



Evolution of Armenia's Foreign Policy

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Abstract

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This paper will examine the evolution of Armenian foreign policy since the country gained independence in 1991. Barry Buzan's framework for understanding state security will be used to examine the political and economic threats driving Armenian foreign policy. Two important principals have shaped Armenian foreign policy in the past decade including: efforts to normalize relations with neighboring countries and the desire to integrate independent Armenia into the international community. Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, Armenia found itself landlocked and surrounded by unreliable neighbors. Georgia, to the North, struggled to maintain control of its territory. Turkey and Azerbaijan, to the West and East, shared a history of enmity with Armenia complicated by the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and subsequent economic blockade. Iran, to the South, sought influence in the region, yet was perceived unfavorably by much of the international community. An examination of these relations and their impact on Armenia's state security will be considered.

Armenia's security has also been influenced by shifting relations with Russia and the United States. Interest in the Caucasus region has been particularly great in the post-September 11th period. Russia continues to consider the region an area of vital interest, yet U.S. troops have made an unprecedented move into the region in order to train local forces in the fight against terrorism. Armenia has cooperated in the fight against terror by opening its airspace to the U.S. military, while simultaneously maintaining close political and economic ties with Russia. Immediately following independence, Armenia began to move away from its Russian partner, but soon realized that it was not in a geo-political position to isolate itself from the regional power. The impact of Armenian-Russian and Armenian-U.S. relations on the state's security will be discussed.

After examining the evolution of Armenia's bilateral relations in the post-Soviet period, this paper will focus its attention on Armenia's membership in or cooperation with international organizations including: NATO's Partnership for Peace Program, the Council of Europe, and the World Trade Organization. Armenia's affiliation and/or cooperation with these and other international organizations has not only helped the country to improve multilateral ties, but has influenced domestic thinking on issues such as democracy and human rights. Increased participation in international organizations remains an important foreign policy objective.

INTRODUCTION

Since declaring independence from the Soviet Union on September 23, 1991, Armenia has been faced with the challenge of creating new security arrangements and restructuring old ones. As the smallest of the former Soviet republics, Armenia was left geo-politically isolated following independence and has spent the past decade shaping its foreign policy to ward against political and economic threats.

In order to examine the evolution of Armenian foreign policy since 1991, this paper will draw upon Barry Buzan's theoretical framework for understanding security. Buzan's framework, as presented in People States and Fear (1991) and elaborated in Security: A New Framework for Analysis (1998), altered the traditional understanding of security by moving beyond the accepted power- military focus which dominated Cold War studies. In doing so, Buzan argued that a comprehensive understanding of state security cannot be achieved without examining non-traditional threats to states (i.e. internal and economic threats) as well as external military ones. This theoretical shift is particularly important for understanding the security challenges facing smaller and less developed states such as Armenia. Although Buzan's framework incorporates aspects of internal security as well as traditional military and economic security, the later two components will be stressed in this paper as they have the most relevance for Armenian foreign policy. By briefly outlining Buzan's indicators of traditional and economic security and applying them to the case of Armenia, we will begin to examine how and why Armenian foreign policy has evolved over time.

BUZAN'S MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING STATE SECURITY

According to Buzan, "Security is a relational phenomenon," (Buzan 1991, p.187). He argues that any discussion of external military security must examine the relationship between states located in geographic proximity. Relations between states may range from friendly and supportive to fearful and hostile. In order to determine the patterns of amity and enmity between states that can have security consequences, Buzan suggests a consideration of the following: 1.) Is there a presence or absence of border disputes/warfare between the states?, 2.) Is there a presence or absence of longstanding historical ties? (Buzan 1991, p.190). Third, Buzan suggests that patterns of rivalry and cooperation can be identified by examining state membership in regional security organizations. Each of these variables will be applied to the case of Armenia to determine the type of influences affecting Armenia's foreign policy making.

Economic security provides a second important aspect of Buzan's expanded discussion of national security. Buzan argues that in its simplest form, economic security "equate[s] security with the economic conditions necessary for [state] survival," (Buzan 1991, p.241). According to Buzan, in order for the state to survive and thrive it depends on access to trade and foreign investment, as well as the maintenance of a strong national economy. For the purpose of the paper, the strength of the national economy will only be considered as it influences Armenian foreign policy. In order to determine whether or not trade and foreign investment can contribute to state economic security/insecurity, Buzan argues one must consider the following: 1.) increases and decreases in numbers and types of economic partners, and 2.) membership/association with a regional economic bloc.

Although Buzan's military and economic indicators can be delineated for explanatory purposes, when applied to the case of Armenia several of the indicators overlap. Since it is difficult to isolate the indicators without disrupting a discussion of the Armenian case, the indicators will be highlighted in context.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARMENIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Armenian foreign policy has evolved in the period of independence. After being elected the country's first President in 1991, Levon Ter-Petrosyan set forth an initial strategy for Armenian foreign policy based on two important principles. First, Ter-Petrosyan argued that "the security of the state and people, not excluding other factors, depends upon the normalization of relations with all our neighbors, the resolution of the existing [Nagorno-Karabakh] confrontation by means of peaceful negotiations and development of regional economic cooperation, which has lead us to the establishment of collective security system in the region" (as cited in Hovhannisyan 1998, p.11). Second, Ter-Petrosyan stressed that Armenian foreign policy was to be built on the "conception of not uniting to any political or military block" (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.12). While Armenia did not wish to isolate itself from the global community, it wanted to ensure that it would not once again become part of opposing blocks in the international system. These three objectives served as the foundation for Armenian foreign policy from 1991 to 1998.

Ter-Petrosyan was re-elected Armenian President in 1996 and continued to pursue the above-mentioned foreign policy goals –chief among them resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The President demonstrated a willingness to accept a May 1997 Minsk Group proposal calling for the recognition of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity as a vital component of the conflict's resolution. Ter-Petrosyan's position was unpopular not only among some members of his government, but also among Armenian refugees, and members of the Diaspora communities. Growing resistance to Ter-Petrosyan's Karabakh policy ultimately led to the President's resignation in January 1998.

Robert Kocharyan, Ter-Petrosyan's Prime Minister and formerly appointed President of the self-declared independent republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, was elected the new Armenian President on March 30, 1998. Kocharyan campaigned on a tough stance toward negotiations with Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh. Kocharyan set forth the following negotiation principles: "(1) the right of the Karabakh people to self-determination, (2) guarantees of Karabakh's security, widely interpreted to include a role for Armenia, (3) a permanent geographic link between Armenia and Karabakh, i.e. Armenian retention of the Lachin corridor" (Migdalovitz 2001, p.6).

The change in leadership altered the country's foreign policy only slightly. Kocharyan supported Ter-Petrosyan's attempts to promote positive relations with Armenia's neighbors. An important part of this objective was not only a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also improved relations with neighboring Turkey. While Ter-Petrosyan expressed Armenia's interest in integrating with the international community, Kocharyan actively supported Armenia's participation in international organizations. Under the new leadership, Armenia's cooperation with regional organizations including the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Black Sea Economic Cooperation were strengthened. In outlining

Armenia's foreign policy priorities, Kocharyan also discussed the importance of eliminating Cold War thinking and strengthening democracy and respect for human rights in the region (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.15).

ARMENIA AND THE MAJOR POWERS

In order to protect its national security, independent Armenia began working toward the establishment of bilateral relations with its immediate neighbors including Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran, as well as with Russia and the United States (Adalian 1995, p.313). Although Soviet Armenia was unable to pursue an independent foreign policy with respect to its neighbors, longstanding historical ties provided a foundation for the patterns of amity and enmity that have shaped post-Cold War relations. Political and economic ties between Armenia and its major partners will now be considered.

Armenian-Russian Relations

Armenian-Russian relations have developed in stages since 1991. Immediately following independence, Armenia began to decrease ties with Russia. This move was an attempt to demonstrate Armenian sovereignty and alter relations set in place with the former Soviet Union. Soon after gaining independence, however, Armenia realized that it was not in a geo-political position to isolate itself from the major regional power. Therefore, beginning in 1992 the Armenian government adopted a new policy of normalizing relations with Russia. This meant a new sense of cooperating with Russia on economic, political and military issues. On April 3, 1992, official diplomatic relations between Armenian and Russia were established. Also in April 1992, Armenia joined Russia as a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In doing so, Armenia became the first Transcaucasian country to join the CIS. Membership in the organization would mean increased political and economic cooperation and would include participation in the Mutual Stability Pact (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.21). Armenia has since become a signatory to the Collective Security Treaty.

While Russia maintained a passive interest in Armenia soon after the break up of the Soviet Union, it soon recognized the importance of the Caucasus region to Russian interests. By 1993, Russia was actively looking to the near abroad, including the Transcaucasus, to increase its eroding influence. Russia was also motivated by its opposition to the expansion of U.S., Iranian, or Turkish influence in the region. Further, Russia saw stability in the Transcaucasus, including Armenia, as vital to Russian interests in the North Caucasus. Former Foreign Minister of Russia Andrey Kozirev made Russia's position known by stating, "This region [i.e. Transcaucasus] is the zone of our vital interests. If Russia loses its positions there, other forces could take our place, and that will be inevitably leading to destabilization in North Caucasus" (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.23).

While Armenia seeks to maintain sovereignty, it does not view Russia's interest in the region as contradictory to its own security interests. On the contrary, Armenia views Russian interest as a means of protecting itself against its neighbors. As evidence of Armenia's desire to maintain Russian involvement, Armenia signed treaties in 1993 and 1994 granting Russia access to military bases along both the Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Iranian borders. Armenia's borders continue to be defended by Russian as

well as Armenian troops (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.26). In December 2002, Armenia's Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Mikael Harutiunian, told Mediamax that "a small unit of Russian troops will be transferred from Georgia to Armenia" once Russian troops withdraw from Georgia's military bases (Fuller 2002a). Azerbaijan has already expressed concern about the future redeployment of Russian troops to Armenia.

In addition to promoting military and political cooperation with Russia, Armenia continues to look to Russia for economic support. At the time of independence, Armenia remained the most heavily dependent of all of the Soviet republics on Russian trade. Only 3 percent of Armenian exports went beyond the borders of the Soviet Union (Goldenberg 1994, p.72). In the case of the Caucasus, more than 50 percent of all trade was conducted with Russia alone (Herzig 1999, p.121). As of 2000, Russia remained Armenia's most important trade partner. Russia received 15 percent of Armenian exports and was responsible for 14.9 percent of Armenia's import trade ("Index of Economic Freedom" 2003).

As evidence of the overlap between political and economic interests and how they are playing out in Armenian foreign policy, on December 4, 2002, the Armenian parliament voted to transfer control of five Armenian enterprises to Russia in exchange for debt repayment. The enterprises involved, including the Razdanskaya hydroelectric station, AOZT Mars, AOZT Yerevan scientific and research institute of automated administrative systems, and AOZT Yerevan scientific and research institute of material study, are defense-related industries and may be used in Russia's arms program ("Enterprises for Debt Deal Ratified by National Assembly." 2002). The enterprise transfer will allow Armenia to repay its \$95 million debt to Russia. Critics of the decision suggest that the transfer will increase Armenian economic dependence on Russia. Independent Armenian legislator Semyon Baghdasarian told RFE/RL on December 4, 2002, "The government has opted for a scenario that underscores Russia's economic expansion in Armenia," (Khachatrian 2002). Those who support the transfer argue that the swap will prevent Armenia from having to divert future funds from the budget to Russian debt repayment. Supporters also suggest that Russia "will revitalize the enterprises in question," (Khachatrian 2002). According to the agreement, the enterprises will be transferred to Russian control within two months of the ratification.

Armenian-United States Relations

Immediately following independence, Armenia looked West for financial, technological and security assistance (Adalian 1995, p.321). Given the United States' relationship with first the Soviet Union and then Russia, it was not in a position to extend immediate cooperation with Armenia, or other CIS states, particularly in the area of security guarantees. The U.S. did recognize Armenian independence on December 25, 1991 and established diplomatic relations with the state on January 7, 1992.

Further complicating relations between the U.S. and Armenia was the U.S. relationship with Turkey. The U.S. went so far as to suggest that Turkey could serve as a guarantor of security in the region. This suggestion reflected less U.S. support for Turkey than concern by the U.S. that Iran would gain influence in the region. Of course, any security designs in the area, which placed Turkey at the center was unacceptable to Armenian interests (Adalian 1995, p.321).

In recent years, the United States has increased its interest in Armenia and the Transcaucasian region, calling it vital to U.S. interests. The U.S. is particularly interested in strengthening ties with Azerbaijan since Azerbaijan could provide the U.S. with a link to Caspian oil. While Armenia does not have such natural resources to attract U.S. attention, relations between Armenia and the United States are important given the large Armenian Diaspora community. There are an estimated 1.4 million Armenians living in the U.S. In total, there are more than 5 million Armenians living outside of Armenia in countries as diverse as Russia, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Israel, Georgia, Greece, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Egypt, Kuwait, and France in addition to the U.S. (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.10). The Armenian population in the U.S. is not only large, but also politically active. Armenian grassroots organizations can be found throughout the U.S., the largest and most influential of which is the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). As a result of its activities, the Armenian community is able to exert some degree of influence on U.S. policy. Armenia views this Diaspora population as an additional channel for promoting U.S.-Armenian relations and for helping Armenia become integrated into the global community (Adalian 1995, p.323).

Although the Diaspora and Armenians in Armenia proper have worked to cooperate post-independence, there remain differences between the two groups. For example, Diaspora communities have argued for Armenia to make demands on Turkey to both acknowledge and provide restitution for the 1915 genocide. In addition, Diaspora Armenians have pressed for a "militant stance on the Karabakh dispute" (Dudwick 1997, p.493). These positions have often come in conflict with the official foreign policy goals of the Armenian government (Dudwick 1997, p.493).

Since September 11, 2001, the United States has taken an increased interest in Armenia and the Caucasus in general. Not only has the U.S. sought support for the war on terrorism, but it has also worked to counter the spread of Islamic influence in the region. Following September 11th, Armenian President Robert Kocharian told "Moskovskie Novosti", "The basis of our foreign policy is currently the principle of complementarity," ("Armenia's National Policy" 2002). Complementarity is a framework promoted by Armenia "to create conditions in the Caucasus in which the interests of Russia and the West overlap rather than contradict," (Khachatrian 2001). Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian reaffirmed Armenia's commitment to increasing security ties with the U.S. and the West given new geopolitical challenges. Oskanian commented, "Armenia is adjusting its foreign policy to the dramatic global changes that have taken place since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States," (Danielyan 2002). Oskanian added that Armenia opened its airspace to the U.S. shortly after September 11th and that more than 600 U.S. military flights have flown over Armenian territory bound for Central Asia in the past year. According to Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister Ruben Shugarian, speaking at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. on September 25, 2002, the U.S. has provided Armenia with \$4.4 million in communications, equipment and training since September 11th in order to fight global terrorism.

Responding to Armenia's declared intention to strengthen relations with the U.S. and the West, Iranian Ambassador to Armenia Mohammad Farhad Koleini made public remarks on September 28, 2002, openly challenging Armenia's foreign policy strategy. Koleini commented that "Armenia lacks the resources and international clout to continue

to pursue its 'complementary' foreign policy of maintaining good relations with the West, Russia, Iran and other major powers," (Danielyan 2002). Koleini said, "Complementarism requires both software and hardware instruments. Armenia's software capacity is good. But in terms of the hardware, there are problems," (Danielyan 2002). Following the comments, Koleini turned to Oskanian and asked, "Don't you think it would be more correct to describe [your policy] as a multilateral dialogue, rather than use the word 'complementarism'?" (Danielyan 2002). Although Armenian officials considered the remarks a "serious break of diplomatic ethics," Oskanian responded to the Iranian Ambassador by saying, "We will not do anything in the region infringing on the interests of neighboring countries that are strategically important to us," (Danielyan 2002). Despite the fact that Armenia has indicated a shift in its foreign policy, the country wishes to remain close to Iran both politically and economically in order to balance difficult regional relations with both Turkey and Azerbaijan.

In addition to promoting political ties with the U.S., Armenia also views U.S. interest as vital to its economic security. As of 2000, the U.S. was Armenia's third largest export trading partner (12.7 percent) and second largest import partner (11.6 percent) ("Index of Economic Freedom" 2003). In 2001, bilateral trade between Armenia and the U.S. increased 43 percent. Armenian exports to the U.S. drew in \$33 million in 2001, while imports from the U.S. reached \$50 million. Armenia also relies heavily on the U.S. for aid and investment. According to the U.S. Commercial Service in 2000-2001, Armenia is the third largest recipient of United States aid per capita. As of January 2002, total direct foreign investment in Armenia reached \$608.9 million ("Armenia: 2003 Investment Climate Statement"). The majority of this investment came from Armenian Diaspora communities in the U.S., Russia, Iran, France, Greece, the U.K., Germany, and Syria. In total, there are approximately 70 U.S. firms active in Armenia through subsidiaries and joint ventures ("Investment Climate Statement-Armenia" 2002).

ARMENIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

Armenia's foreign policy has been influenced not only by relations with Russia and the U.S., but also by historical ties with neighboring Georgia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Iran. Given Armenia's location, developments in both the Transcaucasus and the Middle East impact the country's foreign policy (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.10). This paper has demonstrated that Armenia's relations with Russia and the U.S. have evolved over time. We will now turn to an examination of Armenia's relations with its immediate neighbors and the impact of those relations on the country's foreign policy.

Armenian-Turkish Relations

Although Armenia and Turkey shared a history of enmity, following Armenian independence there were hopes that positive relations between the two countries could develop. Turkey became the first state in the Middle East to recognize Armenian independence in December 1991. In April 1991, Turkey's Ambassador to Moscow, Volkan Vural, made his first visit to Yerevan. At this time both Armenia and Turkey were serious about normalizing relations between the two countries. Discussions took place concerning a draft on good neighborliness, willingness to promote cross-border trade, and the opening of a highway between Turkey and Armenia. Both sides also "recognized the need to overcome psychological barriers between the two peoples that

stemmed from the massacre of Armenians in Eastern Turkey during World War I" (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.30). Between 1915 and 1917 approximately one million Armenians were executed or died as a result of forced marches across Turkey to present-day Syria. Under the leadership of the Young Turk government and Committee of Union and Progress in the Ottoman Empire, Armenians were virtually eliminated from "nine-tenths of their historical territories in Turkey, leaving them only the small fragment in the Russian Transcaucasus to call their own" (Dudick 1997, p.475). The genocide remains an important part of Armenian historic memory both within Armenia and among the Diaspora communities.

Despite intentions to overcome obstacles from the past, relations between Armenia and Turkey quickly soured when Turkey put demands on Armenia in order to establish diplomatic recognition. As a precondition to the establishment of diplomatic relations Turkey called for "Armenia's explicit abandonment of territorial designs on Turkey, of allegations of Turkey's culpability for the 1915 'genocide' of Armenians (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.31)" and a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Armenia refused these demands, with President Levon Ter-Petrosyan calling for "bilateral relations without preconditions" (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.32). Turkey was unwilling to relinquish its demands. Having reached a stalemate, diplomatic relations between the two countries were not established. This situation continues to this day. Although official diplomatic ties were not established, Armenia and Turkey do have contact with one another. For example, Armenia joined the Turkey-inspired Black Sea Cooperation Organization in June 1992.

Between 1993 and 1994 Armenian-Turkish relations worsened as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh army defeating the Azeri army in Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkey supported Azerbaijan in the conflict and openly threatened Armenia by sending troops to the Armenian border. Both Russian and U.S. officials warned Turkey against taking military action. Marshal Shaposhnikov, the Commander-in-Chief of Russia's military forces, warned Turkey that "any hostile military action against Armenia could mean the beginning of the Third World War," (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.32). While Turkey did not take military action against Armenia, in March 1993 it joined Azerbaijan in suspending both aid to Armenia and Armenian access to transit routes (Goldenberg 1994, p.77). In effect, both Turkey and Azerbaijan imposed a blockade of all air and ground shipments to both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Turkey's blockade of Armenia remains in place, and the border between the two countries, which once served as the dividing line between NATO forces and the front line of the Soviet Union, remains unstable and heavily guarded (Adalian 1995, p.318). The governments of Armenia and Turkey are under internal pressure from their respective populations, which makes it difficult for officials from either side to compromise. Despite the challenges, joint participation in multinational organizations such as the Black Sea Economic Organization provides a framework within which the two countries can communicate (Adalian 1995, p.318). It can be said that while one of Armenia's top foreign policy goals post-independence was the establishment of positive relations with its neighbors, in the case of Turkey, this has not yet been achieved.

Armenian-Iranian Relations

Iran recognized Armenia's independence on December 25, 1991 and established diplomatic relations with the newly independent state on February 9, 1992 (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.43). Unlike Armenia's relationship with Turkey, Armenia and Iran have a history of amity between the two countries. There are no territorial disputes between Armenia and Iran. Following Armenian independence, the Presidents of Armenia and Iran declared that the "two states consider their common borders to be borders of peace" (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.44).

Armenia and Iran's friendly relations are dictated by both political and economic factors. Given their mutual interest in one another, cooperation has increased in recent years. This has been particularly true since Turkey and Azerbaijan imposed the blockade on both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Following the introduction of the blockade, Iran became an important trade route for Armenia. According to Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister Ruben Shugarian, speaking at the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Caucasus Project Meeting on September 25, 2002 in Washington, D.C., Armenia's trade with Iran amounts to roughly \$100 million a year. Shurgarian commented, "In our situation, where we are blockaded on two borders, Iran is virtually our only connection to the outside world." In addition to having high levels of trade with Iran, Armenia receives 10 percent of its electricity needs from this neighbor (Winrow 2000, p.54). Iran also benefits economically from relations with Armenia. Armenia serves as a significant market for Iranian goods and capital. Furthermore, Armenia provides a link for Iran to Russia and countries in Western Europe. Iran, therefore, views relations with Armenia as an important part of increasing its own ties with the international community (Winrow 2000, p.53).

Positive political relations with Armenia remain important to Iran, particularly in light of the country's less than ideal relations with Azerbaijan. Iran has accused Azerbaijan of having aspirations to unite the Azerbaijani minority living in Iran with the state of Azerbaijan. This would threaten both Iran's territorial integrity as well as its position in the Middle East (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.47). Despite unsteady relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, Iran tried to play a mediator role in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute from February to May 1992 (Hovhannisyan 1998, p.46). This was done in part to prevent the U.S. and Turkey from strengthening their influence in the region. Unfortunately, Iran's efforts were unsuccessful and the crisis remained unresolved. Iran has maintained its interest in serving as a mediator to the conflict. During a meeting between Iranian and Armenian officials in the second week of December 2002, Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi again expressed his country's "readiness to help mediate a settlement of the Karabakh conflict," (Fuller 2002b).

Armenian-Iranian relations have remained positive over the past decade. On December 16, 2002, an Iranian parliamentary delegation traveled to Yerevan to meet with Armenian Prime Minister Andranik Markarian, Parliament Speaker Armen Khachatryan, and Foreign Minister Oskanian. During the meeting, Markarian called Armenian-Iranian bilateral relations "strategic" and "long-term." He also "called for an expansion of 'important' economic ties and bilateral trade" between Armenia and Iran," (Fuller 2002b). According to Interfax, Oskanian hailed Iran's "balanced policy toward the Karabakh conflict," which he said "has a positive impact on the entire South Caucasus," (Fuller 2002b).

Armenian-Azerbaijani Relations

Relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan are among the most challenging in the Transcaucasian region. Ties between the two countries have been permanently strained and even openly hostile, since each declared independence from the former Soviet Union. The status of Nagorno-Karabakh, a former autonomous district under the Soviet Union which is claimed by both Armenia and Azerbaijan, has remained central to Armenian foreign policy since the country gained independence. Immediately following the break up of the Soviet Union, the Karabakh issue was viewed as a "low intensity ethnic conflict in a remote enclave" (Adalian 1995, p.326) and later escalated into a full-fledged war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Nagorno-Karabakh dispute is a complicated one and can be traced back for centuries.

According to scholar Shireen Hunter, "Both Azeris and Armenians believe that, for at least 3,000 years, the region has been part of their respective countries, and their scholars have done excellent work in support of each other's views. The fact is, however, that the region, like other parts of the republic, has had a checkered history and has witnessed many changes in the makeup of its population and the identity of its political masses" (Hunter 1997, p.443). In order to understand the conflict in the region today, a very brief historical discussion will be offered.

Prior to 1828, Karabakh was part of Iran. That year, according to the Treaty of Turkmenchai, Iran ceded its Transcaucasian possessions to Russia. After 1917 and the Russian revolution there was another scramble for power in the region. Ultimately, the republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan were established. By 1920, Karabakh had been incorporated into Azerbaijan. The Armenians did not approve and war broke out between the two republics (Hunter 1997, p.444). When the Bolsheviks entered the region in November 1920, they decided to award the regions of Nakhichevan, Karabakh, and Zangezur to Armenia. This decision was reversed in 1921 with both Nakhichevan and Karabakh returned to Azerbaijan. By awarding Nakhichevan to Azerbaijan, the republic was able to share a border with Turkey (Hunter 1997, p.444). While in 1920 the population of Nakhichevan was almost evenly divided between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, today there are almost no Armenians living on the territory. Karabakh Armenians feared that the same would happen in their region. In response to this fear, Soviet officials declared Karabakh an autonomous oblast within Azerbaijan in 1923. This was not acceptable to Armenians either in Karabakh or Armenia proper. As a result, tensions persisted between Armenia and Azerbaijan throughout the communist period (Hunter 1997, p.444).

Karabakh protested its situation to Moscow periodically under Communism. Karabakh Armenians argued that Azerbaijan "seriously neglected the oblast's infrastructure," failed to guarantee cultural rights granted by the Soviet Constitution, and "prevented contacts with Armenians" (Dudwick 1997, p.483). The Armenians in Armenia proper argued that Karabakh had always been an important part of Armenia. From their perspective, there was not any difference between the Armenians of Karabakh and those in the republic. The populations shared the same ethnicity, language, religion (Christianity) and cultural heritage (Hovannisyan 1998, p.59).

In 1988, a movement developed in Nagorno-Karabakh whereby the Armenian population began to press for the attachment of the region to Armenia. Mass demonstrations began in the region, which grew to become the largest in Armenia since

1965 (Dudwick 1997, p.483). With dissent already in place, the dissolution of the Soviet Union provided a catalyst for change.

In December 1991, Karabakh Armenians chose independence through a referendum and unilaterally declared Nagorno-Karabakh an independent republic on January 6, 1992. The republic has not been officially recognized by the international community, despite its formation of an independent government. An independent army was also created. Armed conflict followed and soon Armenia and Azerbaijan were embroiled in an all out war (Dudwick 1997, p.491). A ceasefire was declared in 1994.

Although the ceasefire has held since May 1994, the conflict has yet to be resolved and remains a constant source of friction. Not only has the war increased ethnic tension between the Armenian and Azerbaijani people, but the souring of state relations has had devastating economic consequences. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan have suffered from the diversion of limited economic resources to the war effort. For example, in December 1992, Leila Yunosova, Azerbaijan's former deputy defense minister, estimated that 60 to 70 percent of Azerbaijan's budget was being absorbed by defense spending (Goldenberg 1994, p.73).

In addition to diverting economic resources to the war effort, Armenia's economy has been further hurt by the joint blockade of the country by both Azerbaijan and Turkey. Since Armenia's longest borders are shared with these two countries, the blockade has significantly altered Armenia's ability to trade and attract investment. For example, in 1992 Benetton, along with two clothing factories, was opened in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. However, the factories were forced to close soon after, since they were unable to receive necessary supply shipments (Goldenberg 1994, p.76). Not only has Azerbaijan closed trade routes, but it also placed an energy blockade on Armenia. This has had devastating consequences for the Armenian people, since the country imported 95 percent of its energy needs – most of which came from Azerbaijan (Goldenberg 1994, p.75). The blockade continues to this day, leaving Armenia with only a narrow border to Iran and another border with Georgia. Internal conflict in Georgia, however, has further hindered Armenia ability to send and receive goods through that country.

In November 1998, the Minsk Group (co-chaired by the U.S., Russia, and France) proposed a second settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. The new proposal called for the resolution of the dispute based on "the equal legal status of the conflicting sides, impossibility of Karabagh's return to enclave status, and guaranteed security for its population," ("Armenia's National Policy" 2002). Armenia accepted the new proposal, but it was subsequently rejected by Azerbaijan. Both Armenian President Robert Kocharian and Azeri President Geidar Aliyev have met several times since July 1999 to discuss the Karabakh issue. Talks held in Florida on April 3-7, 2001 failed to reach an agreement and additional talks scheduled for June 2001 in Geneva were postponed indefinitely (O'Lear 2001, p.305). The Nagorno-Karabakh dispute continues to hinder the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and impose political and economic constraints on the two countries.

Armenian-Georgian Relations

On July 27, 1991, Georgia became the first state to recognize independent Armenia. Official relations between Armenia and Georgia are considered favorable. Differences do exist between Armenia and Georgia, though they are not as severe or

disruptive as are the differences between Armenia and neighboring Turkey and Azerbaijan. Tensions between the two countries in recent years have revolved around Armenia's concerns about the treatment of 300,000 ethnic Armenians living in Georgia. Armenia has also remained skeptical of Georgia's efforts to participate in the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline linking Azerbaijan and Turkey (Khachatrian 2001).

Georgia and Armenia signed their first important treaty on December 13, 1991. As a result of this treaty, Armenia and Georgia agreed to cooperate in the areas of economics, culture, and science. On May 19, 1993, the two sides signed an additional agreement calling for political cooperation in the form of a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Security (Hovhannisyanyan 1998, p.75). A friendship treaty was modified and resigned in both 1996 and 2001.

Positive relations between Armenia and Georgia became even more significant following the introduction of the blockade against Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan. As a result of the blockade, Armenia became dependent on Georgia, as well as Iran, for the transportation of vital supplies. Travel across Georgia became particularly important for Armenia, since it provided a transit route to Russia and European countries. Given Georgia's internal struggles, however, the country was unable to secure the transportation links to Armenia. Roads between Georgia and Russia were themselves closed due to conflict in Georgia's separatist republic of Abkhazia. Widespread robbery on highways, initiated by bandits, government officials, and private forces also limited Georgia's ability to serve as a dependable trade route.

In May 1997, Georgian President Edward Shevardnadze visited Armenia. On this occasion Armenian President Levon-Ter-Petrosyan stated that "there is not any political and national problems between Armenia and Georgia" (Hovhannisyanyan 1998, p.77). This sentiment was reiterated in 1998 when the new Armenian President Kocharian met with Shevardnadze in Moscow. During their meeting, both Presidents "affirmed their willingness for further development of friendly relations between Armenia and Georgia in political, economic, cultural and regional fields (Hovhannisyanyan 1998, p.78). Georgian President Shevardnadze again visited Armenia on October 23-24, 2001. During his meeting with President Kocharian, both sides agreed not to enter alliances that could be construed as hostile to the other country's interests. Shevardnadze said, "Georgia will never participate in any project capable of establishing a 'Berlin Wall' in the South Caucasus," (Khachatrian 2001). Following Shevardnadze's visit, Armenian Defense Minister Serzh Sarkisyan arrived in Tbilisi for additional talks. On October 28, 2001, Sarkisyan announced the creating of a joint Armenian-Georgian working group to discuss the development of military cooperation (Khachatrian 2001).

ARMENIA'S PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Since gaining independence, Armenia has become increasingly interested in engaging with the international community and has joined a number of regional and international organizations to meet this goal. Armenia's two-part strategy for integration includes increasing both bilateral and multilateral cooperation (Adalian 1995, p.312). On March 2, 1992, Armenia joined the largest international organization, the United Nations, as an independent member (Hovhannisyanyan 1998, p.13). Other international organizations joined by Armenia include: the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Organization of Black Sea

Economic Cooperation, NATO's Partnership for Peace program, and the Council of Europe ("Background Note: Armenia." 2001). Most recently, Armenia has been accepted to join the World Trade Organization (WTO). A selection of organizations with which Armenia is involved will now be discussed.

NATO

Armenia joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in October 1994 and became a founding member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997. In 1997, the mission of Armenia to NATO was also established. Armenia's cooperation with NATO through the Partnership for Peace program and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council has remained among Armenia's top foreign policy priorities. Cooperation between Armenia and NATO has evolved around the following: defense policy and strategy, civil emergency planning, national defense research, language training, peacekeeping, military education, and military exercises ("Mission of the Republic of Armenia to NATO" 2001). On December 19, 2001 during a speech at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Armenia's Defense Minister Serzh Sarkisian said, "Armenia, in its foreign policy, is oriented towards establishment of friendly relations with all the countries of our region and full participation to all the peace and security initiatives. In this context, we watch our participation to EAPC and cooperation through PfP as a major element of our security system" ("Mission of the Republic of Armenia to NATO" 2001).

The Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Joseph Ralston, led a NATO delegation meeting in Yerevan on December 16, 2002. The delegation met with President Robert Kocharian, Defense Minister Serzh Sarkisian, and Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian, (Fuller 2002c). Both NATO and Armenian officials have expressed their pleasure with the "tremendous progress" in contact. During their meeting, Ralston and Kocharian also discussed "Armenia's participation in the Kosovo peacekeeping operation and the planned NATO maneuvers to be held in Armenia in June 2003," (Fuller 2002c).

Council of Europe

Armenia applied to join the Council of Europe in March 1996. This organization was founded in 1949 and serves to promote multilateral cooperation among European democracies. The Council of Europe addresses issues such as democratic pluralism, human rights, labor, health, etc. with the exception of defense issues. After submitting its application, Armenia began to participate in the Council's assistance programs and contributed to the organization as a guest delegation. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan were admitted to the Council of Europe on June 28, 2000 at a session of the organization's parliamentary assembly meeting in Strasbourg. Georgia was invited to join the organization in January 1999 (Gankin 2000, p.19). The decision to admit Georgia prior to Armenia and Azerbaijan was in response to the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. Ultimately, the Council agreed to admit both Armenia and Azerbaijan simultaneously in order to prevent the appearance of support for one country over the other in terms of the conflict.

World Trade Organization

On December 10, 2002, the World Trade Organization (WTO) approved Armenia's application for membership. The decision was made six years after Armenia began negotiations with the 144-member trade body. Negotiations between Armenia and the WTO stalled in 2001 after member countries accused Armenia of failing to make significant progress in implementing market reforms. In 2002, the Armenian parliament passed legislation to bring Armenian trade practices in line with WTO regulations, including the opening of Armenia's market to foreign goods and services.

Responding to the WTO decision, Trade Commissioner for the European Union Pascal Lamy said, "Overall, Armenia has been able to offer its WTO partners commitments that are balanced and in line with its economic capacities," ("WTO Countries Say Ex-Soviet Armenia Can Join." 2002). Armenian Prime Minister Andranik Markarian called the WTO's approval of Armenian membership in the organization "the most important step for his country since gaining admission to the Council of Europe," (Hakobyan 2002). Trade analyst Gagik Gabrielyan, who assisted in Armenia's WTO accession negotiations, told "Transitions Online" that Armenia can now request Turkey lift its trade blockade (Hakobyan 2002). WTO regulations generally prohibit states from blocking the free transit of goods across member state territory. According to the WTO agreement, however, states may introduce a blockade against another member state if they inform the organization of their intentions in advance. Turkey has already told the WTO that it will not follow the organization's general agreement on multilateral trade with respect to Armenia. Before Armenia can officially join the organization its entry package must be ratified by its parliament and a formal statement acknowledging the ratification must be sent to the WTO. One month after the WTO receives the statement of ratification, Armenia will automatically become a WTO member.

CONCLUSION

Although Armenia's foreign policy has not shown radical shifts since the country gained independence, there have been clear responses to changes in the international environment. Relations with both Russia and the U.S. have waxed and waned in response to the security needs of both Armenia and the major powers. Despite Armenia's stated foreign policy priorities of normalizing relations with its neighbors and resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, success has not yet been achieved. Relations with Iran and Georgia are officially cordial, yet relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan remain openly hostile. Armenia has, in fact, made greater progress in terms of joining international organizations in an attempt to promote its state security.

The indicators suggested by Barry Buzan for examining national security are indeed relevant for the Armenian case. Given its size and location, Armenia's security cannot be considered independent of its neighbors or the major powers influencing the region. By examining long-standing historical ties and patterns of warfare, the rationale for Armenia's current foreign policy decisions comes more clearly into focus. Armenia's participation in regional security organizations (i.e. NATO's Partnership for Peace program and the CIS Collective Security Treaty) also demonstrate Armenia's desire to promote a foreign policy of "complementarism."

As has been demonstrated by a discussion of the Armenian case, it is not possible to examine Armenian security from a purely political/military perspective. The economic

challenges facing the state are intertwined with political considerations. Armenia has lost potential economic partners and markets through the ongoing disputes with Turkey and Azerbaijan. In addition, the economic blockade has decreased Armenia's ability to attract and maintain direct foreign investment. Armenia has joined economic organizations such as the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the World Trade Organization in attempt to participate in international economic markets and promote the country's economic security. Although Buzan's framework has not been applied to the Armenian case in its entirety, the indicators offered demonstrate the importance of considering both traditional and non-traditional threats for a comprehensive understanding of state security. Armenian foreign policy will continue to bridge the gap between meeting the country's political and economic needs.

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