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~ljubljana/bookreviews/Zlatko_Skrbis.pdf

The importance and influence of diaspora remittances and support for promotion of conflicts is illustrated by a widely cited World Bank Report.⁸ It is perceived that the diaspora members, by sending large remittances as well as channeling huge funds through welfare organizations close to insurgent or terrorist groups, contribute to conflict escalation rather than supporting constructive conflict transformation.⁹ As Cochrene notes, “When Diasporas are mentioned within the context of violent conflicts, the focus frequently tends to be on their tendency to fund the continuation of warfare and their propensity to destabilize negotiations and peace building efforts.”¹⁰

Not only financial support and remittances, but also the recruitment of guerrillas to fight the homeland struggle, is a regular phenomenon within diaspora groups. As Vertovec points out, diaspora groups have played major roles in fomenting and supporting conflict in places as diverse as Ethiopia, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Kashmir, Israel, and Palestine. The conflict in the homeland is often the yardstick of diaspora identity and therefore diaspora groups have a tendency to complicate the peace processes, and may make homeland conflicts even more protracted.¹¹ Examples on this front are numerous and that is why diasporas are seen as part of the conflict problem, not as part of the solution.¹² However, even diaspora groups who support peace processes at home may unintentionally assist actors involved in conflict by sending their remittances. As Vertovec claims, even diasporas who took part in efforts to resolve conflict and supported peace building projects - particularly in Eritrea and Sri Lanka - with their remittances, naively helped to renew conflicts in their home countries following political upheavals.¹³

When examining the factors that may affect the essence of diaspora behavior towards the homeland, one should consider the triadic relations between homeland, hostland and the diaspora, but in this paper our focus is primarily on the homeland-diaspora aspect. With regards to the participation in homeland affairs, one may argue that diasporas perpetually get involved in the internal conflicts of the homeland. The reason for diaspora participation in the homeland affairs could be their motivation to preserve the memory of their homeland and keep the emotional attachments of solidarity and kinship.¹⁴ This is true especially for the diasporas that surface as the result of a civil conflict in the homeland. Diaspora groups are also committed to preserve or restore their ‘nation’. Their consciousness and solidarity are primarily defined by

⁸ Collier, Paul & Hoeffler, Anke, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War”, Policy Research Working Paper 2355, The World Bank Development Research Group, May 2000.

⁹ Zunzer, Wolfram, “Diaspora communities and civil conflict transformation”, Berghof Occasional Paper, 26, pp.1-50, p. 27.

¹⁰ Cochrene, Feargal, “Civil Society beyond the State: The Impact of Diaspora Communities on Peace Building”, in: *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2007, p. 69.

¹¹ Lyons, Terrence, “Diasporas and Homeland Conflict”, Presented to the DC Area Workshop on “Contentious Politics”, March 2004. p.15.

¹² Demmers, Jolle, “New Wars and Diasporas: Suggestions for Research and Policy”, in: *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development*, 2007. p.11.

¹³ Vertovec, S., “Political Importance of Diasporas”, University of Oxford, Centre of Migration, Policy and Society Working Paper, No. 13, 2005, p. 5

¹⁴ Shain & Barth, “Diasporas and International Theory”, in: *International Organizations*, Vol.57, No.3, Summer 2003, pp. 449-479. p. 465.

this continuing relationship with the homeland.¹⁵ A majority of the diaspora groups, especially the conflict-generated diasporas,¹⁶ tend to keep their attachments to their ancestral homeland and give symbolic importance to it. As Vertovec explains, “Belonging to diaspora entails a consciousness of, or emotional attachment to, commonly claimed origins and cultural attributes associated with them. Such origins and attributes may emphasize ethno-linguistic, regional, religious, national or other features. Concerns for homeland developments, and the plight of co-diaspora members in other parts of the world flow from this consciousness and emotional attachment.”¹⁷

Furthermore, for the diasporas there is always the issue of returning to the homeland. The idea of a potential return affords them a legitimate stake in the way they interfere with homeland policies. The notion of a ‘secure homeland’, a place to return in time, plays a very important role in diaspora behavior, yet it has been proven by various cases that diaspora members are reluctant to leave the hostland when it comes to returning home if their goals are somehow achieved. Demmers contributes to the debate on this dilemma: “...the dilemma of wanting to return home and not wanting to give up relatively secure future, which creates a fear for peace among diaspora communities. Peace can take away one’s moral justification to live abroad.”¹⁸

Demmers describes the long distance interaction of the diaspora groups in the homeland conflicts, as they are engaged in a sort of “virtual conflict: they live their conflicts through the internet, email, television, and telephone without direct (physical) suffering, risks or accountability.”¹⁹ It could also be argued that since diaspora groups do not live in the homeland anymore and consequently do not suffer from the absence of peace conditions, they keep their emotional attachments to the holy homeland and make the conflicts even more protracted by not sacrificing their cause on the way to a peaceful settlement. As Lyons argues, the diaspora groups are less likely to support reconciliation efforts and they are also more reluctant than the homeland policy makers to bargain about exchanging part of their homeland for some other instrumental end.²⁰

It is not surprising that the policy priorities of diaspora members do not always coincide with the priorities of homeland state policy makers. The conflict between the diaspora behavior and the homeland’s interests is somewhat an understudied subject. The homelands’ relations with the diaspora should not be considered as a static policy. The homelands’ perception of the diaspora might change due to changes in governmental power, global dynamics, relations with the hostland etc. King and Melvin support this view by arguing that “...like all domestic

¹⁵ Safran, William, “Diasporas in modern societies: Myths of homeland and return”, in: *Diaspora*, Vol.1, No. 1, 1991, pp. 83-99; and Gillespie, Kate; Riddle, Liesl; Sayre, Edward; Sturges, David, “Diaspora Interest in Homeland Investment”, in: *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol.30, No. 3 1999, pp. 623-634.

¹⁶ Lyons, “Diasporas and Homeland Conflict”, p. 12.

¹⁷ Vertovec, “Political Importance of Diasporas”, p.2.

¹⁸ Demmers, “New Wars.”, p.15

¹⁹ Demmers, Jolle, “Diaspora and Conflict: Locality, Long-Distance Nationalism, and Delocalization of Conflict Dynamics”, in: *The Public*, vol. 9, No.1, 2002, 85-94. p. 94.

²⁰ Lyons, “Diasporas and Homeland Conflict”, p.17.

political issues, relations with the diaspora are rarely a subject of universal agreement among political actors. Diaspora policy on the part of the kin state, results from domestic wrangling among actors with divergent visions of the homeland, and its ties to territorially displaced co-ethnic communities. Kin states with the far reaching diaspora policies have been those that have been able to develop domestic political consensus on the need for stronger ties with the diaspora and to mobilize domestic resources for such a project.”²¹ They also add the argument that the consensus in the homeland towards the diasporas is usually not a response to shared national sentiments between the diaspora members, but most of the time a response to specific domestic interests. That is why one may observe several cases in diaspora literature where ‘yesterday’s traitors’ became ‘today’s beloved citizens who live outside the homeland’.

With regards to the inconsistency between the diaspora and homeland interests, Demmers argues that “[d]iasporas and homeland discourses of war and peace play different roles, and are at times directed at different constituencies, audiences and powers. The different priorities, functions and meanings assigned to the homeland by diaspora versus homeland actors can lead to tensions over war and peace policies.”²² Demmers also adds that the balance of power between the diaspora and homeland actors depends on several dynamics such as the relative strength of parties, qualitative and quantitative asymmetries between the two, resources, monetary flows and political lobbies. As Shain and Barth argue, the power relations between the diaspora and the homeland depend on how much the homeland needs the diaspora’s resources. However, need is not everything; they also put emphasis on the organizational structure of the diaspora concluding that the more the homeland is in need of diaspora and the more the diaspora is united, then the ability of the diaspora to influence the homeland policies is much stronger.²³

While examining conflict-generated diasporas, Lyons put emphasis on the fact that they usually develop networks based on their ethnic identity and they actually work on keeping nationalist hopes alive although they are abroad.²⁴ Those networks can be highly effective when it comes to raising consciousness in the hostland or in the global arena, raising funds for the ‘cause’ back at home, and developing stronger bonds with their ancestors or among each other. King and Melvin explain further the dynamics of the diaspora and homeland relationship: “Diasporas with well developed international organizations, extensive financial resources, and a strong sense of intergenerational ethno national identity have been most effective in challenging the leading role of indigenous elites within the homeland and in becoming powerful independent actors both within the kin state and in international arena.”²⁵

Another dimension in which to explain the diaspora involvement in homeland politics could be the dynamics between the hostland and the diaspora organizations. The political system in the

²¹ King, Charles & Melvin, Neil J., “Diaspora Politics: Ethnic Linkages, Foreign Policy and Security in Euroasia”, in: *International Security*, vol.24, No.3, Winter 1999-2000, pp. 108-138. p. 131.

²² Demmers, “New Wars.”, p.12.

²³ Shain & Barth, “Diasporas and International Theory”, p. 465.

²⁴ Lyons, “Diasporas and Homeland Conflict”, p.14.

²⁵ King & Melvin, “Diaspora Politics”, p. 132.

hostland is highly important, since it determines the extent to which the diasporas might influence the homeland politics in addition to the hostland ones. The more liberal the hostland's political system is, the easier it is for diaspora groups to put forth influence on foreign policy matters in the hostland towards the homeland. The nature of the hostland regime determines the way that the diaspora community organizes and interacts among itself and also with homeland actors. The way the host state allows the community to exert influence on itself affects the worth of the diaspora as a foreign policy asset in the eyes of the homeland.²⁶ For instance, "The openness of the American political system to ethnic politics has allowed many newly organized Diasporas to acquire a meaningful voice in the US foreign policy, especially on issues concerning countries of origin or symbolic homelands."²⁷ As Nielsen highlights, the states of residence for diasporas are not just midwives but also gatekeepers, as they lay down rules and constraints for the diaspora's political attempts to influence conflicts in their countries of origin.²⁸

Moreover, Diasporas may also resist peace moves by their homeland political elites as they still tend to hold on to different narratives of victimhood and "chosen trauma".²⁹ If a homeland government decides to pursue reconciliation with a historical enemy, diaspora communities may feel their identity as historical victims of the same enemy is under threat. The case of Armenia is one of the best examples of this. As Demmers points out, though a majority of diasporas aspire for peace and reconciliation that might go against their interests of protecting legal and social status and identity.³⁰ This dilemma can be observed in the behavior of many diaspora groups, particularly by the American- Armenian diaspora.

Armenian Diaspora: Its Size and Strength

Throughout the history, Armenia's strategic location was the reason for many empires and clans to fight over to dominate. Tölölyan states that during the early 11th century, Armenian people resided in a homeland that was six times bigger than today's Armenian Republic.³¹ After numerous devastating occupations, Armenians today find themselves dispersed around the world and organized as diaspora communities. For several centuries, the Armenian nation has been formed on interconnected communities without an umbrella government of its own.³² That is why immigration to other countries and continents became a part of the Armenian

²⁶ Shain & Barth, "Diasporas and International Theory", p. 463.

²⁷ Shain, "Ethnic Diasporas.", p. 812.

²⁸ Østergaard-Nielsen, Eva, "Diasporas and Conflict Resolution: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?" in: *DIIS Brief*, March, 2006, p. 8.

²⁹ Shain, Yossi, "The Role of Diasporas in Conflict perpetuation or Resolution", in: *SAIS Review*, vol. 22, no 2, summer –fall 2002, p.119.

³⁰ Demmers "New Wars", p.16

³¹ Tölölyan, "The Armenian Diaspora as a transnational actor and as potential contributor to conflict resolution", p.1.

³² Pattie, Susan P., "Longing and Belonging: Issues of Homeland in the Armenian Diaspora", in: *POLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, vol. 22, Issue 2, June 2008, pp. 80-92

population's destiny. As Minassian puts it, in the Armenian case the geography determined the history.³³

It is generally claimed that the existence of Armenian Diaspora goes as far back as the end of the 14th century. According to Tölölyan, the process started even before: "The first Armenian diaspora communities emerged in the eleventh century in the Crimean peninsula (now in Ukraine) and reached the peak of their prosperity in the 14th and 17th century in what are now Poland, Ukraine and Moldova; over time others developed in the adjacent territories of what are now Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria..."³⁴ Tölölyan also mentions several waves of Armenian migration outside the homeland, mostly because of power struggles between dominant powers on Armenian territory.

However the Armenian diaspora only grew to noteworthy size after the First World War and with the Ottoman deportations of Armenian population.³⁵ Consequently, the mass migration of the Armenians had occurred in various directions and forms, whether voluntary or forced, by way of deportation and repatriation, across many states or even continents.³⁶ Today it is possible to assess Armenian populations – assimilated or non-assimilated- in numerous countries in the different parts of the world. The population of Armenia varies between 3.5 and 4 million, while the total Armenian population living worldwide is estimated to be around 7 to 8 million, depending on various sources. According to Kasim; "The number of Armenians living in Diaspora is varying in different sources. In general, about 800.000 Armenians live in the US, 100,000 in Canada. In Europe the highest number of Armenians live in France where there are more than 300,000 Armenians. The Middle East, Iran and Lebanon have the high number of Armenian population...more than 200,000 Armenians live there."³⁷ In addition to that, the estimated number of Armenians living in Russia is around 1 million, in Azerbaijan (including Nagorno Karabakh) around 160,000 (130,000 in NK+30,000 in the rest of Azerbaijan), in Turkey 40,000 to 70,000 and in Australia around 40,000.

As has been discussed before, diasporas are not homogenous in character. The diasporas of the same ethnic community might have different structural patterns in different host countries. As Melkonian argues: "The living conditions of the Armenian Diasporan communities are a function of the host country's social, political, economic and cultural attributes... The general classification can hardly express the situation of each individual community in a member of the group of countries since they are conditioned by the distinct nature of each country."³⁸

³³ Minassian, Ter., "Enjeux, Les Armeniens au 20e Siecle. Vingtieme Siecle", in : *Revue d'histoire*, 67. Juillet-Septembre 2000, pp. 135-150. p. 135.

³⁴ Tölölyan, "The Armenian Diaspora", p.1

³⁵ Majority of the sources confirm the 1915 deportations as the main reason why the Armenian Diaspora had emerged. For instance, Minassian cites Bruneau; "Événement –matrice, le genocide de 1915, constitue l'acte de naissance de la diaspora ». p.148.

³⁶ An Armenian official website: <http://www.armeniaemb.org/discoverarmenia/Diaspora/Index.htm>

³⁷ Kasim, Kamer, "Armenian Diaspora in Australia", in: *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 13 October 2004.

Tölölyan also agrees that there is no truly reliable demographic survey of all Armenians, all figures are contested.

³⁸ Tölölyan. "The Armenian Diaspora as a transnational actor and as potential contributor to conflict resolution". pp1.

An Armenian official website: <http://www.armeniaemb.org/discoverarmenia/Diaspora/Index.htm>

Furthermore, in a particular hostland, there could also be different factions in the diaspora community: this has been the case for the Armenian Diaspora. In some of the host countries, diaspora members are truly integrated and take up positions in politics and bureaucracy, or have assimilated so much that their affiliation to the homeland is comparatively weak. It should also be noted that there are several waves of migration in the Armenian case, ranging from forced separation to the economic migration. For instance; Tatoul Manaseryan prefers to analyze the Armenian Diaspora by dividing it into three types; old, new and newest periods. According to that division, old diaspora refers to the population that settled in Central Asian countries and Russia in the second half of 19th century and the establishment of colonies in the first quarter of the 20th century. Secondly, the relatively new diaspora was formed with the wave of migration in late 1970's and 80's as a result of dissatisfaction with the improvement of socio-economic conditions. Finally the newest diaspora was formed by mass emigration from Armenia after the collapse of the Soviet Union³⁹. Manaseryan also highlights the difference between the far diaspora and near diaspora. According to him, the former is represented by the old and newly formed diaspora communities, while the latter is the less organized one consisting of diaspora communities in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia which emerged right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He claims there is a serious difference in the perception of the homeland between those two diaspora communities.

As discussed, the Armenian diaspora community is highly dispersed and among those, the American-Armenian diaspora deserves serious attention since it is one of the most powerful transnational communities and is highly influential in influencing policymaking, both in the homeland and hostland. Many Armenians migrated to the US soon after the 1915 Ottoman deportations, and faced harsh conditions in the beginning. They had to adapt to the hostland's culture in order to survive, and had to deal with very tough conditions, besides their disadvantage of being forced to start from scratch. Yet, due to the education that they received in the hostland and also their will for success, they rapidly climbed to the upper ranks of the social and economic ladder. According to Melkonian, preserving their ethnic identity against the permanent influence of Western culture was quite a tough task for the diaspora Armenians in the US. If one considers the reason of the first wave of immigration - the deportations and massacres of 1915 - it will be quite clear to understand why they wanted to adopt the social-cultural values of the majority group in their hostland, by and large limiting their manifestations of their traditional ethnic culture. However, by the second and third waves of Armenian immigration, the community became stronger and more influential. As Melkonian puts it: "The life of the Armenian communities in the West was reawakened after the inflow of new Armenian immigrants... Establishment of first full-time Armenian schools in the US during the 60's owed to the activism of the new wave of Armenian immigrants... The salient feature of the Armenian schools was that in addition to general curriculum, the students took courses in the Armenian language, literature and history and the history of Armenian Church, dance and music."⁴⁰

³⁹ Manaseryan, Tatoul, "Diaspora: the Comparative Advantage for Armenia", Working paper no 04 / 14 for Armenian International Policy Research Group, January, 2004.

⁴⁰ Melkonian, Eduard, "The Armenian Diaspora (Spyurk)".

<http://www.armeniaemb.org/discoverarmenia/Diaspora/HistoryofDiaspora.htm>, p.5.

One can see that the Armenian community started stressing their ethnic identity right after the second and third inflow of Armenian immigrants, and tried to establish strong bonding features within the community which contributed to increasing the awareness of ethnic identity. In order to do that, American-Armenians created several organizations and networks such as unions, cultural groups, political parties, charities etc. Furthermore, they took advantage of already-existing institutions such as the Armenian Apostolic Church. As Pattie explains, “The church has provided a primary identity alongside kin and locale... Today the church remains a central symbol in diaspora and in the Republic where it plays a powerful role in the new politics of nation-building and diaspora networking.”⁴¹ Having the same religion as the host country, albeit of a different denomination, gave the Armenian diaspora the upper hand in influencing local politics and made it easier for them to integrate into the hostland society.

Today, the American-Armenian diaspora, like the other Armenian diasporas in Europe (especially in France), devotes most of its attention to recognition of the Armenian “genocide” of 1915. In addition to that, after the emergence of an independent Republic of Armenia, there have been other causes added to the primary agenda, such as the independence of Nagorno Karabakh from Azerbaijan and supporting Armenia’s cause in the Caucasus region and the world. As Manaseryan demonstrates: “In the recent several years, Armenian diasporas have definitely united around the Republic of Armenia to support the Karabakh movement, establish democracy, offer material contribution to the Armenian population, and develop the country’s economy.”⁴² All these declared intentions of the diaspora community go hand in hand with the policy of the Armenian state. However, today it is seen that in some cases diaspora behavior and actions may not coincide with the interests of the homeland. The aim of this paper is to further analyze these differences.

In order to compare the actions and intentions of diaspora, one should firstly keep in mind that it is impossible to ignore the problem of over-generalization. When one talks about the actions of the Armenian diaspora, it should be kept in mind that diaspora groups are not homogenous, and therefore a certain section in the diaspora does not represent the community in the host country, let alone the whole Armenian diaspora. Yet, the aim of this paper is to make an analysis of very common diaspora stand, an X-ray of the main fragile issues that has been stressed by the diaspora for a very long time.

States Intention versus Actual Action

It is a well-known fact that the diaspora plays an important role in Armenia’s foreign policy. The dynamics within the triadic mechanism - homeland, hostland and the diaspora - are extremely important for determining to what extent the diaspora can be influential on policy making procedures in the homeland. In the case of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora, one may observe that policy making in the homeland is highly vulnerable to diaspora involvement,

⁴¹ Pattie. “Longing and Belonging.” p. 5.

⁴² Manaseryan. “Diaspora The Comparative Advantage for Armenia.” p. 2.

since the hostland and its liberal values provide all the room that a diaspora needs to influence both the homeland and the hostland politics. Furthermore the homeland is a newly independent state, which is weak both economically and politically and in need of constant support from its rich and powerful diaspora. The diaspora is highly concerned with the policy-making procedures in the Republic of Armenia. For instance, the struggling democracy in Armenia is often criticized openly by the diaspora.⁴³ However, many authors and academics still criticize the diaspora for its persistence on the issues of the past and undermining the urgent needs of Armenia. As Freikman argues, internal political divisions in the Armenian diaspora seem to be a surprisingly important constraint for developing a consolidated diaspora strategy for supporting a new Armenian development agenda. These political divisions are, to a major extent based on tradition, and much less on real differences in current policies. The dividing line for most diaspora Armenians remains the policy towards Turkey.⁴⁴ It is said that the contentious issues between Armenia and Turkey could only be solved by the consent of the diaspora.

In terms of resolving the conflicts between Armenia and Turkey, Turkish President Abdullah Gul's recent visit demands serious attention. First of all, it was more than a symbolic trip that just shows "good will". As Hrant Dink mentions in his book, only showing good will is not enough to solve the problems between Armenia and Turkey. A new dialogue among the diaspora Armenians, Armenia and Turkey is essential to bring normalization to the problems that they have been facing.⁴⁵ In this regard, this meeting represents a new dialogue between the two states and brought hope, so to speak, for future relations. Three major issues were on the agenda for the meeting; Turkish-Armenian relations, opening the border between the two countries, and finally the dispute over Karabakh.⁴⁶ These are the most critical issues and reasons of dispute between Turkey and the Armenian diaspora, and also illustrate the clash of interests between Armenia and its Diaspora.

The Armenian Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia

The Armenian Diaspora has been highly dedicated to the political causes of the Armenian nation and after its creation, to the Republic of Armenia. Until the creation of the independent Armenian state, the diaspora perceived themselves as the sole representative of their nation. With the formation of the Republic of Armenia, the diaspora regards itself as the representative of Armenia abroad.

⁴³ Akgönül, Samim, "The Armenian Community of France and Turkey: Propaganda and Lobbyism", *Review of Armenian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2003, p.60.

⁴⁴ Freinkman, Lev M., "Role of the Diasporas in Transition Economies: Lessons from Armenia", In: *Cuba in Transition*, ASCE 2001, p. 339

http://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/10013/1/MPRA_paper_10013.pdf

⁴⁵ Dink, Hrant, "İki Yakın Halk, İki Uzak Komsu" (Istanbul: Uluslararası Hrant Dink Vakfı Yayınları, Haziran 2008), p. 1.

⁴⁶ "Gul's Armenia visit more the symbolic", *Turkish Daily News*, 06 September 2008

Many argue that preserving wide-ranging and strong relations with the homeland is vital for the Armenian Diaspora to maintain its own ethnic identity. However, keeping these strong relations was not always easy, especially when Armenia was part of the Soviet Union. During Soviet times, diaspora Armenians and the Soviet Armenians had to live in a sort of separation since all contacts between them were controlled and programmed by the central Soviet government.⁴⁷ As Melkonian describes; "...the Diaspora Armenians were left alone even as they had to cope with the pressure to adopt within their societies... Separate existence of two segments of the Armenian people during the Cold War further increased and deepened the historical dissimilarities between the Western and Eastern Armenians, and perpetuated among these two segments of stereotypical, mutually misinformed, and unrealistic perceptions of ethnic and political life of Armenians on the opposite side of the dividing line."⁴⁸

This separation, combined by the 70 years of Soviet control in Armenia, resulted in creating a dividing line between the diaspora and homeland Armenians, especially in terms of culture. According to Manaseryan, this is the main reason why Diaspora Armenians have little cultural affinity with the homeland Armenians.⁴⁹ Furthermore, various authors such as Freinkman argue that most diaspora Armenians have no historical connection with present day Armenia since the diaspora members are from the territories which now belong to Turkey. "For most of them, Armenia is more of an idea than a real country that may be considered as a place of potential residency and business activity."⁵⁰ On the other hand, as Melkonian argues: "The walls of separation started to come down in late 80's, and in the wake of the catastrophic earthquake of 1988, all the Diaspora organizations and many individuals hastened to assist and provide relief to the victims... after re-establishment of the independent republic of Armenia, the Diaspora extended enormous assistance by re-building hospitals, schools, paving new roads, establishing joint ventures and restarting industrial enterprises."⁵¹

There is no doubt that the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Armenia was a critical event for the Armenian diaspora. According to Freinkmen "... creation of an independent Armenian state was never a part of the traditional agenda of the mainstream diaspora in Soviet times. As a result, the Armenian Diaspora was ideologically quite unprepared to deal with an independent Armenia."⁵² As Tölölyan argues "Few had believed that the USSR would collapse and an independent Armenia would emerge."⁵³ The sudden emergence of an "Armenian state" has created a frustration among the diaspora with regards to the issues of 'homeland' and 'possible return' as well. For many Armenian diasporas, the question of return was, and still is, very puzzling since for centuries there has been no single, clearly defined

⁴⁷ Melkonian, "The Armenian Diaspora (Spyurk)" p. 8.

⁴⁸ Melkonian, "The Armenian Diaspora (Spyurk)" p. 10.

⁴⁹ Manaseryan, "Diaspora The Comparative Advantage for Armenia", p. 6.

⁵⁰ Freinkman, "Role of the Diasporas"

⁵¹ Melkonian, "The Armenian Diaspora (Spyurk)", p.10.

⁵² Freinkmen, "Role of the Diasporas" p. 339

⁵³ Tölölyan, "The Armenian Diaspora" p.1

center and periphery acknowledged by all Armenians, and they have also gradually become more at home in their hostlands.⁵⁴

Besides these reasons of perceptual divergence between the diaspora and homeland Armenians, one should also add that there is a difference between the diaspora Armenians and Turkey's Armenians as well. As Dink puts it, it would be ill-defined to categorize Turkey's Armenians under the diaspora since they have been living in Anatolia for more than four thousand years and their behavior differs from the diaspora radicals.⁵⁵ Turkish Armenians are the biggest Christian community in Turkey with approximately 70,000 people living [mostly] in Anatolia.⁵⁶ And their needs and priorities are different compared to Armenians within Armenia and the diaspora. For obvious reasons, they prioritize trying to resolve the problematic issues between Turkey and Armenia as soon as possible. To them, every clash between Turkey and Armenia or between Turkey and the diaspora, bring tension and preoccupation. According to Mesrob II, the 84th patriarch of Turkey's Armenian Orthodox community, the Armenian Genocide Resolution pending in the US Congress, for instance, was quite negative because it disrupts both the relations between Turkish people and Armenians in Turkey and between Turkey and Armenia. Mesrob II argues that; "we are the ones here living with our Turkish friends everyday. The resolution's passage would have a cooling effect on our relations."⁵⁷ In his view the relations of Turkey and Armenia have been held hostage to the issue of genocide.⁵⁸

Turkey's Armenians have been at loggerheads with the Armenian Diaspora on many occasions and issues. To some diaspora members, Turkey's Armenians are betrayers of the "Armenian Cause" and by taking the side of Turkey when it comes to discuss the "Armenian Issue." For instance Hrant Dink, who tried to push both groups towards reconciliation and to support peaceful Armenia-Turkey relations, was accused of being a traitor by both Turkish and Armenian radicals. Laciner provides one example; "The Diaspora blamed Dink of being a betrayer and a servant of Turkey. In 2004, on the last week of November an international meeting was held in Marseille, France. In this meeting the tension increased between Turkey's Armenians and the radicals of the Armenian Diaspora. Being humiliated by the Armenian Diaspora, Etyen Mahcupyan and Hrant Dink blamed the radicals in the Diaspora of making politics through the corpses and not wanting a resolution in the Armenian Issue. Mahcupyan and Dink advocated that Turkey's EU membership would be a key factor for the resolution of the Armenian Issue and they claimed that the Diaspora had not changed and was afraid of any step that would be taken by Turkey."⁵⁹ This discussion was over the diaspora's policy against

⁵⁴ Pattie, "Longing and Belonging", p. 5

⁵⁵ Dink, "İki Yakın Halk, İki Uzak Komsu" p.16.

⁵⁶ An interview with Mesrob II, the 84th patriarch of Turkey's Armenian Orthodox Community, *Today's Zaman*, 17 September 2007.

⁵⁷ An interview with Mesrob II, the 84th patriarch of Turkey's Armenian Orthodox Community, *Today's Zaman*, 17 September 2007.

⁵⁸ An interview with Mesrob II, the 84th patriarch of Turkey's Armenian Orthodox Community, *Today's Zaman*, 17 September 2007.

⁵⁹ Kaplan, Sefa, "Rahatsız Diye Üzülmeyin", *Hürriyet Newspaper*, 30 Nov 2004, "Diasporaya Sagduyu Daveti", *Agos*, 26 Kasım 2004 cited in Sedat Laciner "Poison in Armenian Blood and Making Politics through Dink's Death", 05 March 2007, <http://www.turkishweekly.net>

the membership of Turkey to the EU. It is just one example of how opinions differed among the diaspora radicals and other members of the Armenian world.

It was not just two intellectuals of Armenians in Turkey, Dink and Mahcupyan, the Patriarch himself was accused of betraying the “cause” as well. Armenian Americans protested Mesrob II’s speech at a conference about the “genocide” issue in Dallas. According to him; the diaspora members found his approach to the whole issue as a denial of the “genocide” and they do not understand the sensitivities involved.⁶⁰ He adds that, Armenian Diaspora does not care about the Armenians who live in Turkey and everything is politics for them.⁶¹

The Problematic Issues: 1915, Karabakh Conflict and Diplomatic Relations with Turkey

There are differences between the diaspora and the new republic in terms of previous experiences and trauma. In fact, the threat of pan-Turkic movements or the recognition of the 1915 “genocide” were the main concerns of the Armenian diasporas for a very long time, and it can be said that those issues enabled them to stick together and unify for their causes. However, at the same time, the issue of the 1915 and anti-Turkism is not central to the homeland Armenian identity, as they have not experienced the traumatic events of 1915.⁶² Some argue that the Armenian diaspora is reluctant to change its policy towards the future development of Armenia, as this process would give less priority to its ‘traditional’ agenda. As Shain mentions, “diaspora hard liners are said to care less about the homeland’s present and future than about past’s dead.”⁶³ Mahcupyan also argues that the protective instinct created by a sudden change of living space creates, in the end, a reactionism that freezes time, fixes the community, and obstructs politics by pushing it into irrational channels.⁶⁴ Laciner claims that “the diaspora Armenians and Dashnaks⁶⁵ (Armenian Revolutionist Federation) just focused on their own interests instead of saving the newly established Armenia.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, “The Diaspora encouraged more wars to capture the ‘lost territories’ in Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan. While the other former republics tried to decrease their dependency on Russia, Armenia more and

⁶⁰ An interview with Mesrob II, the 84th patriarch of Turkey’s Armenian Orthodox Community. *Today’s Zaman* Newspaper, 17 September 2007.

⁶¹ An interview with Mesrob II, the 84th patriarch of Turkey’s Armenian Orthodox Community, *Today’s Zaman*, 17 September 2007.

⁶² Shain, “The Role of Diasporas.” p.119.

⁶³ Shain, “The Role of Diasporas.” p.119.

⁶⁴ Mahcupyan, Etyen, *Zaman*, 5 Dec 2004.

⁶⁵ “Dashnak: is the most notable party for the Armenian activities before 1914. Between the years of 1918 and 1920, the leaders of the Armenian republic were in this party. After Armenia’s becoming Soviet, they were exiled and they continued their activities in Diaspora. Today the most common political movement is considered to be Dashnak Party.” Samim Akgönül, “The Armenian Community of France and Turkey: Propaganda and Lobbyism” in *Review of Armenian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2003.

⁶⁶ Laciner, Sedat, “Armenian Diaspora is Egoist”. *Journal of Turkish Weekly*
<http://www.turkishweekly.net/comments.php?id=712>

more became a ‘Russian orbit’ in the region. When Russia lost its military bases in Azerbaijan and Georgia, Armenians invited the Russians to their country.”⁶⁷

Due to the serious differences in objectives, it is inevitable that the diaspora and the homeland Armenians experience clashes of interests, especially in turbulent times. For instance, in the case of the conflict in Karabakh, it is important to know that very few members of the Armenian diaspora in the West are from Karabakh, but the issue gets high priority in the diaspora’s agenda. Shain explains this by quoting Tölölyan; “the issue matters to them in the light of their historical memory of losing lands and lives to Turkish nationalists throughout eastern Anatolia between 1915 and 1923 and they insisted that no more Armenian land be lost”.⁶⁸ Since the beginning of the conflict, the diaspora hardliners made it clear that their stance was in favor of Karabakh and its total independence and later its possible unification with Armenia. The Karabakh issue, similarly to the 1988 earthquake, became the tool to organize Armenians worldwide and worked to strengthen national identity and solidarity among the Armenian communities. However, it is clear that the conflict destabilizes the region and it should be resolved urgently before a possible re-eruption of hostilities.

In spite of various mediation efforts by third parties including Russia, Iran, and the OSCE, the conflict still remains insoluble. Since the beginning of the conflict, the Armenian diaspora played an elusive role when it comes to asserting its own policies by lobbying the hostland governments, especially in the US. Most Azeri officials, for their part, name the Armenian-American lobby in Washington as the primary obstacle to peace in the Caucasus and to developing US-Azeri relations.⁶⁹ Huseynov provides one of the examples: “In the fall of 1992 the U.S. Congress passed the Freedom Support Act (FSA) to facilitate economic and humanitarian aid to the former republics of the Soviet Union, aimed at helping democratization processes and fostering economic growth. However, a month after its adoption, on October 24, 1992 the Congress pushed by the Armenian lobby introduced a highly controversial amendment to the FSA, most commonly referred as Section 907, which banned direct American government assistance to the government of Azerbaijan.”⁷⁰

Section 907 of the 1992 Freedom Support Act denied all aid to Azerbaijan, which left the Azerbaijani side in a difficult situation during the war and in the aftermath of a ceasefire. Azerbaijan was alone among all other post-Soviet states which received no US aid while Armenia became the highest per capita aid recipient.⁷¹ The lobbying done by the Armenian diaspora in the US had a big effect on Congress and managed to influence US policy towards the Karabakh dispute for a very long time.⁷² According to Tölölyan, “In recent years, some

⁶⁷ Laciner, “Armenian Diaspora is Egoist”

⁶⁸ Shain, “The Role of Diasporas.”, p.119.

⁶⁹ Shain, “The Role of Diasporas.”, p.7.

⁷⁰ Huseynov, Tabib, “Influencing American Foreign Policy: A Case on Ethnic versus National Interests.”
http://www.stradigma.com/english/june2003/articles_04.html

⁷¹ “Azerbaijan: Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh”, (USA: Human Rights Watch/ Helsinki, 1994), p. 78.

⁷² Baser, Bahar, “Third Party Mediation in Nagorno Karabakh: Part of the Cure or Part of the Disease?”, (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, Dr. Müller Publications, 2008), p.46.

elements of the Diaspora have become insistent that Armenians should attempt to retain all the territories occupied by Armenian forces in the Karabagh conflict while other elements have become interested in conceptualizing an equitable form of conflict resolution that would not simply be a disguised form of Armenian surrender of Karabagh. Debate about how to attain the latter has often been muted but sometimes contentious”⁷³

In terms of the relationship with Turkey, the diaspora has adopted an even tougher stance. To begin with, Turkey’s support to Azerbaijan at the outset of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict strengthened the diaspora’s position on Armenia’s relations with Turkey. Richard G. Hovannasian maintained that “Turkish moves to support Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict were seen by the diaspora as the logical continuation of a long-term policy to keep Armenia helpless and vulnerable...”⁷⁴ And finally, interruption of diplomatic relations by Turkey with Armenia because of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict proved the diaspora’s point in the eyes of the Armenian world.. As Tocci illustrates, “In April 1993, Turkey sealed its border with Armenia by closing Dogu Kapi/ Akhourian crossing and halting direct land communications between the two countries. The closure and the ensuing refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia took place in view of the escalating conflict in Nagorno Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Armenia’s ambivalence over the recognition of its common border with Turkey.”⁷⁵ As a newly independent state, Armenia needs sustainable economic development strategies, good relations with its neighbors, regional cooperation and stability. In order to achieve that, Armenia needs to focus on future strategies, not necessarily by abandoning its past or its policies regarding the issues of “genocide” and Karabakh but by being open to dialogue and compromise. Moreover, Armenia and its ruling elites are aware that it is a landlocked country in the Caucasus, which can only sustain development by regional and global cooperation. As Norman Stone describes the sorry state of Armenian economy; “If you go to eastern Turkey and Kars, look across the border at Armenia. It is very poor, and will continue so if there is no commerce with Turkey.”⁷⁶ Tocci also argues that Armenian political elites should work towards developing cooperative relations with Turkey; “The closure has generated grave costs to Armenia. Landlocked, with its western and eastern borders closed and connected to distant markets via expensive routes through Georgia and Iran, Armenia’s development is heavily handicapped.”⁷⁷ Similarly Soykok reasons; “[the] Armenian economy has been dependent on aid from the US and Armenian Diaspora...Armenia has to develop good relations with its neighbors in order to end its isolation.”⁷⁸ However, Diaspora needs to free Armenia from its opposition to achieve this objective.

⁷³ Tölölyan, “The Armenian Diaspora.”, p1.

⁷⁴ Shain, “The Role of Diasporas.” , p.6.

⁷⁵ Tocci, Natalie, “The Case for Opening the Turkish-Armenian Border”, Trans European Policy Studies Association, Study for the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament made in the framework contract with TEPSA, 24 July 2007, Co-authors: Burcu Gültekin-Punsmann, Licia Simao, Nicolas Tavitian. p.2

⁷⁶ Stone, Norman, “Armenian Question.” 21 October 2006. <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=40339>

⁷⁷ Tocci, “The Case for Opening the Turkish-Armenian Border.”, p.2.

⁷⁸ Soykok, Jan, “Armenian Tragedy, But who is Responsible?” , in: *Journal of Turkish Weekly*. 06 Jan 2005. <http://www.turkishweekly.net/comments.php/comments.php?id=107>

Conclusion

Here the aim has been to give a basic outline of the clashes of interests and ideas between the Armenian Diaspora and the homeland. The disputes, which are discussed above, are multi-dimensional in character and involve many other important parties. It is also essential to mention that the resolution of these disputes is not solely possible by the diaspora. As recent developments suggest, Turkey and Armenia are moving towards a more peaceful path, and at least a channel of communication has been established between the two parties. A new committee of intellectuals has been recently formed and hopefully will be able to start a dialogue process between the two countries. Before, there have been many false starts, failed attempts and missed opportunities. That is why the general view about the new developments is one of skepticism. Today's approach should be a wait and see one to be able to talk about more concrete results. These new attempts are unique in the sense that for the first time a Turkish President visited Armenia and talked about those fragile issues.

Improving Turkish Armenian relations seems to be the primary objective of the AKP government, so as the very same aim has high priority for Armenian bureaucrats and officials. At present, we experience a kind of change in mood both in Armenia and in Turkey, and a dubious one in the Diaspora. Recently the news cover the following type of information: high official visits between Turkey and Armenia, positive energy on the way to the resolution in Karabakh, attempts to re-open the Kars-Gümürü railroad between Turkey and Armenia, normalization of relations between the two countries; and ironically also enough the Diaspora efforts of piling on the pressure the U.S. president Barack Obama to recognize the "genocide" claims over the 1915 events, while Turkish officials plan counter-measures to prevent this from happening⁷⁹, and Armenian foreign minister states "they will never tell the Armenian diaspora to stop their efforts to make the "genocide" claims internationally recognized, however, I reiterate my country's commitment to the normalization process with Turkey, initiated by President Gül's visit to Armenia"⁸⁰.

To conclude, it can be argued that the Republic of Armenia wishes to pursue an open border policy, and is not fanatical about Turkey's recognition of "genocide" as the basis to improve bilateral relations. But the diaspora has its own agenda and the homeland is not able to take a stance without taking the powerful diaspora on board. The obstacles for improved Armenian-Turkish relationship are not limited to the hard-line stance of diaspora. Turkey has its own conditions, such as a satisfactory resolution to the Karabakh issue and dropping the "genocide" claims. And all those issues once again find an audience in the radical section of the diaspora and strengthen their position. There is a need for improved communications between parties as well as among the various diaspora groups and factions. At the same time, the hard-line diaspora groups must soften their radical demands and stop imagining the maximalist solutions, while Turkey and Azerbaijan try to understand the other side of the arguments, and empathize

⁷⁹ *Hurriyet* Newspaper, 28 November 2008

⁸⁰ *Hurriyet* Newspaper, 25 November 2008

with the Armenians and the diaspora and seek common ground. All sides need to realize that pumping up nationalist and radical feelings did not work in the past, and will not work in the future.