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NATO -EAPC Research Fellowship 1999-2001
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Acknowledgments

First and foremost I would like to thank Dr. Charles Fairbanks, Director of Central Asia Institute, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC for hosting me at their Institute and for his valuable advice and help to meet in various governmental agencies, universities, research centers and as well as with experts in DC area. I also thank Hagani Huseynov - military analyst for his helpful comments.

Special thanks to the library personnel of Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and to my son Ulvi for their assistance in searching materials.

Conclusion

The complexity for Azerbaijan and as well as the countries of South Caucasus for the researched period has been characterized by the mixture of different factors including pro-independence movements, formation of sovereign nationhood and at the same time the periods of violent conflicts between and inside the countries. The mixture of these three major elements have allowed to both internal and external forces to play their own game due to sensitivity of those issues.

Internal disturbances and coup attempts have been instrumental for changing power, instability and waves of violence has served as impediment for development of regional cooperation. The weapons inherited from the Soviet Union had served not for security but for military confrontation in both interstate and ethnic wars causing security disaster we are facing now.

The violent confrontation has put the integrity and security of the countries in uncertainty and the arms race and armament has polarized the countries of the region and an idea of security had been equated with armament.

Globally, collapse of the soviet military has been accompanied by the collapse of the soviet union mixing complex military political development and leaving the countries of the south Caucasus under the ruins of these two mighty institutions. To keep and develop the independent statehood in a complex environment with the collapsed structures of social and economic life with the inexperienced politicians of post soviet era has faced tremendous difficulties. In case of Azerbaijan where the mixture of all these elements

plus military operations inside the country have turned the country into the disastrous situation which could at the end lead to dismemberment of Azerbaijan Republic.

Azerbaijani strong pro-independence movement has turned the history of the country towards the full independence and the removal of foreign troops from the country had created new, different situation from its neighbors in its international politics.

The current situation in Georgia which is aspiring for its independence has showed that Azerbaijan had distanced itself and ensured its independence leaving less direct leverages to be intervened and pressured.

The military activities inside the country and violation of its international borders and occupation of large part of the country and flow of refugees has brought the country on the brink of failure in mid 1993. Political turmoil, absence of order, demoralized army as part of society and lost hopes had been good chance for advancement of Armenian forces into the deep areas receiving inadequate response.

The cease fire agreement has turned the military plans into the political and required the time to resist and mobilize again the existing resources. The question of establishing foreign bases has been speculated as a loss of independence and political leadership did not risk to compensate the issue with the assurances on return of occupied territories.

Chechen war and strained relations with Russia distanced Azerbaijan from the traditional space and stimulated for seeking its own ways of development. Here Russian military assistance to Armenia and Azerbaijani strong arguments against Russia's armament of Armenia had given additional stimuli and reason for pursuing Azerbaijani own interests in the international arena.

Alignment of GUUAM countries and initiating of regional projects from Europe to Central Asia

bypassing Russia has been the result of division of interests in the region. Seeking new regional structures with the possible security dimensions and active cooperation with NATO structures for ensuring the security of the country has been instrumental for the past years.

Building of the border troops, restructuring of the army similar to NATO standards, training of officers in Turkish military schools has been strengthening elements of Azerbaijanian security .

However, as analysis show for ensuring the security of the newly emerged country the necessity of internal security is significant. The issue is being debated in Azerbaijan since the authoritarian style of governance is not the source for long term security and stability of the country. Absence of rule of law, deficiencies of tax policy, corruption and bribery are the impediments for strong economy and strengthened statehood. Rigged parliamentary and presidential election do not complement the foreign policy objectives of Azerbaijan for ensuring effective security and sovereignty of the country.

Distribution of income, lack of institutionalized mechanisms for resolution of conflicts, lack of power sharing mechanisms and conditions for peaceful transfer of power are also challenges of Azerbaijani security .

Military build up in the region and accumulated huge amount of weapons in Azerbaijani occupied lands has been serving for long term insecurity in the region. Highly politicized society and attachment of people to their own land makes it extremely likely for resuming military activities in the region The research has discovered stationing of powerful

weapons in the hand of nationalistic elements whose only argument is the weapon that can work out any time.

With the presence of huge arsenal of opposition Armenian weapons inside Azerbaijan one can not speak about the security of Azerbaijan Republic. If we add the devastated weapons stationed in Armenia proper we would see the picture of warehouse of weapons in a small territory.

Those weapons have already had undermined Azerbaijani state security leaving uncontrolled of 120 km international border with Iran and more than that with Armenia proper.

The study concludes that there should be effective international mechanism for intervention and eliminating of illegally held weapons. In this respect, Armenia-Azerbaijani confrontation has to be resolved within the context of security of independent countries limiting the number of weapons for both nations and removing and eliminating of illegally kept weapons in the uncontrolled NK area.

With this regard the proposed idea of Caucasus security pact which envisioned the removal of foreign troops and signing of bilateral security pact among the Caucasian nations namely Azerbaijan and Armenia would serve the ground for the security of these nations.

There would be no security if the countries of the region would not look at the security of their neighbor as their own security. The region's people are so close psychologically, culturally and geographically that forcing to be in insecurity of one nation at the expense of other is not perceivable and would serve for new source of instability. As Armenian defense minister said before the parliament that "there are territories that we occupied and we must not be ashamed¹ of that. The territories were occupied for the sake of our national security" Will that provide lasting security in the region? Such a confrontational approach predicts that the region's security is still hanged in balance.

Investment in energy resources of Azerbaijan and to Azerbaijan's economy which totals up to eight billion and proposed pipeline for the transportation of Caspian energy resources would create additional concerns for the security of Azerbaijan, capability and resources for providing is highly debatable due to absence of comprehensive accord for its realization.

Complex processes going on in the north Caucasus and unsolved confrontation between Russia and Chechen leaders and unpredictability of the development in that front could be additional sources of greater insecurity in the future If the conflict would spill over the Russian boundaries.

Azerbaijani rapprochement with Russia after Putin's rise to power, although has diminished some uncertainty in bilateral relations but the Russia's continued role for military alignment in the region by dividing the CIS countries into allied and non-allied does not predict good environment for Azerbaijanian security.

Finally, the positive sign of this period has been strong aspiration for freedom and independence that they managed to maintain. The another point is that the western democracies' involvement in regional affairs was not sufficient and influential and major initiatives came from the regions rather than from the West. Although, NATO's PfP initiative, Council of Europe's membership are to be considered as a support for political independence of the Caucasian nations but for removing of the existing situation has not been done effective measures.

Overall, Azerbaijan security policy is built on bilateral basis and there is no institutionalized structure for security policy after leaving CIS Collective security Treaty which had also had symbolic character. In early period of membership at CST and particularly after the cease fire agreement the issue of Russian bases and border troops have been dominated in bilateral relations as a protection of CIS “borders” but after the Chechen war of 1994-1996 those claims have already been taken out of agenda.

Chapter 1.

Introduction

The project sponsored by NATO-EAPC fellowship and entitled “Security policy in Azerbaijan“ covers foreign policy issues of Azerbaijan beginning from the early period of independence of 1991 up until recent years.

As the given research is named security policy in Azerbaijan, it could include overall security issues pertaining to Azerbaijan, but I confined my research to a specifically military development of the region, which remains number one issue in Azerbaijani security.

Pipeline issues and their security implications are also widely debated by researchers and politicians across the world, but the issue has remained untouched by the research and I believe it could also be considered within the context of conflict resolution in the region.

Azerbaijan’s difficult socio-economic situation and the migration of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis abroad in search for a source of subsistence for their families as well as their safety is also a security concern for Azerbaijan. Difficult economic situation and potential undesirable social explosion could trigger chaos in the fragile society with weak institutions, which, in its turn, could undermine the internal stability. Women and drug trafficking is a burden that Azerbaijan needs to tackle as a serious security challenge at this stage in its development.

I have focused on military political developments inside Azerbaijan, trying to create the picture of pre-independence and post-independence military activities and further military political processes ongoing in the country.

Although the term “security” and especially the concept of “national security” is not clearly defined within the former Soviet Union, where the lack of the rule of law, intolerable living standards create more negative factors for the security than the traditional approach towards security. The technological, political and economical challenges of the new century change the dimensions of security so greatly that sometimes it is too difficult to give an exact definition of security.

But for the given project my concept was to provide the framework for the research and to consider particular issues and particular outcomes within that framework. Here it should be indicated that the Azerbaijani perspective for the search of security has always been perceived as a way of finding mechanisms for providing integrity and inviolability of borders of the Azerbaijan Republic.

To clarify certain issues, I have divided my research period in two major stages, although each year of independence is being examined separately. The first stage focused exclusively on the period of 1991-1993 and the second stage dealt with the years of 1994-1999. .

These two time frameworks are different for their content and policy orientation. Interesting and dramatic changes on Azerbaijan's military and political scene and its international relations were the gist of the research of that period.

Chapter 2.

1. Internal political situation in Azerbaijan on the eve of the break-up of Soviet Union

During the Soviet rule in Azerbaijan, communist rulers were trying to deprive the Azerbaijani people of their roots and identity, by twice forcing them to change their alphabet in the 1920s and 1930s² and the name of the nation in the 1930s. The intelligentsia, including writers, poets, composers, philosophers, historians, who could carry on the glorious record of Azerbaijani Turkic nation, were exterminated in the years of Stalin's repression³ in the late 1930s. Therefore, the policy of the "Soviet people" proved more successful in Azerbaijan, especially in Baku, due to the demographic spectrum of the city that changed a lot after the Bolshevik revolution.

Although the Azerbaijani language was official, Azerbaijanis had no right to use⁴ it in the overwhelming majority of ministries and offices. Azerbaijani regions were abandoned with no school facilities and buildings, public health and service systems.

The lack of electricity, gas, roads and food with huge agricultural fields brought the people to the brink of a desperate life. The country's population was mobilized to cotton and grape fields to fulfill the Five-Year Plan set by the Communist party. Due to these slave-like conditions Azerbaijan was well ahead of anyone else in the USSR, and probably even in the whole world, for children mortality. The town of Sumgayit near Baku, with poisonous chemical factories of the Soviet Union, had a separate children's cemetery, which had no analogs⁵ elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

The Azerbaijani history was falsified⁶ and a new generation of Soviet historians appeared with the Marxist-Leninist approach to history. Any research or writing on national self-consciousness could be prohibited and author arrested on grounds of damaging the eternal friendship of the Soviet people, which, however, was not the case in neighboring Armenia and Georgia, except some basic restrictions relating to the Soviet period of history.

Perestroika and the revival initiative launched by M. Gorbachov in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s were accepted by the Azerbaijani young intelligentsia as a chance to resolve the problems the society was facing. First branches of non-governmental charitable, linguistic, folk organizations were set up⁷ initiating the debate on problems of Azerbaijan that woke up national consciousness in people.

The expanding movement for reform and sovereignty in Russia and eventually independence movement in the Baltic republics promoted similar movements in Azerbaijan, which changed the nature of sovereignty demands. Azerbaijan's positive import-export balance together with only Ukraine in the entire Soviet Union inspired the supporters of sovereignty to take the initiative and push the country toward state sovereignty,⁸ which drew fire both from the local communist rulers and the central Soviet government.

However, the territorial claims of neighboring Armenia for Azerbaijan supported by the Armenian population inside Azerbaijan's administrative region of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) inflamed new tensions in the country. Initially, the Azerbaijani people were ignoring the claims believing that they were ungrounded since Armenians and Azerbaijanis lived as one family in Azerbaijan. However, further developments changed the situation in the region and led to a rapid politicization of peoples in both countries. Eventually the Azerbaijani people became less confident in Moscow and felt insecure in the ever mighty Soviet Union. Taking advantage of the popular mistrust to the Center, the newly-organized Azerbaijan Popular Front took the lead and in the late 1989 called for a complete independence⁹ of Azerbaijan from the Soviet Union. Radicalization of the Popular Front was necessitated by the lack of security of Azerbaijan's provinces bordering on Armenia, where different Armenian terrorist and paramilitary groups were penetrating¹⁰ into Azerbaijani villages, terrorizing and kidnapping local population. Actions of the Soviet leadership aimed to diminish Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the NK region also furnished the Popular Front with solid arguments in favor of national independence. People had no trust in the Communist government and relied on the Popular Front, which, in their turn, had no leverages to physically ensure the security of the people. Any appeal for defense could trigger an immediate response from Moscow to crush the popular movement under the pretext that the organization was planning on a military coup.

Popular disobedience to the Communist authorities prompted the central government to send troops¹¹ and shoot at the protesters in the streets of Baku. The imposed state of emergency was lifted after the failed coup in Moscow in September¹² 1991. The parliamentary election was held under the state of emergency and "ensured" the sweeping dominance of the Communist party. The parliament was formed under complete disparity of political forces in Azerbaijan, did not reflect the existing political situation in the republic and served for future instability and frequent changes of power in the country.

2. Development of situation in NK.

The situation changed in February 1988 with demonstrations in NK regional capital Stepanakert, where local Armenian population of the region demanded secession from Azerbaijan and joining Armenia¹³. The separation demands were further accompanied with violence in the region, where different local groups and experienced Armenian terrorist groups arrived from abroad, initiated terror and violence against Azerbaijani civilians and government agencies¹⁴. Violence was the only means to attract the attention since there was no solid argument for claims.

Deployed Soviet troops pursued their own goals and were mainly concentrated in regional capital and towns, but the outnumbering groups were hiding in the mountains¹⁵ and remote villages.

In the early stages of tensions in 1988 and 1989, the authority of the autonomous region was suspended, while Moscow appointed a commission led by N. Volski¹⁶ and later the Azerbaijan Organizational committee led by V. Polyamichko, the then second secretary of the Azerbaijani Communist party¹⁷.

The Organizational committee worked closely with the law-enforcement forces trying to eradicate the violence.

By the break up of the Soviet Union, the area was turned into the a center of military training of Armenian, local and Diaspora dominated militants including ASALA¹⁸ terrorist organization (military wing of Diaspora based Dashnak party). The groups served as a financial source to buy weapons and dictate force in the small region. Later when the conflict escalated into the war those groups have been united under the unified command.

After gaining independence, the Azerbaijani opposition demanded the withdrawal of V. Polyamichko and his organizational committee from Stepanakert accusing the committee for its alleged pro-Moscow activities¹⁹. But no one was sent to replace him and the region in fact was abandoned into the outrage of militants²⁰ That was a mistake from the Azerbaijan central government and an indication of the lack of will and experience to face and to deal with critical situations.

Local radical elements financed from abroad, took the initiative and formed local self-proclaimed executive organs and armed forces. They were intimidating local Armenian population against any contacts and travels to other parts of Azerbaijan. Any visits by government officials to the region²¹ and its capital were blocked by local militants, who were smashing cars, organizing mob assaults and abducting people.

3.Situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan

By imposing the state of emergency in Baku and quelling the political opposition in early 1990, Soviet troops were deployed²² on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and inside the country in order to defend local Azerbaijanis from Armenian attacks. The situation itself was unique in the Soviet country as Soviet troops were for the first time protecting one republic's border from another.

The Soviet first deputy interior minister General Shatalin, then in charge of anti-terrorist combat in Trans-Caucasus, was complaining on the absence of political order from Moscow with regard to Armenia AND THE LACK OF PERMISSION FROM²³ the Armenian authorities. But the entire operation in Baku and the rest of Azerbaijan in January was carried out without any permission of the Azerbaijani authorities. Such an approach led to the formation of numerous uncontrolled military formations²⁴ in Armenia.

Different political and non-political organizations in Armenia had their own armed groups²⁵. Armenian groups from the Middle East, experienced in training in terrorist camps, were both instructors and fighters²⁶ here. Their very aim at the first stage was to train young people and send them to Karabakh to try to intimidate and oust²⁷ Azerbaijanis from mixed and Azerbaijan villages adjacent to Armenian populated areas. Meanwhile, the Soviet media was spreading reports from Armenia about military attacks²⁸ on local Russian army units intended to plunder weaponry. Despite the numerous appeals from Azerbaijan to the Soviet leadership, the then Soviet president Gorbachov did not take any resolute step to dismantle them.

Although the Soviet president did issue a special decree "On disarming illegal armed formations"²⁹, the implementation of which was entrusted to defense and interior ministries, nothing was done to Armenian forces. The inaction was justified by the fact

that they were located in the mountains and their disarming could cause casualties in the Soviet army. In fact, the Soviet military units in Armenia were defending themselves from possible Armenian attacks.

The Soviet Armenian forces had at their disposal helicopters, which they freely used to transport³⁰ army personnel and weaponry inside Azerbaijan to their military bases in Nagorno Karabakh and other Armenian populated areas of Azerbaijan. In the fall of 1990, the majority of unofficial paramilitary organizations in Armenia joined into a unified group³¹ with all their weapons and artillery. The united Armenian military group represented the cornerstone of the Armenian army in the Soviet Union, equipped with armored vehicles³², tanks, helicopters, heavy artillery and large amount of machine guns and automatic weapons.

It should be indicated that the local Soviet forces, due to the poor living conditions and unpredictability of their own future, were covertly involved in illegal arming³³ of the local paramilitary forces, which was a source of income for them. The “attack and capture” policy was a way³⁴ to obtain weapons promoted by the local government itself, because nationalist forces were in control of the government, including power ministries. By the time the Soviet Union collapsed in late August 1991, Armenia was the only country in the former Soviet Union to have its own armed forces³⁵. Azerbaijan, with the state of emergency, was left unarmed³⁶ in front of armed Armenian groups, which played a crucial role in further military developments in the region.

Such developments in Armenia provoked acute debates on the future security and integrity of Azerbaijan. Pro-independence, anti-Communist supporters believed that Armenian rebels³⁷ inside the country and in Armenia proper are supported by Moscow to intimidate Azerbaijan and keep the country within the Soviet Union and the only way to integrity and security was seen through the secession from the Union and becoming a subject of international law.

4. Violence in NK area

Before the August coup attempt in Moscow, both Russian and Kazakh presidents B. Yeltsin and N. Nazarbaev made a joint statement on their intentions visit the region and broker peace to the region. They kept their promise and visited Azerbaijan and Armenia³⁸ in September 20-23, 1991, trying to help to cease hostility and violence. The leaders further gathered in Zeleznovodsk in North Caucasus and agreed to send a special observer mission of Russian and Kazakh officials³⁹ to the region to monitor the situation, facilitate communication and develop cooperation.

Immediately after the meeting of four presidents in Zeleznovodsk on September 24, Armenian armed forces located in NK region launched an attack on Azerbaijani populated village of Imaret Garvent⁴⁰ in the North-West of the then Mardakert district. The village with the population of 1,200 people was totally destroyed and burnt, while the survivors fled to other parts of Azerbaijan.

The attacks to villages inside Nagorno Karabakh region were a carefully planned policy of Armenian radical groups in Armenia and the Diaspora and were aimed at getting at least non-Azerbaijani Nagorno Karabakh as the first step in further extraction of the region. The violent Armenian groups were arriving in the region and joined by local

Armenian youngsters. They possessed a great experience in terrorizing local villagers, who were protected neither by regional police⁴¹ nor by central Azerbaijani authorities. The situation could have been improved with the aid of the Soviet interior ministry and defense ministry units still stationed in the region and its capital of Stepanakert, whose role, however, left further suspicion. Reports arriving from regional people suggested that Soviet tanks, armored vehicles and officers stationed in the region were being bribed⁴² by Armenian groups to shell the adjacent villages and force them to abandon their homes. The shelling was executed under the cover of darkness⁴³ so that to oust people and then return the equipment to their location. This practice became usual since there was no one to punish them for their actions.

On the contrary, the fate of the Soviet troops withdrawn from East Europe projected an ominous shadow over the future of Russian forces outside the Russian Federation. The living standards and unpaid salaries prompted them to any action in the region. In some cases they didn't care if an Azerbaijani or Armenian villagers were becoming victims, as the main concern was money.

Inexcusable actions of Azerbaijani leaders led to isolation of Azerbaijani villages in NK and their abandonment before paramilitary groups, which brought to a total ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanis from the region. On the other hand, the government and its president recognized the reluctance⁴⁴ of the Soviet military and interior ministry's personnel to listen to the Azerbaijan government's appeals to restrain the attacks on civilians.

Thus, Azerbaijan had no armed forces to oppose Armenian attacks and the local armenian groups were arming before⁴⁵ the Soviet military troops forcing a day-to-day expulsion of Azerbaijanis from their homes in Nagorno Karabakh region. The internal situation was characterized with violence both inside and in borderline parts of Azerbaijan.

The situation dramatically deteriorated in November 19, 1991, when a governmental delegation, including the secretary of state, interior minister, prosecutor general of Azerbaijan, Russian and Kazakh generals, ministers and parliamentarians, heads of security agencies of Nagorno Karabakh visited the region to deal with the problem⁴⁶ of refugees fleeing from Hojavend, Martuni and other villages inside NK. The helicopter carrying half of the Azerbaijani government was shot down near Garakend in Martuni district and all people on board⁴⁷ were killed. The terrorist act left an indelible shock in the country and shook the Azerbaijan society. People demanded urgent action against armed and terrorist groups in Armenian populated areas. In response, the Azerbaijan parliament abolished the autonomous status of NK region⁴⁸.

On December 21, the Operative regiment N81 of the Russian Interior ministry located in Stepanakert has been "disarmed" by local armenian militants capturing tanks, armored vehicles⁴⁹ and vast amount of weapons which had played crucial role in further ethnic cleansing in the region.

By late December 1991, the areas near Stepanakert were subject to ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanis, while Shusa became an object of incessant artillery shelling. On January 22-24, two big villages with the population of thousands of people⁵⁰, Malibeyli and Gushchular, and in mid-February the village of Garadagli, were cleaned off Azerbaijanis. About a hundred of villagers were forced into a truck and brutally slain by paramilitary groups⁵¹, while survivors had to flee through mountains to nearby villages of Agdam.

The massacre of Garadagli has been forgotten against the backdrop of Hojali, where on February 26, Armenian forces, with the support of the 366th Motor Rifle Regiment of the Russian Federation, surrounded the town at midnight and shelled it with tanks and heavy artillery⁵². Hundreds of people were killed and thousands taken hostage. The barbaric groups unleashed one of the appalling tragedies of the 20th century, by brutally killing sons in the presence of their mothers, humiliating husbands in the presence of their wives, fathers in the presence of their children⁵³. Corpses of babies, women and elderly were scattered over the hills⁵⁴ down Hojali following the unprecedented carnage of the 20th century.

Russian regiment's role was overwhelming since at that time there were not so many tanks and armored vehicles at the disposal of Armenian groups to capture Khojali and to transport them by helicopters from Armenia was not possible. Seeing Azerbaijan's fury, Marshal Shaposhnikov immediately ordered to pull back the forces and military equipment from Nagorno Karabakh proper⁵⁵ and borderline regions with Armenia. During the withdrawal, eight tanks, more than one hundred AIFV, artillery, air forces equipment and three fourth of ATK have been reported as "captured" by local Armenian officers of 366 regiment and armed groups⁵⁶. Scores of military equipment remained⁵⁷ with local rebel groups through "capture" policy. The sold equipment could easily be documented as captured.

Under public pressure, the Azerbaijan president stepped down in early March facing accusations that he failed to take steps necessary to defend the Hojali population⁵⁸. TV broadcast of massacred people's bodies and survivors' accounts of Armenian atrocities sowed panic among those residing in the whole Karabakh area and adjacent regions, prompting them to flee their homes to central areas of Azerbaijan to Baku and Sumgayit. Government institutions were paralyzed and people had no security guarantee from their government.

Some radical opposition groups believed that the Hojali massacre was an act of intimidation from the Russian Federation intended to teach a lesson to Azerbaijan for the refusal to join CIS and for the demands to remove Russian troops from Azerbaijan. Some others speculated on the version that Russian forces received a tidy bribe from Armenians for the operation and the mass killings were perpetrated by Armenian forces acting behind the 366th regiment. Although the Azerbaijan president attended the CIS meetings, the parliament had decided not to join the CIS. This dual approach caused Russia's suspicion and mistrust to Azerbaijan. What was going on behind the closed doors was unclear albeit president Mutalibov did not make any statements about the 366th regiment, claiming that he was not guilty of the fall of Hojali.

5.Struggle for full independence and recognition

While analyzing the pre-independence environment in Azerbaijan, one must emphasize that the internal situation represented a mixture of complicated social trends characterized by the will of people to preserve the country inviolable, to promote democratic changes and to achieve independence for the country. The question was whether the power and the ability of the people would be sufficient to meet those tasks.

Pro-independence forces were encouraged by the developments over Kuwait in the Gulf, believing that international organizations would not tolerate and respond similarly to any

attack on part of Armenia. Independence was considered to be a guarantee for integrity and equivalent of security.

Pro-Soviet and Communist forces argued that to have a sovereign Azerbaijan within the Soviet Union would represent a best chance for providing Azerbaijan with security since independent Armenia would not risk to claim Azerbaijani territory under the new “renewed” Soviet Union⁵⁹. They also considered central Soviet government as guarantor of their political dominance in the republic.

With this stance, the Communist-dominated parliament adopted a resolution in March 1991⁶⁰ to participate in the referendum in favor of preserving the Soviet Union, thus ignoring the huge pro-independence opposition.

At that time, the tactics pursued by the popular movement was also different in terms of achieving independence of the country.

A part of the people in higher popular front echelons⁶¹ were after the idea of obtaining independence through democracy⁶² and democratization of the society, which they believed could lead to a complete freedom of people and furthermore to independence of the country. They believed that such course would win international sympathy and the world community would support the recognition of Azerbaijan’s independence.

As to the second approach to the future of Azerbaijan, a host of approaches were suggesting that democratization could be realized through independence. They claimed that our goal is to obtain independence since democratization within the framework of the Soviet Union was impossible⁶³. Attempts to stick to the course of independence within the Soviet Union were unpopular and considered as futile.

The ruling communist party believed that only as part of the Soviet Union can Azerbaijan develop its economy taking advantage of the enormous resources of Russia and other Union republics and that Azerbaijan’s integrity and security were closely intertwined⁶⁴ with the central Soviet power structures.

The society was divided in camps, where a huge confrontation and hostility between pro-independence and pro-Soviet forces had an enormous impact on internal stability which was described as “restrained stability”.

After the failed coup in Moscow in August 1991, Azerbaijan, just like other union republics, declared its independence.⁶⁵ Despite the declaration of independence, the behavior of the Azerbaijan government was far from being independent. In September 1991, a presidential election was held in Azerbaijan, where the head of state A. Mutalibov was provided with a comfortable victory.⁶⁶

Opposition forces were still considering Mutalibov’s election as continuation of Moscow’s domination in the republic. In reality, despite the declaration of independence of the Union republics, M. Gorbachov was the Soviet president and military and security entities of the Soviet Union were concentrated in his hands although B. Yeltsin had more sovereignty and real power in the Russian Federation.

Resentment against the Soviet Union was running high in Azerbaijan due to the January 20 massacre and Armenian claims, but the Azerbaijan president got involved in Gorbachov-initiated talks for a new style of the Union, which would preserve common military and security entities with limited foreign policy⁶⁷ functions.

First the Azerbaijan leaders did not seek foreign recognition of the Azerbaijan republic resolutely, being well aware of Moscow’s reluctance. But President A. Mutalibov launched active foreign policy activities within the soviet space visiting Uzbekistan,

Kazakhstan, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine The idea was establishing bilateral relations with union republic freeing itself from Union's structures. For that reason Azerbaijan did not sign Economic Council agreement of sovereign⁶⁸ states arguing it will lead to restriction of sovereignty⁶⁹. The agreements signed in Teheran, Ankara opened large space for economic, trade, cultural and scientific relations between Azerbaijan and these countries. The Azerbaijan parliament displayed more keenness to independence as opposition forces enjoyed popular support. In this respect, the Azerbaijani parliament adopted a host of legislative acts laying foundation for independent statehood, amended the Constitution and declared the state independence of Azerbaijan on October 18⁷⁰ Two weeks later Azerbaijan appealed to international community to recognize it as a independent country The Azerbaijan independence was first recognized by Turkey in November 9⁷¹. . Foreign countries had also exercised some caution with the issue of recognition, waiting for Moscow's response. In early September 1991, the United States government defined five guiding principles of the US policy for further developments in the rest of the Soviet Union, outlining conditions for recognition of new countries of former Soviet Union.⁷²

- support internationally accepted principles, including democratic values and practice and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act;
- respect existing borders, both internal and external, with change through peaceful and consensual means consistent with the principles of the CSCE;
- support the rule of law and democratic processes;
- safeguard human rights, including minority rights;
- respect international law and obligations, especially the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris

Those principles were warmly welcomed by the Azerbaijani society, since the republic was facing a threat to its security and integrity and had pushed the internal move towards complete independence counting on greater international protection under those principles.

But the Azerbaijan president's behavior seemed more suspicious in the issue of complete independence, which surfaced in his speech in the parliament in November 1991 where he tried to justify Gorbachov's new Union plan:

"Moscow has abolished more than 80 central government ministries, there is no structure to dictate to us like before. The Center will only take care of foreign and security policy, which too will be coordinated with us". Further, he argued for the necessity to maintain close ties with the center or to have⁷³ a confederation of sovereign republics that would serve Azerbaijan's security interests. The arguments were, of course, unacceptable for the influential pro-independence forces and triggered further internal tensions.

Pro-independence forces argued that the best guarantee of security is complete independence of the Soviet Union and seeking guarantees from international organizations. These arguments were high on agenda during a debate in parliament concerning the formation of the Azerbaijan armed forces⁷⁴. Former Communist nomenclature members and parliament leaders, under the instruction of the president, offered stiff opposition to the constitutional provisions of building the Azerbaijan armed forces. They were lobbying for something like armed units, armed formations, self-defense forces⁷⁵ with uncertain status, which would even be considered as police forces.

Pro-independence forces, in turn, considered the constitutional framework for creating the army as the main factor of independence, but the Communist forces had no courage to make an independent decision and wanted to check with Moscow as the Soviet president still was in office.

For Moscow, the question of national armies was very sensitive and was not at all foreseen for the future confederation. Maneuvering of the Azerbaijan leadership between local political forces and the Central government were explained by its interests to avoid complications in the Ogaryevo process ...

To calm down the Azerbaijan public outrage, the local government initiated the creation of Defense Council (DC), which included government and moderate opposition leaders loyal to the regime.⁷⁶ The Council played an important role in negotiating with the Russian government and military officials the delivery of the Soviet and then Russian military equipment and facilities to Azerbaijan, as the Fourth Army Unit stationed in Azerbaijan had a great weaponry arsenal, training centers, military facilities and officer personnel.⁷⁷

During the CIS December summit in Minsk, Ukraine, Moldova and Azerbaijan were chosen as first republics⁷⁸ to receive the personnel and weapons of the Soviet armed forces stationed in their soil. However, later on, Russia delayed the transfer and Russian Defense Minister P. Grachev reversed that agreement in May 1992 in Tashkent and divided the Soviet weapons stationed in Trans-Caucasus republics equally, thus ignoring the size of Azerbaijan, its population and geographical location violating previously agreed documents.

Meanwhile, the disintegration processes was further deepened and after the formal dissolution of the USSR and formation of the CIS by Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia on December 8, 1991, the Azerbaijan president signed the Alma-Ata Declaration on December 21 to join the newly formed CIS.⁷⁹ However, the attitudes towards the CIS were mixed and unambiguous. The government nomenclature supported the president's move as usual, though there were also people who opposed the joining due to the availability of immense economic resources in Azerbaijan.

But a number of pro-independence forces supported Azerbaijan's joining the CIS as an associative member for economic reasons since we had the same infrastructure.

One of the fraction leaders of the Popular Front H. Hajizade argued that "CIS is the end of totalitarianism and we need to cooperate in the transition period with other members of CIS. Let's cooperate where we need as an associative member and we will see there".⁸⁰

Some political forces considered the CIS to be an instrument of preserving Russia's influence⁸¹ over the republics, similar to the creation of the Soviet Union in 1922, when independent Soviet republics formed the Union and lost their sovereignty.

Popular Front supporters of complete independence rejected any Russian-dominated entity and achieved parliamentary rejection of the CIS. It was widely believed that joining the CIS would mean losing independence again⁸²

The Azerbaijan president Mutalibov's participation in the first CIS meeting was branded as disrespect for Azerbaijan's independence and the will not to pursue an independent policy. Mutalibov's philosophy of independence sharply differed from those of the opposition, while his reliance on Russia did not have popular support. Further developments proved the need for balancing both approaches to post-Soviet realities, previous long-term ties and ongoing Azerbaijani interests. Opposition forces were

inclined to the policy of good bilateral relations with Russia and other CIS countries rather than within the framework of a multinational organization.

The final collapse prompted recognition by foreign countries. The Azerbaijan parliament, dominated by influential pro-independence forces, opposed any alliance policy and proposed to pursue the course of neutrality⁸³ in foreign policy and improved bilateral relations rather than alliances. The idea was impressive, but sounded a little romantic due to the hostilities with Armenia and its side effects. This approach was also justified by the notion that being neutral, Azerbaijan could gain international sympathy and protection. Of course, the non-alliance policy⁸⁴ was dictated by the anti-Soviet environment and Russia's involvement in the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict and reflected public opinion that was against joining the CIS.

Meanwhile, Russia still kept its military bases in Azerbaijan, while Russian border troops were stationed on Azerbaijani-Iranian and Turkish borders. The old economic infrastructure with Russia was functioning and human relations remained unchanged. Political developments were unclear in Azerbaijan and, of course, the experienced Russia was monitoring further developments by pulling all the strings.

Violence in Armenian-Azerbaijani front was continuing and political forces had long been warning the authorities of Armenia's plan to forcefully expel Azerbaijanis from their villages and towns⁸⁵. The authorities either ignored or promised to take action to defend civilians. To avoid mounting public anger and condemnation they concealed the killings and ousting of Azerbaijanis, thus creating an informational blockade around Azerbaijan. The inability of the authorities and the president led the country to overall insecurity and uncertainty.

Public protests were confined to a meeting of representatives of all levels of the society, including government agencies and opposition forces. They held a joint conference in the parliament in January 1992⁸⁶ to hear the government's plans on preventing violence and breaking through the blockade of besieged villages in the NK area. The authorities pledged to take urgent steps and inform the forum shortly.

Long days of persistent silence and absence of any action on part of authorities toward safeguarding the people in NK area led to a resolution of the Popular Front movement in its session in mid-February calling for the resignation of President Mutalibov⁸⁷. They substantiated the decision by the fact that the president did not behave as a president of an independent country.

Political situation in March, 1992 developed dramatically. The parliament speaker resigned and newly elected speaker automatically became the acting head of state following the president's resignation⁸⁸. Considering the complicated military and political situation in the country, the Popular Front proposed to form a government coalition with the Communist leadership in order to restore unity and stability and oppose presidential election on grounds that it would lead to even more division in the society and further instability in the country.

But negotiations collapsed and both the Popular Front and the former Communist nomenclature decided to vie in a new presidential election of June 6⁸⁹. That was the culmination of the struggle for power in the republic despite the numerous statements by the Popular Front of their unwillingness to come to power. At another parliamentary debate, leaders of the Popular Front reiterated their suggestion to postpone the presidential election, stating that they would win it if the election took place.

6. International activities

After the Hojali massacre, the OSCE on March 24 decided to convene the Conference in Minsk⁹⁰ on the Nagorno Karabakh issue in an effort to settle the problems facing the conflicting parties.

The OSCE involvement was welcomed by the Azerbaijan political forces since the OSCE principles and mediation guaranteed Azerbaijani sovereign rights and precluded any unilateral mediation, which could take the developments under the sole mediator's control. In any way, unilateral Russian mediation was again highly unacceptable in view of potential deployment of Russian forces as peacekeeping forces in the conflicting area. For Armenian side, the OSCE was highly undesirable, because for the OSCE the territorial integrity was of priority nature, which already excluded Armenia's territorial claims in any form. The idea of overall expulsion of Azerbaijanis and the existence of a purely Armenian populated NK was dominating in Armenian circles before OSCE involvement⁹¹. That was considered to be the first step toward restricting Azerbaijani control of the area. .

In April 1992, the Iranian government offered its mediation and the Azerbaijan acting president was involved in top level talks⁹². By April, the NK region was cleaned off Azerbaijanis with only Shusha and surrounding villages remaining under Azerbaijani control, though they too were under permanent artillery attacks⁹³. During the summit of Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders in Tehran on May 8, Armenian forces launched an offensive and captured Shusha⁹⁴, which stirred instability in Baku and the rest of Azerbaijan. The loss of Shusha had a serious impact on the moral spirit of the newly-formed Azerbaijani armed forces, while Armenian troops took advantage of this and further advanced from inside the NK and Armenia proper to Lachin and occupied the region forcing the population to flee.

The political situation reached the highest point of turmoil, where the ousted president tried to return to power with the support of his parliamentary supporters⁹⁵. The Popular Front urged the people to take to streets and under popular pressure he left the country. Azerbaijan was hung in the air for some days compelling the parliament to convene and try to restore constitutional order. It elected the acting head of state and power ministers and resumed the presidential race⁹⁶.

In a short period of time, the new Popular Front interior minister restored stability in the country that had been shattered by criminal elements due to the political turmoil in the region. Azerbaijan's interim government and the acting head of state I. Gambar tried to establish a favorable internal and external situation for the first free and fair election in the history of Azerbaijan. The newly set up State Defense Council, which included high-ranking officials and ministers, dealt with the country's defense, economic revitalization and functioning of government agencies.

People cherished great hopes for a new presidential race and for the Popular Front chairman, who was expected to ensure security and integrity of the country. The election was actually considered as one of Azerbaijan's independence though de-jure Azerbaijan was an independent country.

The Azerbaijan Popular Front chairman Abulfaz Elchibey received popular support from the people and became the first democratically elected president on June 7, 1992⁹⁷. The

new president confirmed his pre-election statements concerning Azerbaijan's development priorities towards the West, emphasizing close relationship with Turkey, England, the United States⁹⁸. In regard to the Russian Federation, he stated the preference for bilateral⁹⁹ relationship rather than multilateral one like CIS. Russia too did not take a radical position, while interstate economic relations could be described as successful under the reformist government of Gaydar who also expressed his government's wish to build close relationship with Azerbaijan on a bilateral basis during his visit to Baku in the fall of 1992.

Bilateral and multilateral relations with Russia were moving forward within the newly established Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization in Istanbul and the OSCE Helsinki¹⁰⁰ summit, where steps were taken to boost the Azerbaijani-Russian relations. In October 1992, the Azerbaijan parliament repeatedly refused to join the CIS and decided to participate in CIS meetings in the capacity of observer. After the parliament's decision in October 12, 1992, the Azerbaijani president Elchibey paid his first official visit to Moscow and signed with President B. Yeltsin the friendship and cooperation treaty¹⁰¹. That could be characterized as an indicator of agreement over CIS between Russia and Azerbaijan. Although some issues like Caspian status and further stationing of Russian troops in Azerbaijan were not on the visit's high agenda, the visit served to thawing bilateral relations. The visit indicated once again the great role of Russia in the region and Azerbaijan's willingness to develop friendly and equal relations with it. A symbolic part of the visit was also important since it was the first visit of the head of a sovereign state, which used to be a part of Russia and the Soviet Empire for the past 200 years.

At the end of October, the Azerbaijani president paid his official visit to Turkey, which coincided with the summit of Turkic-speaking nations in Ankara. The official visit to Ukraine in December 1992 was an indicator of characteristic signs of Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities.

The analysis indicated the worsening of bilateral relations with Russia starting with early January of 1993. The chill in relations was not based on bilateral ties but rather on the approaches to the region's future. Russia was considering the growing role of international organizations, namely the OSCE and the USA in the area, as unacceptable. Azerbaijan's independent foreign policy, continued isolation of Russian oil companies in Azerbaijani sections of Caspian oil fields and the rejection of the CIS stirred harsh feelings in Russia, which continued considering the region as the sphere of its vital interests.

The idea meant keeping the Russian troops in Azerbaijan despite an earlier agreement to withdraw by 1994. Russia resented the dominating OSCE mediation of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict and wanted to send its own troops as separating force along the Armenian-Azerbaijan front-line. The OSCE itself was coordinating its activities with Russia and in its draft proposals always considered the deployment of Russian observers¹⁰² under the CIS framework into the front-line or concretely in the Azerbaijan-Armenian border area in the occupied Lachin region.

The formula of the Russian/CIS observer group under the OSCE mandate was not objected to by Azerbaijan, but Russia was not happy with that claiming to deploy a contingent of military forces stationed in Ganje and eventually to preserve the Ganje base in Azerbaijan. Subsequently, after the parliament's decision on CIS, the Azerbaijan government ignored the CIS summit in Minsk on January 17, 1993 and rejected Russia's

proposal handed over to the Azerbaijan leadership. Azerbaijan considered the deployment of armed forces in NK area as a method of isolating NK from the rest of Azerbaijan, similar with previous Soviet Union experiences in the conflict. Deployment of Russian troops in borderline areas with Armenia was viewed as a threat to national sovereignty¹⁰³.

Meanwhile, the Azerbaijan president invited his Georgian counterpart to Baku and the two signed a comprehensive treaty “On friendship, cooperation and mutual security” between the two countries, which paved the way to unity of the Caucasian republics. The treaty envisioned, “in case of a threat posed to the security of the parties, they will exchange information and coordinate possible measures”. “The parties will conduct consultations with the purpose of coordinating their positions in regional and international issues”¹⁰⁴.

Two days later Armenian forces launched large-scale offensive seizing the earlier liberated vast areas in NK area. That was an alarm for Azerbaijan, but the leadership did not want to make concession on that. Azerbaijan was facing enhanced pressure, which led to the occupation of Kelbajar¹⁰⁵, forced more than 60,000 people to flee and inflicted a serious blow on the Popular Front government. The Azerbaijan leadership, having duly assessed the situation, launched active diplomatic activities and introduced the state of emergency inside the country for two months¹⁰⁶.

The world’s superpowers reacted promptly to the seizure of Kelbajar, condemned it and demanded the withdrawal of the occupying forces¹⁰⁷. The Azerbaijan foreign minister interrupted the Armenian-Azerbaijan negotiations in Geneva, flew to New York and raised the question in the UN SC¹⁰⁸. In late April, the UN SC adopted the resolution 822 demanding the withdrawal of the occupying forces and respect for sovereignty and integrity of Azerbaijan. That was considered as the first diplomatic victory of a young independent nation in terms of awakening the world’s superpowers to its problems.

In his letter to the Azerbaijan president in April 1993, US president Clinton expressed¹⁰⁹ his government’s commitment to alleviating the consequences of the invasion and cessation of hostilities in the region. The tones of the Russian president B. Yeltsin and Iranian president A. A. Rafsangani were critical and patronizing as regards Azerbaijan’s foreign policy. Turkish, Pakistani and Israeli Prime Minister’s letters were encouraging. In mid-April, the late Turkish President T. Ozal visited Baku¹¹⁰ and strongly supported Azerbaijan’s integrity and sovereignty. In a meeting with refugees from the occupied areas, he opposed, in heartfelt words, Armenian claims¹¹¹ on Azerbaijan and highlighted the importance of peace for the security and well being of the region’s population.

Several days later, during president Ozal’s funeral ceremony, the Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents met in Istanbul and agreed on a negotiated settlement to the conflict. On the basis of the UN SC resolution 822, the OSCE influential members Russia, United States and Turkey initiated a peace plan, which would lead to the cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of the occupying forces and final negotiated settlement to the Nagorno Karabakh crisis¹¹². The plan was later adopted by the Azerbaijan and Armenian parties and representatives of NK Armenians and Azerbaijanis. That encouraging moment was then violated by Armenian troops, who took advantage of the political instability in Azerbaijan stemming from the attempts to disarm uncontrolled military formations.

7. Political turmoil and armenian advances

Azerbaijan's former defense minister R. Gaziyeu used to be one of the Popular Front leaders and had tremendous influence over voluntary military units. In the early stages of independence, the numerous uncontrolled paramilitary groups and their commanders were spending their own money on buying weaponry from the Azerbaijan-based Russian army units thus establishing close ties with Russian senior military officials. The lack of strong government institutions made them influential within the region and later across the country. The presence of large groups of armed men around them automatically made them hand down political demands, because in the circumstances of a vacuum of political authority they had more arguments for political voice.

Suret Huseynov was the most popular of them. He had been promoted by the Popular Front Government as corps commander in the front-line. The suspicious withdrawal of Azerbaijani units from the front-line leading to a dramatic change of the situation further increased the suspicion and after some hesitation President Elchibey sacked both Suret Huseynov and Defense Minister Rahim Gaziyeu¹¹³ in February 1993.

The move was necessitated by the decisive steps undertaken by the government to develop and strengthen the independent statehood since those uncontrolled formations served as a source of instability inside the military and an instrument for political forces still hoping to seize political power by force. In light of the diplomatic progress on international arena and the need for internal security prompted to neutralize those forces. The links of those rebel forces with the 23rd MRD located in Ganje was an additional concern for the government. However, after a short while Suret Huseynov's forces started to disagree with the political leadership and tried to raise opposition-minded military units in the area of Ganje¹¹⁴.

The government's appeal and talks with the uncontrolled military units yielded no fruit and military action was taken to disarm the units. However, military operation failed and inspired rebel groups took advantage and expanded their sphere of influence seizing executive power committees of civil institutions in the adjacent areas and in Ganje.¹¹⁵

Further developments indicated that political opposition to Elchibey's government joined with the military one to form a single politico-military unit and succeeded in overthrowing the democratically elected president. Furthermore, the former Soviet leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev formed a coalition with the rebel commander Suret Huseynov taking legislative power and prime minister's post.¹¹⁶ The failure of the Popular Front government demoralized the army, which was divided into rebel and Popular Front supporters. Mistrust, mismanagement, poor discipline started to reign the army.

Volunteers and Popular Front battalions were disbanded and some even arrested for political reasons and revenge. Armenian forces trying to make the best of the political turmoil in Baku launched an offensive into the deep areas of Azerbaijan violating previously agreed cease-fire regime¹¹⁷.

The OSCE failed to implement the agreed withdrawal schedule of Armenian forces from Kelbajar and in light of the advancing Armenian forces the resolution lost any meaning. By mid-July, the district center Mardakert and later Agdam city, with 60,000 population, were captured, destroyed, burnt and looted. The UN SC adopted a new 853 resolution demanding an immediate withdrawal of Armenian forces¹¹⁸. The capture of Agdam inspired Armenian forces who advanced towards Iranian border of Azerbaijan taking

over Jebrail, Fizuli, Gubatli and Zangelan districts and their villages. The UN SC adopted two more resolutions 874 and 884 demanding an unconditional and immediate withdrawal, respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.¹¹⁹ The seizure brought the number of refugees to 800,000.

People had the sense of insecurity and mistrust to the government forces and were fleeing homes in the face of Armenian threat. The government itself did not make any attempt to mobilize its resources to encounter Armenian forces.

At the time of the turmoil in the country, former deputy defense minister Alikram Hummetov, who had his own forces in the front, withdrew them and announced creation of the Talish-Mugan republic. He arrested local heads of executive bodies and installed checkpoints on the roads going to the region. The move did not win any support from the local population and failed.¹²⁰

8. International and regional implications

The United Nations confined to adopting four resolutions and the security council chairman's statements. The US government also condemned Armenian offensive and destruction of the villages and towns.¹²¹ Regional states Iran, Turkey and Russia were more in confrontation with each other rather than attempted to cooperate to stop the advancing forces.

Iran, with millions of Azerbaijanis, could not remain indifferent to Armenian aggression¹²² and the seizure of the Azerbaijan territories and expressed a more radical position.

First, the Azerbaijan-Iranian international border was being trespassed and captured by advancing Armenian forces.

Second, Iran could not tolerate the destruction of a newly independent country right under the nose of the international community.

Third, the areas of attack were historically under Iranian influence inhabited by Muslim Azerbaijanis and the occupation and forced deportation of the Muslim population triggered anger in Iran.

During the Armenian advances, the Iranian side made numerous statements condemning the aggression¹²³, but stopped doing so in the face of Russian counter statements that Moscow would not remain indifferent in case of Iranian interference¹²⁴. The developments indicated indirect Russian involvement due to its responses to Iranian statements. The picture of the period in light of the military developments and international responses was similar to the tying up the hands of one party and creating favorable environment for other. These developments give us a reason to judge that the military operation was coordinated by senior leaders in Russia and the fact that the chief of staff of the military forces located in NK area was Russian defense minister Grachev's close associate General Zinevich¹²⁵ causes further suspicion.

Here should be noted interesting fact during Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Koziriyev's visit to Azerbaijan in April 1992. In his meeting in Stepanakert he was asked about the Russian reaction to Armenian plans to capture Shusha and he called such plan "limited and mistaken step, saying Azerbaijan will not simply watch your offensive. Azerbaijan is creating its own army. The confrontation will be deepened and lead to the war. Our possibilities are limited. What we can do for you that is prevention of formation of any

coalition against Armenia”¹²⁶. The outlined by A. Kozirjev policy was a core of Russian policy during Iranian and Turkish reactions to Armenian offensive.

Azerbaijan’s new acting head of state H. Aliyev, at a parliament session in early September broadcast live, informed the public of the military preparedness of Iran, Turkey and Russia without giving any further comment.

The internationalization of the war was obvious due to the destruction of the country by military machine and the resulting humanitarian catastrophe. Armenian sources close to the government circles informally acknowledge that Russians strongly ordered to stop further advances due to the fact that the developments were going out of control.

Thus, Turkish military deployed major forces of the Third field army along the Armenian border, deploying the 12th and 13th MR brigades towards the 127th Russian MRD in Gumri (Armenia) and bringing the combat readiness of Turkish air force¹²⁷. At the same time, command composition of the Russian forces in Trans-Caucasus conducted a Command-Staff training of the 127th MRD to repeal possible Turkish deployment in Armenia.¹²⁸

Iran deployed and brought into high combat readiness in the western part of Azerbaijan strong forces (21st infantry division of regular army, 31st infantry division of Islamic revolution defenders, a part of gendarmery and air force). After the rapid deployment of Iranian forces in the vicinity of hostilities, Iran began to hold military training under the name of “Sohand”¹²⁹.

Russian foreign ministry’s statement opposing any Turkish and Iranian involvement predicted some conclusions. The underlying one was that Russia considered the region exclusively as its own sphere of influence and responsibility, and any Iranian or Turkish involvement aimed at nipping Armenian advances could frustrate Russian plans in Azerbaijan.

The third conclusion was the isolation of any country sympathizing with Azerbaijan, which means tying up the hands of Azerbaijan in the face of Armenian threat and further appeals to Russia for assistance.

Internally Azerbaijanis were unaware of the developments around them and the authorities were more involved in internal political struggle rather than the country’s security and integrity. Under such circumstances, Azerbaijan could easily be divided, at best by rival countries.

The view that Russia was behind Armenia’s offensive was widely acknowledged and the entry into the Russian dominated CIS did not have as strong opposition as a year ago. Azerbaijan’s political opposition was against any CIS affiliation, but their voice was weak. The unconfirmed but not denied reports about Russian conditions, which included three points, were as follows¹³⁰:

- Stationing of Russian border troops on Azerbaijan’s international borders with Iran and Turkey;
- Establishing Russian military bases in Azerbaijan;
- Defining Caspian Sea status again.

Stationing of the Russian troops as a separating force between Azerbaijan and Armenia was widely debated in the Azerbaijan press, but conditions of it were never publicly disclosed. The interviewed high officials¹³¹ admitted the existence of such conditions, as well as Azerbaijan’s verbal consent with those conditions in return for all the occupied lands.

Russia had complete control of the military-political developments in the region at the period of Armenian advances. It was characterized by the military advances of Armenians and Russian demands in political negotiations with Azerbaijan over Russia's military-political interests.

In light of this, the Azerbaijan acting president visited Moscow¹³² to meet with president Yeltsin and defense minister Grachev expecting that Russia would take resolute action against Armenia and demand its withdrawal. H. Aliyev's decision to suspend the talks on oil contracts and a U-turn toward Russia was vehemently condemned by opposition-minded forces, who saw the meaningless of reliance on Russia as Moscow was behind Armenian military activities.

Azerbaijan offered to Russia such concessions that could preserve its political independence and benefit it in its war with Armenia. Proceeding from historical perspective, to predict further developments with Russia was not difficult. Obviously, the idea was that Russians would come and establish their bases here and would force Azerbaijan into even greater dependence upon Moscow. The failure of the promising September visit was obvious and Azerbaijan did not meet the concessions on its sovereignty that Russia wanted. The Azerbaijan president realized that Russia's position in the issue is unclear and provocative and Aliyev stopped to heavily rely on Russian assistance and appealed to the nation to liberate their lands from Armenian occupation. At the CIS Ashgabat summit in December 1993, H. Aliyev's statement on Armenia's aggression was barely responded by Russia and Azerbaijan lost all illusion of support from Russia and started relying on its own strength¹³³. Baku won some military advantage in the winter campaign¹³⁴, but the course of war and promises of peaceful solution prompted the warring sides to conclude a cease-fire agreement in May 1994. After the cease-fire agreement, the Azerbaijan president flew to Istanbul to a NATO foreign ministers meeting to meet with the US secretary of state W. Christopher, which was followed by Azerbaijan's joining the PfP program on May 4, 1994.¹³⁵

The cease-fire accord was further strengthened by the OSCE documented format, which did not receive a lukewarm welcome of Russia as an attempt to "belittle Russian attempts at mediation in the region"¹³⁶

The UN secretary general's suggestion that the OSCE and UN should assume a peacekeeping role in Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia respectively annoyed Russia, which had been perceiving those areas as those of national security interest¹³⁷. Russia insisted on deploying Russian and CIS peacekeepers in the region.

The reaction from Russia followed the developments in Turkey, where Prime Minister had asked the Great National Assembly for authority to deploy a disengagement peacekeeping force to conflicting areas and subsequent environment dominated in OSCE circles¹³⁸.

Meanwhile, Armenia welcomed the introduction of peacekeeping forces into conflicting area but whether it could be Russia and OSCE was not clear. In any case it was clear that Armenian¹³⁹ intention was to have Russian troops opposing any Turkish component¹⁴⁰. Meanwhile, the cease-fire agreement was followed by a new wave of pressure from Russian government in an effort to deploy Russian troops along the cease-fire line. The Azerbaijan public and internal governmental forces protested against the return of Russian troops and later President Aliyev publicly denounced the rumors and unconfirmed information about the arrival of Russian troops. In his speech in February

2001, H. Aliyev confirmed the information of 1994 saying that even Russian generals came to Baku to visit the front-line to examine where to deploy the separating forces¹⁴¹. For Azerbaijan, it would have been a double blow as it would mean bringing foreign troops and leaving its lands in uncertainty. Consequently, the complicated internal situation would be another factor for potential social explosion.

The analysis shows that diplomatic maneuvering and efforts of Azerbaijan were extremely difficult after the cease-fire agreement signed in Biskek, Kirgizistan, on May 14. The time period from May to the OSCE Budapest Summit was important in terms of repeated signals from Russia to bring¹⁴² and establish Russian bases and separating forces in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan's resistance to that through different channels. Azerbaijan received US backing in the summer of 1994 indicating American resistance for unilateral dominance in cease-fire area.

In the summer of 1994, Azerbaijan stepped up its effort together with foreign oil companies to sign oil contracts for exploitation and transportation of energy resources in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian and on September 20 the contract branded as the Contract of the Century¹⁴³ was solemnly signed. Russian attitude towards the contract was not encouraging due to their statements regarding the status of the Caspian sea, which became another subject in inter-state tensions.

Immediately after the signing of the Contract, the Azerbaijan president traveled to the United States for a UN General Assembly meeting to meet with President Clinton for the first time since coming to power. The idea was to boost the US-Azerbaijan relations established during the Istanbul meeting with the Secretary of State and seek support for Azerbaijan's independence and territorial integrity.

While the President was in the United States, the internal situation was again exacerbated due to a suspicious release of anti-Aliyev forces from prison and confrontation of different law-enforcement bodies with each other. Later, the situation further escalated leading to disobedience of special police forces and alleged involvement of Prime Minister Suret Huseynov, who generated H. Aliyev's rising to power. Public disapproval and discord with the special police forces led to easing the situation and counter-actions of Aliyev's forces inside the government ensured the victory of Aliyev over S. Huseynov, who had influence in Ganje area, in the army and in high echelons of power. Although the processes were assessed by the Aliyev government as a coup attempt, peculiarities of the confrontation were that both conflicting sides were government forces. In any way, to change the power by force would be an enormous blow upon Azerbaijan's statehood and further developments would be unpredictable. The October 1994 events allowed H. Aliyev to clean up military forces, which were under S. Huseynov. The developments had partially strengthened the statehood although the situation continued to be fragile.¹⁴⁴

In early December, at the OSCE summit in Budapest, the OSCE, with active participation of the United States, agreed with Russia on a permanent chairmanship of Russia in the OSCE Minsk Group and sending the OSCE multinational force to the conflict zone after the peace settlement. The OSCE decision was a major benefit for Azerbaijan to avoid the dominance of one country, which was all independent and internal stability were about¹⁴⁵. Under the OSCE decision, no country could send more than a third of the peacekeeping contingent.

Meanwhile, Russian military campaign in Chechnya started in mid-December 1994 and developments in the region took another turn. Russia was locked in military and political

failure concerning the Chechnya and in the process of war started to accuse Azerbaijan of supporting Chechen fighters. Shortly afterwards, Moscow sealed off the Azerbaijan-Russian border. The action was followed by Russia's demand to jointly guard the Azerbaijan international borders to prevent foreign military aid to Chechnya. Azerbaijan dismissed the charges of infiltration of any foreign mercenaries to Chechnya from Azerbaijan and refused to allow to do that¹⁴⁶.

Russia restricted railway and automobile communication and Azerbaijan was forced to look for alternative ways of importing goods to the country. The closure of the border separated Azerbaijan from Russia economically. Military activities in Chechnya diverted and eased the pressure of military-security forces dominated in Russian politics although occasional claims to protect and observe the Azerbaijan border for blocking of international militants were still made.

Finally the end of the Chechen war, the defeat of Russian forces and recognition of a new Chechen republic and its popularly voted new president reflected advantageous environment for Georgia's and Azerbaijan's independence. In its turn, Russian withdrawal from Chechnya reduced the claims Russians had been putting before Azerbaijan as well.

9. Foreign policy advancements

The Azerbaijan president believed that justice would get the upper hand in international relations and he would liberate the occupied Azerbaijani lands through peaceful ways by the will of international organizations. International organizations, namely the OSCE, were also willing to make progress and settle the conflict at the Lisbon summit by adopting the principles for resolution.¹⁴⁷ The OSCE chairman in office made a statement on behalf of all member-states except Armenia outlining principles for the settlement of conflict. The principles included the accepted guidelines of the current international system and covered the issues concerning the conflicting parties.

The three principles confirmed the territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan, provision of Nagorno Karabakh region with a high degree of self-rule within Azerbaijan and appropriate security guarantees for the population of the region. Later on, to implement the OSCE principles, a three-fold chairmanship of France, Russia and the United States was set up and three presidents made a statement in their Denver G8, 1997 meeting confirming the OSCE principles.

The proposed two plans¹⁴⁸ contained confusing elements and restricted Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the region, but for the sake of peace they were accepted by Azerbaijan as a settlement basis. In July and August 1997, the Azerbaijan president paid two visits to Russia and the United States with the hope of getting support in restoring territorial integrity and security of boundaries.

During the Moscow visit, President Aliyev's complaints on Russian arms transfer to Armenia were challenged by Russians, who suggested to create a trilateral commission to inspect the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan and discover the weapons illegally transferred to both countries. Later, H. Aliyev acknowledged the fact that he first received very positive response from president Yeltsin during their telephone conversation on illegal arms transfer. But later, according to Aliyev, Yeltsin's position changed under the influence of the military¹⁴⁹. Creation of the trilateral commission was

not a constructive move from the Russian side since all high officials, including state ministers and defense minister I. Rodionov, publicly acknowledged the illegal transfer of a vast amount of weapons to Armenia during 1994-1996. This was the indicator of a change in Russia's policy on arms transfer and, as many observers believed, a complete loss of hope for Russia's recovery of the transferred weapons.¹⁵⁰

During H. Aliyev's visit to the United States, the parties discussed the strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the political, security, economic and commercial spheres, repeal of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which limits potential cooperation between the United States and Azerbaijan.

In a joint statement released by both presidents "the United States recognizes the challenges facing Azerbaijan in assuring its national security and strongly supports Azerbaijan's active integration into newly emerging European security structures, including NATO's Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council¹⁵¹. The Presidents expressed satisfaction with the entry into force on May 15, 1997 of the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) Flank Document and agreed on the importance of the U.S.-Azerbaijani Joint Statement released in that connection. They also welcomed the adoption of the CFE Basic Elements decision in Vienna July 23, 1997, and agreed that the adaptation of the CFE Treaty should enhance the security of each state party"¹⁵².

As regards the CFE Flank Document, Azerbaijan had for a long time until the deadline been opposed to the signing of the treaty, which was insisted upon by US vice president Al Gore. The agreement allowed the Russian Federation to deploy, in case of crisis, its forces in the southern flank zone, which included Azerbaijan as well. Azerbaijan made it clear that Baku regards any deployment of Russian forces in its territory as unacceptable and will respect the CFE Treaty only on these grounds¹⁵³.

In this respect, Azerbaijan approved the "Document agreed among parties to the Treaty on Conventional armed forces in Europe of 1990" making the above-mentioned conditions that application of the document should be within the Tashkent Agreement on principles and procedures for implementation of the CFE treaty. Any military deployment by the Russian Federation in the Caucasus flank zone should not apply to Azerbaijan. Later Azerbaijan was pressured by Americans to sign in the fear that Russia might abandon the Treaty as H. Aliyev acknowledged¹⁵⁴>>>.

In the period after the Washington summit, Azerbaijan's foreign policy shifted toward the west, as public demands were made for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Armenia and Georgia. The demand to return transferred illegal arms from Armenia and remove Russian bases from Caucasus received mixed responses from Russia, which proposed, in return that those weapons are not directed against Azerbaijan and they may transfer similar weapons to Azerbaijan as well¹⁵⁵.

Late 1997 was also characterized with an active involvement of brokering countries of the Minsk Group in the search for NK settlement. Armenian President L. Ter-Petrosyan accepted the stage-by-stage peace plan proposed by the OSCE Minsk group, which envisioned the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied areas outside NK area, deployment of international peacekeeping forces, opening of communications between the two countries and determining of NK status within the Azerbaijani Republic.¹⁵⁶ The developments caused heated discussions in both countries, as well as neighboring ones, since signing of a peace deal would change the situation in the whole region. The peace treaty would to a greater extent lessen Russian influence in the region and open a great

potential for western involvement and normalization of Turkish-Armenian and Azerbaijani-Armenian relations.

However, the developments in Armenian political elite supported by power ministries and the current Armenian president R. Kocharyan, who had gotten the upper hand on the front-line with considerable Russian support, succeeded in removing the Armenian president and plunging the region and the relations between the two nations into greater uncertainty.

The so-called peace process stalled for a year and at the end of 1998 the OSCE proposed a new plan, a so-called "common state" plan¹⁵⁷, which envisioned the division of internationally recognized Azerbaijan republic in two parts. Azerbaijan turned down the plan, while Armenia accepted it as meeting its interests.

Azerbaijan accused the co-chairs of a preferential treatment and dismissed the Russian-drafted proposal aimed at dismembering the Azerbaijan Republic. Russian foreign minister I. Ivanov and the then prime Minister E. Primakov tried to persuade H. Aliyev to accept the settlement plan. Although the plan was more appropriate to western thinking, numerous observers¹⁵⁸ and H. Aliyev's repeated statements proved that it was invented by Russia. Further, similar plans were initiated and offered by Russia to Georgia and Moldova to settle their Abkhazia and Transnistria, but were rejected by both countries. Analyses show that the proposed plans serve to legalize intervention of a third party and relinquish the sovereignty of existing states. "Unprecedented in international experience and fraught with ambiguities that solution would create ample opportunity for Russian arbitration of the inevitable constitutional disputes within the "common state," rendering both parties to such a state dependent on Russian mediation."¹⁵⁹

The environment dominated in 1997 has promoted the creation of a non-Russian group of nations with common purposes and problems stemming from their common interests like GUUAM.

Creation of a regional GUUAM structure and nomination of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe members in 1997, state visits to Russia, United States, Turkey and France were the essence of the effort toward integration of Azerbaijan with European structures and pursuit of an independent policy of equal bilateral and regional relations¹⁶⁰. The year 1997 was an active stage in Azerbaijan's foreign policy with the purpose of ensuring security and integrity.

Chapter 3.

1. Formation of Azerbaijan Army

Constitutionally, the Union republics had no right to have their own army within the Soviet Union. But the overall situation in late periods of the soviet union has changed the situation concerning with the armed forces as well. The necessity for creating armed formations in Azerbaijan was stipulated by the violence in Nagorno Karabakh area and on the border with Armenia. Originally Soviet troops and the Azerbaijani interior ministry's special police forces took steps to disarm armed groups, but increased intensity of clashes put the interior forces¹⁶¹ beyond their capacity to control the situation.

Azerbaijan itself was one of the republics with a heavy military contingent stationed in its soil since it was located between the Soviet Union and the Middle East. Azerbaijan was

the scene for the Soviet Fourth Army of the Trans-Caucasus Military District (Zakavkazskiy Boenniy Okrug), air defense, air force and the Navy.

The Fourth Army constituted the body of ground forces having at its disposal four motorized¹⁶² rifle divisions located 60th in Baku, 23rd in Ganje, 295th in Lenkoran and 75th in Nakichevan. The Fourth Army was headquartered in Baku.

In addition, the 104th Airborne Division was located in Ganje, which enjoyed good reputation and was one of the rare units of the Soviet Union to have personnel according to military sources up to 7,000. Ganje was hosted a Helicopter Assault regiment comprising Mi24 and Mi-8 helicopters. The 366th MR regiment of the 23rd division was located in Stepanakert, which played an essential role in escalation of the conflict into the war. However, Soviet KGB and interior ministry during the Armenian-Azerbaijan tensions deployed additional troops in Azerbaijan of which 3600 troops along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and 5500 within Nagorno-Karabakh during 1991¹⁶³. Trans-Caucasus military district, in the form of 34th Air Army, had three air force regiments located in Azerbaijan. Those were bombers number 30 Su-24 in central Azerbaijan, a reconnaissance regiment number 30 Su-24/Fencer and Mig-25/Foxbat at Dallar, a ground attack regiment at Sital-Chay of 30 Su-25/frogfoot. Air-force had its support ground units as well¹⁶⁴.

Air defense system was part of a single Soviet system with the surface to air-missile brigades and radar troops aimed at protection of Soviet-Iranian border. Air-defense system has also served for military objectives and observation in Caspian sea. Early warning radar systems had been deployed in the vicinities of Soviet-Iranian border as well.

Azerbaijan was a host for modern Mig-29 fighter jets as well as Mig-25, Mig-23 in the north of Sumgait in an area called Nasosni, currently the town of Tagiev for Caspian sea region and Soviet-Iranian periphery. Air force system was also equipped with surface-to-air missile brigades and supplementary units.

At the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, according to Soviet reports, the number of conventional¹⁶⁵ weaponry stationed in Azerbaijan was estimated at 391 tanks, 1285 armored combat vehicles, 463 pieces of artillery, 24 helicopters, 124 fighter aircraft and 66000 military personnel, though there were some other estimates on the Soviet military deployment in Azerbaijan.

The Caspian Sea Fleet¹⁶⁶ had its powerful Base in Baku with its combat Soviet naval forces. Naval forces included the headquarters of Caspian Sea Flotilla, The Caspian Higher Naval School and 23rd Military Ship Repair Factory. Caspian Sea flotilla consisted of 4 Riga class frigates, 30 patrol and coastal combatants, 22 mine-sweepers, 19 polnochny-class amphibious landing ships, 10 support craft.

Another military installation, the Gabala radar station which is now the only Russian military facility in Azerbaijan built in 80s, served to identify and track down ballistic missiles over the area of Middle East and southern borders¹⁶⁷ of the Soviet Union serving valuable element of early warning system.

The High Commanders School in Baku, Caspian High Naval School and Military School named after G. Nachichevanski were the source of officer personnel not only for Azerbaijan but for also the Soviet Union.

2. Concept of the Azerbaijan independent army

Azerbaijan survived the last years of the Soviet Union under the state of emergency supported by the Communist controlled local government and Azerbaijani draftees were serving in the Soviet army fulfilling the quota strongly like in 70s. The situation was different in Georgia and Armenia since they refused to send their draftees in early 1990s outside their republics and their soldiers constituted the majority in the bases stationed in their respective countries. Azerbaijani soldiers serving in different parts of the Russian Federation were allowed to go back home after the Soviet Union ceased to exist¹⁶⁸. The formation of first branches of the national army started with the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan dated September 3, 1991 “On formation of self-defense forces of the Azerbaijan republic.”¹⁶⁹

Although first units of the independent army were set up in the form of the Union of Officers with the purpose of forming autonomous armed forces in early August 1991. The necessity was obvious due to the military developments in Armenia and Armenian military activities inside Azerbaijan, namely in Geranboy region. The Officers Union was involved in drafting all ranks of officers for general purpose forces in case of further escalation.¹⁷⁰

In forming military forces of Azerbaijan, the government insisted on creating self-defense forces to repelling Armenian attacks. They suggested to form a self-defense force of 10,000 contractors comprising professionals not conscripts.

However, the influential opposition did not agree arguing that service in the army should be honorary for every citizen of independent Azerbaijan and blamed the government of reluctance to have the independent republic with its own army. The status of self defense forces was different and had only limited capabilities. For that reason it was not considered reliable for the purposes of defending the country.

But furthermore President Mutallibov had also voiced strong support for creation of national army expressing his grievances in his numerous statements on the grounds that “Soviet army rejects to ensure our security and threatens us to remove its army and property from Azerbaijan. Armenian helicopters are transporting weapons to NK and violate our border. We require either zero option or military balance in both countries. But the Center does not listen us”¹⁷¹

On October 9 the parliament adopted the law on Military Forces of Azerbaijan legalizing the formation of Azerbaijani army. According to the law the draftees of age 18 to 25 were obliged to serve in the army for 18 months, contractors three years, women of age 18-35 could serve by contracts on voluntary basis.

Alternative service was also allowed. The law guaranteed the military ranks of the officers serving before in the Soviet Army.¹⁷²

The question of military equipment was one of the major issues and Azerbaijani president stated that “he appealed to M. Gorbachov with the letter to allocate the necessary weapons for our legalized armed forces since our security is equivalent with our military forces”¹⁷³ He later again stated that “the Center does not protect us and we must form our defense forces to defend ourselves“. There has been created the Defense Fund and many organizations were transferring money to the Fund for formation of the army. Azerbaijani legislatures were also demanding Azerbaijani contribution to soviet defense fund for purchase of weapons for sovereign Azerbaijani army.¹⁷⁴

Later October 1991 Marshal Shaposhnikov¹⁷⁵ visited Azerbaijan and President Mutallibov discussed the status of soviet troops, weapons and issues related with the formation of Azerbaijani army. To his visit preceded Mutallibov's statement calling the soviet army stationing in Azerbaijan as a foreign army and the necessity to define the status of the army¹⁷⁶. Despite the sovereignty acts of newly emerged countries M. Gorbachov issued decree in early October¹⁷⁷ calling the draftees to the soviet army again and he received negative response from Azerbaijan. On the contrary the demands for withdrawal of soviet forces from Azerbaijan have been increased.¹⁷⁸

The newly decreed Army did not have its military doctrine, charter or headquarters. But many voluntary self-defense forces in border areas and in the areas of hostility emerged basically in regional bases and by Popular Front activists and they had their own commanders and financial sources. When the Ministry was created, they did not want to subordinate to the Ministry of Defense, as local warlords they had authority in the population and soldiers¹⁷⁹. Military equipment was purchased through their own sources and military leaders elected themselves. They thought that they could better secure the safety of local people. They were patriotic, but discipline was low and the lack of professional military experience and self-reliance, lack of coordination among different groups caused their military failures.

The environment was so that Defense Ministry could not intervene or disarm voluntary groups for there was neither the order of political leadership nor resources of the Ministry would allow to do so.

The Ministry decided to build the army from mobile units based on Brigade-Corps system, which was different from the Soviet system of regiment-division-army principle. Each brigade consisted of five operable battalions. Each battalion as usual had the following units:

- company of communication;
- commandant company ;
- economic platoon;
- management of brigades and auto -service; in Russian called RAV(paketno-artilleriyskoe vooruzenie)
- company of tanks;

Each battalion comprised about 450 personnel. Out of first volunteers and national army draftees have been formed first Azerbaijani brigade N 701 late 1991. Further formed brigades encompassed about 3-3,500 personnel which constituted the strength between division and army.

Appointed as Minister of Defense of Azerbaijan, retired tank commander General Valeh Bershadly approached professionally the building of the Army. He encountered serious challenges for inaction towards the violence in NK area. His strategy was to ensure the safety of Azerbaijanian-Armenia border for effective control of Azerbaijan international borders and to allow interior ministry's forces to disarm militant groups inside the NK region. However, Azerbaijani military had no facilities to control its borders from Armenia and consequently the helicopters with full ammunitions and weapons were freely crossing the borders into NK and surrounding armenian populated areas . The development had been leading to full scale of war inside the region and to limitation of police forces capability¹⁸⁰.

In parallel the Defense Ministry the existing Defense Council ¹⁸¹ which had high authorities had managed to conduct successful negotiations with the then Soviet Army high echelons creating the ground for transfer of the Soviet armed forces located in Azerbaijan to newly created Azerbaijani army. Defense Council further was dissolved due to Defense Ministry's rise.

Under the pressure of angered mass the newly appointed defense minister had resigned and after the some period of vacuum new defense minister was appointed by the president who also resigned after 45 days. The newly formed army has been led by acting Minister who was later blamed was spying for Russian secret service and until now Azerbaijan is demanding his extradition from Russia.

Third minister had been appointed in late February 1992 who had also just survived for 10-12 days. Appointed after the Khojali massacre in March 1992, then very influential R. Gaziyeu was fourth minister within six months of independence who later became one of the main sources of power in Azerbaijan . Those replacement had reflected the complex internal situation related with the insecurity of people in NK and border areas.¹⁸²

Formation of the independent army has been developed in both political and military directions with the Russian leadership in terms of military equipment and the relationship with then proposed Unified CIS Army.

For obtaining the facilities and equipment of the Soviet army the negotiations have been under way with both political and military leadership of Russia. Russia demanded securing job for officers and supply with the food and housing of local officers and their families .Azerbaijan was ready to meet those conditions and therefore part of offices moved to newly formed Azerbaijanian army. The negotiations concerned only on the premises of the Fourth Army not touching the 104 Airborne division stationed in Ganje and air force units stationed in Nasosni.

The process was slow but was moving forward since the beginning of September 1991 the Ministry of Defense and General Staff was developing the conception ¹⁸³ of keeping of United Armed Forces of former Soviet Republics and when Belovezskaya agreement was signed the military was not informed about the meeting and the agreement did not include any provision on military aspects of dissolution except for strategic nuclear forces.

However, at Minsk summit of CIS in December 1991 the continued opposition of Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldova to have is own armed forces had led to inclusion at summit document of joint general -purpose forces and border troops the provision that each CIS country has " legitimate right to create its own armed forces"¹⁸⁴. But this political move did not get support from the Russian military and namely by Marshal Shaposhnikov trying to block military building at least in the Caucasus since Ukrainian mighty resistance was not affordable

In an effort to torpedo the national army formations he appealed to heads of states of CIS countries dated February 19,1992: " realization of these intentions (creation of Azerbaijanian and Armenian armies) will lead to involvement into military activities of regular units and divisions of the Transcaucasus military district and inevitably will turn the conflict into large scale fraternal war"¹⁸⁵. That was a time when the prospects of stopping the process of formation of national armies in both Azerbaijan and Armenia impossible but could be sabotaged which was the case in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani then president was still hoping to use Russian military for military activities but the circumstances was different and the Russian military could be involved only by the order of political leadership. The contradictions between political and military leadership in Moscow had serious consequences in places since both Azerbaijan and Armenia were trying to take advantage of that for their own purposes. Because in light of disintegration the single element of power of Moscow in places was the military and the military was acting autonomously in many cases siding and assisting conflicting sides. However, the process of division of the Soviet equipment delayed and was postponed till the Tashkent meeting of CIS Defense Ministers on May 15, where division of property and weapons were formalized. Before the Tashkent meeting Azerbaijan had its draft agreement with Russians and according to one of the negotiators the draft was approved by Russians before the Tashkent meeting.¹⁸⁶

Things were changed in Tashkent, where Minister Grachev, forced Azerbaijan to accept the quota equal to Armenia and Georgia, which was to receive more weapons for the size of the territory and population. The idea was to put Azerbaijan's share into the quota of the Soviet Union, which signed the 1990 Paris treaty on CFE. It appeared that a newly-independent state had to bear the share of non-existing state. Azerbaijan was desperate at that time and military activities were ongoing inside the country, which was why Azerbaijan did not oppose and had to agree to a the new quota.¹⁸⁷

After signing of the Tashkent Treaty, Azerbaijan had the quota for 100 aircraft, but was deprived of it by the decision of Defense Minister P. Grachev. In night of June 9/10, the fighter planes from Cital-chay and Bombers from Kurdamir area were taken away and landed on Russian territory¹⁸⁸. Totally out of 124 planes 121 were taken away.

In early June, Azerbaijan's newly formed units of the national army comprising volunteers who had served in Afghanistan, the Soviet Army, and in early stages of the clashes in NK area, equipped with the weapons received under the Tashkent Treaty, launched offensive liberating a large part of the area, which was under Armenian military control. Russian officers serving in the Fourth Army who decided to stay in Azerbaijani army also participated in the military operations, especially within artillery units. The soldiers who went to fight represented experienced and patriotic people knowing all troubles of the war.

In early August 1992, after military victories on the battlefield the army leaders decided to dissolve the units of volunteers and equip the army with draftees. The decision was accepted with surprise and resistance from fighters, but the overall policy of the defense ministry in ignoring the needs and demands of the volunteers led to the overwhelming reduction of those units. The circumstances were so that in borderline areas local residents serving in local units were paid for their service in the army. From this perspective, the composition of the army¹⁸⁹ did not sometimes allow the officers to fully control the units and the army was not capable of paying so much to contractor soldiers. Introduction of draftees led to the retreat from some key positions and restructured the composition in front lines.

But the army brigades and units were controlled by unprofessional leaders who were in confrontation with officers over operational issues. Interference of local executive officials with military affairs and operations was another tendency in the army leading to the confrontation between defense ministry and local executive officials.

The service of heavy weaponry was not on a required level and by the fall of 1992 the number of tanks, APCs, armored vehicles and heavy artillery units received in winter was not sufficient for military activities and the rival military intelligence was well aware of that.¹⁹⁰

In late January 1993, the commander of the Corps operating in the front-line withdrew the forces from the advanced areas, which led to subsequent failures¹⁹¹ of the Azerbaijan army. The action triggered tensions between Defense Minister and the government and between the corps commander and the ruling Popular Front, which resulted in the dismissal of both defense minister and Commander of forces in NK area¹⁹².

The army at that time consisted of two major Corps covering both frontlines in NK area and Armenian-Azerbaijani border from Gazak to NK front-line. In early June 1992, the expanded brigade was leading military operations, but afterwards the Corps II was formed. The Corps consisted¹⁹³ of five brigades plus two regiments, separate special battalions including intelligence, communication and chemical defense. Although the air assault brigade was autonomous, the corps had air support units as well.

In addition to the corps, there were artillery brigades, infantry regiment, MR regiments within the army.

The seizure of Kelbajar in early April accelerated of restructuring and advanced training of soldiers, where Turkish military advisers were also involved.

However, political instability in June and consequent confrontation between rebel and government forces changed the situation and demoralized the army in the face of Armenian offensive. New government's efforts to counter Armenian offensive with the dispersed units failed. The internal political turmoil spread to the army and volunteer units supportive for the Popular Front government were demolished. During a short period of time, by November 1993, 35 battalions were dissolved and formed new battalions dismissing many experienced soldiers. The move was often described as a reason for future military failures.¹⁹⁴

In the winter of 1994, the Azerbaijan leadership made attempts to liberate the areas seized by Armenian forces in summer and fall. The military reached some successes, but the severe winter and the lack of reliable logistics and training, difficult internal situation within the army did not allow to advance early military successes. International efforts with active Russian mediation yielded a cease-fire agreement, which is still in effect.¹⁹⁵

3. Implications of CFE treaty

Until the OSCE Istanbul summit, Azerbaijan was opposed to signing the adapted CFE treaty saying that the quota for Azerbaijan needs to be increased. Azerbaijan claimed unjust division of the Soviet equipment located in Azerbaijan for its size and population. The number of tanks, armored vehicles was limited to 220, whereas Azerbaijan claimed 420 of each of them agreed by working groups. The limit for artillery pieces was 285, for offensive helicopters 50, for combat aircraft 100. Manpower was limited to 70,000.¹⁹⁶

The restrictions did not allow to properly ensure Azerbaijan's defense, which borders on six countries and is in the state of war with Armenia. Additionally, Armenian armed forces and huge weapons have been accumulated in Nagorno Karabakh and other occupied areas inside Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's demands and concerns were not duly

understood and Baku was persuaded by US administration to sign the document with the argument that the whole treaty could be undermined.

In addition to Tashkent quota the army had repaired the out of order tanks remained from the Soviet time and triumphed from the battlefield. Interior ministry has also contributed the equipment to the army's arsenal. Majority of tanks in early 1992 constituted out dated tanks of T-55 although new T-72 was taken into arsenal later.¹⁹⁷

The army was equipped by towed artillery of 122mm and 152 mm, APC and AIFV, mortars of 120mm and Surface to air missiles of SA-4/-8/-13.¹⁹⁸ Completing and formation of the armed forces was developed after the cease fire agreement in May 1994 where Azerbaijan have taken steps for building effective defense of its territory completing the army with necessary weapons. Although defense budget was reduced due to policy of peaceful end of the war but purchase of necessary equipment and forming the structures continued.

By 1998 the army has completed the formation and reduced the draftees who served more than their term of service and draft is being carried out almost 100%. The manpower has been reduced and is about 55,600 by 1999. Third corps have been formed and completed. As of CFE declared totals the army had in its arsenal 259MVT out of them 136 T-72 tanks, 244 AIFV, 74 APC, 303 Artillery Units, 153 Towed of 122mm and 152 mm, SAM 60+SA -4/-8/-13a and SURV systems. Border Guards of National Security Ministry with the 5000 manpower has in its disposal AIFV and APC of BMP-2 and BTR-60/70/80 respectively.¹⁹⁹

Air force and Air defense with the personnel of about 8000 having in its arsenal ground attack aircraft regiment with Su-17, Su-24, Su-25, Mig -21, L-29 and L-39, FTR squadron with Mig-25, Mig-25UB, Reconnaissance units with Mig-25, transportation units, helicopter regiment with Mi-2/8/24., SAM systems. According to military experts the air defense system has been reliably built and is of one of the disciplined parts of the Azerbaijani military.²⁰⁰

The Navy with the manpower of slightly more than 2000 and with the base in Baku has been equipped with the former Soviet officers and the young officers of Baku Higher Navy School having in its control of surface combatants, frigates, patrol and coastal combatants, missile craft, mine countermeasures, amphibious and support and miscellaneous units received from the Caspian flotilla.²⁰¹

Armenian armed forces located in Nagorno Karabakh area had similar equipment which have increased after the seizure of Lachin in 1992 and while Armenia had also received its quota on Tashkent and transferred most part of tanks and APC and AIFV to Nagorno Karabakh area which constituted rebel forces inside the country.

The number of reported Armenian military equipment by 1999 inside Azerbaijan is astonishing. The number of tanks including T-72 and T-55 was 316. ACV 324 including BTR-70/80, 322 artillery units including D-30/D-20/D-44, 2A36, BM21, KS-19. The number of personnel is reported about 25000 majority of them have been completed by Armenian draftees and officers proper which allows them to fully control and integrate into military structures of Armenian army.²⁰² The development is different since in 1992-1996 the military forces in NK area has solid percentage of local Armenian reservists.²⁰³ If we add the weapons transferred within 1999-2000 including reported by Azerbaijani intelligence sources from Russian bases in Georgia to Armenia and then to NK we receive the figure extremely dangerous for the whole region. Azerbaijan was also

concerned by the fact that in addition of Armenian quota Russia has deployed additional 170 units in Armenia shifting the misbalance more deeply²⁰⁴.

In 1992 Azerbaijan had total armed forces of 56000 out of them 49000 in the army with the term of service of 17 months although most of the soldiers' service have been extended for years.. The number of reservists numbered more than 600000 with the military experience in Soviet army. Defense budget constituted \$125m 1992 although the defense expenditures tripled the budget itself. 1993 budget was \$128m for 1994 \$132m. Defense expenditures in each period had different figures. Defense budget for 1995 was the lowest equal to \$109, for 1996 131 million with 70,7 manpower for 1997 was 146 million, in 1998 was 189 million which 3,8 and 4,6 respectively of GDP with manpower 72,2 000.²⁰⁵ . For 2000 FY the defense budget constituted beyond \$200

The analyses of military development in the region namely in Armenian-Azerbaijan front shows that there should be solid international intervention for creating secure environment for development of independent statehood. In the current circumstances while internationally recognized sovereign Azerbaijan is "host" of Armenian armed forces the weapons of which exceeds the military arsenal of total Azerbaijan. To talk about the security of Azerbaijan or the region would be self-deception since the country's one fifth is out of control of the state and huge accumulation of forces could any moment lead to escalation.

Chapter 4

1. Azerbaijan-Russian security relationships

Under the new foreign policy concept signed by President Putin²⁰⁶, the primacy of economic interests and protection of ethnic Russians abroad, including in CIS and other countries, prevails²⁰⁷.

The recent thawing of bilateral relations between Russia and Azerbaijan might be indicator of the existence of positive elements characterizing bilateral relations. Azerbaijan is one of the countries of the Soviet space that granted equal rights to Russian language, which allowed Russian speaking people to enjoy their culture and traditions in Azerbaijan. While the question was a subject of dispute in Baltic countries and in neighboring Armenia where Russian schools have been totally closed the number of Russian schools in Azerbaijan have not been affected by radical changes. Russian president emphasized the view in CIS summit in Moscow and during his visit to Baku in January 2001²⁰⁸.

Russia occupies first place in Azerbaijani foreign economic relations and Russia is the consumer of Azerbaijani agricultural commodities. Azerbaijan transports its energy resources via Russian pipeline to Novorossiysk security of which requires good security relations in the region..

Azerbaijani and Russian law enforcement forces have good bilateral relations and both nations have signed the agreement of legal assistance through which they are helping each other in arresting criminals and terrorist groups. Russia has extradited hundreds of criminals hiding in Russia from Azerbaijani law enforcement agencies. In its turn

Azerbaijan has also extradited the suspicious men in Dagestani bombing in August 1999.²⁰⁹

Russia and Azerbaijan cooperate within the multilateral CIS antiterrorist center which was decided to establish in June 21-23 summit of CIS head of states and government²¹⁰. It has no combat units under its direct control and is established in the wave of anti-terrorist campaign as Russian officials call the war in Chechnya. The establishing of such effective center would be best contribution for the security of the CIS countries since the citizens of this states have non-visa regime status to each other and any criminal would have possibility to be hidden in other CIS countries. But the outlined by Russian security officials²¹¹ the idea that the Center could have its anti-terrorist units and operate on the territories of CIS countries through the legal mechanisms would not be accepted by Azerbaijan and raises concern and mistrust against the true nature of the Center. However, quite significant bilateral accusations are also occasionally taking place, although not on the highest level. The allegations practically relate to the Russian campaign in Chechnya on charges of alleged sheltering of Chechen fighters and rendering transit for foreign mercenaries fighting in Chechnya. The Azerbaijan border Troops commander vehemently denied²¹² saying that infiltration of one or two armed men is a possibility due to the fact that the majority of Caucasian population is armed²¹³. Both sides are protecting the Russian-Azerbaijan border and Azerbaijan immediately tightened security measures along the Dagestani border when the fighting began in August 1999 claiming that the fighting in the North Caucasus is the direct threat to Azerbaijani own security.²¹⁴

Azerbaijani arguments against Russia is related with Russia's Armenian policy, namely militarization of Armenia that is at the state of war with Azerbaijan. Surely, Russia's Armenian policy is not completely directed against Azerbaijan as Russia has its own approach towards region bordering Iran and Turkey from historical and geopolitical perspective. But Armenia has its own objectives and tries to use Russian presence for the purposes which creates problems for Russia itself.

The October 2000 delivery of weapons from Georgia bases to Armenia have strained again the relations between the two nations. According to Azerbaijani sources Russia continued to supply Armenia with weapons withdrawn from Georgia in October 2000 and most part of those weapons have been transferred to Nagorno Karabakh area²¹⁵. Informative sources in military circles told Turan news agency that additional 20 tanks, 60 infantry cars, 25 armored vehicles, 25 salvo launchers shilka, 250 anti-tank launchers, 250 sub-machine guns and 25 various military vehicles have been delivered to Nagorno Karabakh area properly.

But Russian officials denied the transfer of weapons to Armenian hands referring that they are stationed in Russian base in Armenia and under the Russian control. However the experience of the past and military involvement of some Russian units in Armenian side during the hostilities give little hope for effective Russian control of them.

The transfer of weapons has again caused confrontation between Azerbaijani defense minister and Russian Defense Ministries in Dushanbe session of CIS Council of Defense Ministers, October 26. Minister of Defense S. Abiyev made statement that the "significant part of the delivered to Armenia arms and ammunition further is transported to the occupied by Armenia lands of Azerbaijan. Just due to this Armenia has

concentrated an essential number of arms and ammunition in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.”²¹⁶

At the same meeting General Abiyev reiterated Azerbaijani position expressed before by Azerbaijani president that “Russian-Armenian military cooperation became a real jeopardy for the entire Caucasus”²¹⁷

The Azerbaijani protest has been expressed by Azerbaijani Defense Minister during Russian Defense Minister I. Sergeev’s visit to Baku demanding the return of the transferred weapons during 1994-1996. In response to Azerbaijan’s arguments Russia has offered similar weapons to Azerbaijan. Russian ignorance and military build up in Armenia have stimulated the Azerbaijan Defense Minister to make statements in favor of Turkish and NATO forces in Azerbaijan.

Russia also offered military cooperation with Azerbaijan during President Putin’s visit to Azerbaijan. In addressing the parliament he had reiterated Russian readiness to cooperate in military fields and subsequently the defense ministries have signed an agreement on military training of Azerbaijani officers in Russian military schools which had been ratified by Parliament immediately after the visit²¹⁸. The move has been debated in Azerbaijan in terms of training of future officers in Russia in the line that Azerbaijan have been pursuing of reorganizing the Army in the style of NATO model.

2. CIS Collective Security Treaty

Originally the CIS Collective Security Treaty (CST) was signed by Russia, Armenia, Kazakstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikstan, Uzbekistan in Tashkent. Azerbaijan due to its stance on CIS did not join the CST in May 1992 and continued to insist on bilateral contacts.

Consequently, the removal of Russian troops from Azerbaijan created new circumstances different from other CIS members and when Azerbaijan joined the CIS and its Collective Security Treaty in September 1993 it made some reservation and its participation did not include a full range of arrangements agreed by the treaty.

Azerbaijan’s rejection of the CST was reflecting an attitude toward Russia-dominated structures like the CIS and was clearly expressed in various documents concerning the formation of a Unified Army.

The process expressed by the development that after the formal break up of the Soviet Union in December 1991, military and some leaders of the former union republics believed for necessity of keeping of former Soviet troops as a CIS joint Combined forces. The idea was stemming basically from Central Asian republics and from some military circles of Russia involved on CIS armed structures. But, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Moldova were claiming arms, military equipment and military property stationed in their sole as their own. Azerbaijan had constitutional basis and internal opposition was sharply pressing the government to form its own armed forces.²¹⁹

Proceeding from the internal pressure, Azerbaijan did not sign General Purpose Forces agreement, agreement on Supplying the Armed Forces of CIS and even decision on Defense Minister’s Council at Minsk summit 14February 1992 distancing itself from Unified Forces.²²⁰ Azerbaijan together with Ukraine and Moldova rejected financing of CIS armed forces. Azerbaijani insistence of the property of Fourth Army to the sovereignty of Azerbaijan republic was based on formation of its own sovereign forces.

In the meantime the disagreement between Russian defense committee and Marshal Shaposhnikov's group was deepening and Grachev was taking upper hand in persuading President Yeltsin to decree Russian defense Ministry. Such development would be in favor of union republics since they could get sovereignty in military issue as well. On the eve of the Tashkent treaty Grachev was appointed as defense Minister and at Tashkent meeting Russian military delegation proposed establishing of CIS collective Security Treaty with the purpose to put CIS on a path toward the NATO model²²¹.

Azerbaijan did not join CST and received a part of the arms located in Azerbaijan. Grachev and his team were eager to take over the gigantic Russian military and according to military experts participated in the working groups for Tashkent treaty the initiative on CST was face saving for Unified Command supporters.

Other arguments consider the foundation of this alliance as an instrument to keep the countries of CIS under the single military umbrella and further develop integrated military command for all CIS states.

The other motives expressed were "creating favorable circumstances for founding a new Russian defense ministry and independent Russian military than with bringing a NATO model to the CIS"²²²

When Azerbaijan joined CIS in September 1993, it made some reservations and in reality was forced to sign it hoping for Russian military support to repel Armenian offensive.

Later Russian assistance was connected with bringing Russian troops to Azerbaijan.

In 1994-1996, Russia persistently pursued protection of the CIS external borders reflecting the idea of deployment of Russian troops to international borders of Azerbaijan as well. The idea was justified by the necessity to prevent international terrorists, drug traffickers and illegal supplies of weapons. Azerbaijan repeatedly stated its capability to protect its own borders agreeing on joint commissions to observe the check points in its international borders, which did not take place at all.²²³

Further CIS collective security treaty members have agreed for formation of CIS joint air defense system with the purpose of protecting air space of CIS countries from the single headquarters. Azerbaijan again reiterated its position by not joining the single military system.

In early February 1999 the foreign ministers of signatory countries held their meeting in Moscow in order to extend the CST²²⁴ and only six initial members confirmed their intention to renew their membership while Azerbaijan and as well as Georgia and Uzbekistan declared their desire not to participate at further meetings by this way rejecting the extension of the treaty which was expired in May 1999.

Azerbaijan argued that Azerbaijan is subject of Armenian aggression and since Armenia is also member of CST then what's the purpose of being at CST. Except CST members Azerbaijan borders with Iran and Turkey and does not expect any aggression from Iran and Turkey. Since CST did not take any stance on Armenia's occupation of other CST member country's territory then there is no need to continue as CST member²²⁵. Instead both Azerbaijan and Georgia are trying for effective security relationship with Turkey, while Uzbekistan for bilateral military cooperation with Russia.

Some argue that non extension of CST was a result of active contacts within GUUAM in 1998-1999 and also Azerbaijani grievance over the Russian arms transfer to Armenia.

But in any case Azerbaijan takes part in CIS Defense Council meetings the last summit of

which has been held in Baku in May 2001, where again Azerbaijani Defense Minister demanded expulsion of Armenia from CST for its military campaign against Azerbaijan. The CIS collective security Treaty was rather commitment of several CIS countries to cooperate multilaterally but in May 24, 2000 Minsk meeting of CST head of states the institutionalization²²⁶ of CIS and possible recognition as a regional security organization was discussed.²²⁷

Recent development within the CST will be turned for Azerbaijan as a source of insecurity by the fact that within the CST Armenia and Russia agreed to form joint rapid reaction forces under the Armenian command. The creation of “regional groups of forces” namely Western, Central Asian²²⁸ and Caucasus groups was proposed and approved in May 24 at CST defense ministers summit and June 19-21 CIS summit in Moscow.

In a May 24, 2000 meeting of CST head of states there have been outlined the adopted documents’ essence like creation of legal basis for deployment of Russian troops²²⁹, deployment of Federal security service “anti-terrorist” units on the territories of the CST countries the development highly unacceptable in Azerbaijan and the indication of Russian military dominance in the CST countries.

Creation of the Caucasus group happened after the withdrawal of Azerbaijani and Georgian membership from the CST and countermeasures undertaken by Russian and Armenian sides triggered serious concerns in Azerbaijan in Georgia.

Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze termed the planned joint Russian-Armenian forces as “incomprehensible to Georgia and Azerbaijan”²³⁰ Considering the past experience, one can not exclude involvement of those forces in military activities against Azerbaijan in case of resuming military activities. From other side such military strength would encourage Armenian side to speak with the language of force with Azerbaijan in the ongoing Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement.

3. Gabala

Gabala radar Installation was built in early 80s as an early warning system for missile attack for the southern periphery of the Soviet Union, which has been on combat duty since February 1985. The importance of Gabala for Russia’s security is understandable but due to undetermined status of the military installation it becomes the source of occasional disagreements.

Azerbaijan considered it a complex question related with the global security, which was expressed by H. Aliyev in response to allegations on further status of Gabala: “In any case, since obtaining state independence Azerbaijan agreed to the existence of the Gabala radar station and we proceed from the view that it is a question of preventing strategic missile attacks”, nipping speculation on expanding the object into military base.²³¹

Azerbaijan, free of Russian troops, is willing to be clear in Gabala in terms of its military character and ecological damage to the country. Russia is not ready to remove it and there is no substitute in Russia’s southern borders for Gabala.

The issue of removal was the subject of discussion in early periods of Russian withdrawal from Azerbaijan in 1992-1993 but further it has been virtually conserved.

Each side has presented its own draft for the status which contradicts in many terms. Azerbaijan claims all assets²³² of the installation as Azerbaijani property and suggests to create joint commission and identify the moveable assets which should be delivered to Russian defense ministry. Russia suggests that all assets brought to the installation after Aug31,1991 are Russian. Russians did propose to have the installation as an expanded military object originally but Azerbaijani objection led to the idea of long term lease. Russia demands for 20 years lease as in the other countries of CIS like Kazakstan, Belarus which is justified by the functioning procedure of such a systems. Azerbaijan suggests the lease for three-five years. Azerbaijan also insists on Azerbaijani -Russian joint military service in the installation which Russia disagrees.

Also there are disagreements about the sharing of the information received from the system and on sum of the rent . Russia agrees for providing information only on the air situation in Trans-Caucasus.²³³ At the expense of the rent Russia proposes to train Azerbaijani military in Russian military institutions and repair Azerbaijani military hardware in Russian enterprises.

Established recently Azerbaijan-Russian joint commission on ecological impact of the object will serve for determining of the damage to the environment and may be basic for further status.

The commission has been set up after the recent visit of president Putin to Baku during which the Gabala issue did not figure in the documents due to disagreements. But president Putin proposed of increased long term Azerbaijan-Russian military cooperation and as some Russian sources say²³⁴ Gabala radar agreement would be signed within the package of broader cooperation including military. But currently, Azerbaijani government refuses to grant any legal status to Gabala installation as a military object of foreign country

President Putin's visit and recent Azerbaijani-Russian rapprochement softened the position of the sides once radically conflicting by claims of Azerbaijan for removal of the system or delivering the station to Azerbaijani sovereignty²³⁵ . That statement was made in response to violation of Azerbaijani air space by Russian Mig-29 stationed in Armenia indicating the tense relations between the two nations.

According to some unconfirmed reports Israel had interest to place its own missile tracing systems in Gabala in case of removal of Russian personnel.²³⁶

4. Caucasus Four

This structure is highly encouraged by Russia to keep the Caucasian countries in the orbit of Russian Federation. Although in reality the Russian Federation had great leverages to influence in Caucasian affairs first and foremost in conflict settlement issues but Azerbaijan and Georgia are reluctantly support this framework.

First meeting of four countries took place in Kislovodsk in June 1996 where the sides declared their commitment for seeking a fair and lasting settlement to regional conflicts and boost regional cooperation.

The framework has been revitalized after Putin's rise to power although in Yeltsin period occasional meetings had taken place. Putin's government had realized the importance of security cooperation with Caucasian nation for its own security . The tension and

violence in southern borders of Russia has prompted to renew and normalize the relations with Azerbaijan with the understanding of taking new approach in bilateral relations. Azerbaijan strongly believes that Russia had rendered considerable military assistance for Armenia and Russian bases in Armenia serve for armenian reluctance for peace settlement. Widely debated in Azerbaijan Russian arms transfer to Armenia led Azerbaijan to be more suspicious on Russian role in the region keeping in mind the military support during the armenian military campaign. Azerbaijan's sharp demand to return back those weapons from Armenia did not receive the adequate response from the Yeltsin government and Russia continued to supply with modern weapons to Armenia which paved the way to be distanced from Azerbaijan.

President Putin's initiative to meet and discuss Caucasian issues together with Russia that is also could be considered as Caucasus nation did not receive positive response from Azerbaijani president during his visit to Baku in January 2001. The arguments have been expressed²³⁷ that the continued occupation of Azerbaijani lands makes it impossible to cooperate with Armenia within the Caucasus Four.

During the May 2001 visit of Russian security secretary to Baku the question has been raised but Azerbaijani president excluded cooperation among the structured Four unless Armenia withdraw their forces from Azerbaijan.

At Minsk summit of CIS four presidents have again met and discussed security and cooperation issues Caucasus. The four presidents expressed the need for speedy settlement of the conflicts in Caucasus including that of NK, South Ossetia and Abkhaz conflicts for stabilization²³⁸ of the situation in the Caucasus. In an adopted declaration of Four they expressed the important role of regional states in maintaining regional stability and cooperation. The four have expressed the necessity of meeting of parliamentarians of four countries and using the experience of international organizations for establishing peace in the region²³⁹

Putin's active involvement has been appreciated by Azerbaijan and Armenian presidents and the four presidents expressed concern at the spread of terrorism and extremism in Caucasus..

Intensification of Four meetings has been believed by some observers as an alternative model in wave of Caucasus stability pact initiative made by Turkey early 2000.

5. Azerbaijan-Iran relations

The appearance of new states of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as the Caspian basin, created an extremely advantageous environment for Iran in the past 200 years. Russian and later Soviet borders became Azerbaijani-Iranian state borders and the agreements and regulations signed in regard to the Caspian Sea between Soviet Union and Iran needed to be reworded. The status of the Caspian sea and its vast resources created uncertainty between new states and Iran and among the successor states of the Soviet Union as well. Iran ended up benefiting from the disintegration of the Soviets since it gained enormous space for influence. From this perspective, Iran welcomed Azerbaijani independence and Iranian foreign ministry's officials toured the region offering mediation in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict²⁴⁰. The Azerbaijan border with Iran was half open despite the Soviet and then Russian check points and border troops.

Iranian-Azerbaijani relations were relatively good and warm during the 1991-1994 by exchanging the highest level of visits. In early 1995 Azerbaijan excluded Iranian companies from Azerbaijani International Oil Consortium under the anti-Iranian campaign of US administration and the move has cooled relations with Iran. Iran was not happy for increased Azerbaijani-US relations and involvement of US companies in Caspian sea. Iran had publicly accused Azerbaijan for having good relations with Israel blaming Azerbaijan on actions against the Iranian interests in the region.²⁴¹

Azerbaijan in its turn blamed Iran for recruiting agents for spying²⁴² against Azerbaijan and had arrested Islamic Party leaders of Azerbaijan for spying in favor of Iran and organizing coup against Azerbaijan Republic.

Azerbaijan blamed Iran for helping Armenia economically and by energy resources aimed at strengthening of an Armenian military, which Iran denies and asserts that the relations are purely economic. Iran had expressed its numerous resistance against the foreign presence in Caspian sea and has dispute over the division of Caspian sea resources with Azerbaijan and other coastal states.²⁴³

6. Caucasus Stability Pact

During the OSCE Istanbul summit in November 1999, the Azerbaijani president H. Aliyev suggested to sign a Pact on Security and Cooperation in South Caucasus with the purpose of putting an end to the aggression, ethnic cleansing, separatism and terrorism²⁴⁴. The proposed pact envisioned withdrawal of foreign bases from South Caucasus and establishing peace, security in the region, developing closer economic cooperation. The pact was considered as contribution to the creation of free, undivided and secure Europe. The move could also help Georgia to get rid of the Russian troops stationed in its soil. From Azerbaijan's perspective, the sovereignty and integrity of the three countries should serve as foundation for the future Caucasus security pact with the participation of Turkey, Russia and the United States, and European Union, which called on a 3+2+2 formula ignoring Iran.

The Armenian president also called for a new security pact in the South Caucasus at the Istanbul summit adding to the list of bordering countries Iran, which offered a 3+3+2 formula²⁴⁵. Armenian proposal was not clear enough about foreign troops since there is an agreement between Russia and Armenia for long-term stationing of Russian troops in Armenia. The pact proposed by both presidents slightly differed in terms of role of the neighboring Iran but Iran's role could be properly determined if the pact eventually worked out.

The developments were considered by some experts as a reversal in Armenian foreign policy since the Pact envisaged removal of foreign troops from the region.²⁴⁶

Further Turkish President S. Demirel initiated the Caucasus Stability pact with the purpose of helping the Caucasus countries to overcome the economic hardship, strengthening their independence and sovereignty and achieving lasting peace in the region.

From the Azerbaijan perspective, the pact could give additional economic opportunity to Azerbaijan and access to Turkey through railroads running through Armenia that were built at the dawn of the century. The pact would be more beneficial for Armenia, which

would take advantage of the opportunities in Turkey and Turkish investment. The proposed pact would promote expanded cooperation among neighboring regional states and encourage closer cooperation in the name of lasting peace in the region.

However, the Caucasus stability or security pact, first and foremost, demanded peaceful resolution of the Caucasus conflicts, without which prospects of peaceful developments in the region could be at risk.

Of course, the initial debates on the Caucasus pact, consideration of these nations as a single unit free of Russia and making Russia equal with Turkey and the United States in the future pact was not acceptable to Russia.

Due to the centuries-long control and affinity to the region, Russia considers itself a Caucasus nation and any such developments could undermine Russian interests at stake. According to some reports that leaked to press, Russia immediately organized a closed-door meeting of Armenian and Azerbaijani defense ministers in an effort to reaffirm Russia's will to be concerned with Azerbaijan's security and increasing military presence in Armenia.²⁴⁷

But in a televised interview, Armenian president R. Kocharyan described Russia's military presence in South Caucasus as a stability factor and a major component of the new system of regional security. He further elaborated that de-facto existing situation must be correctly included into the new security system and Russia must play a significant role in the formation of such a system"²⁴⁸. The statement in fact put an end the Azerbaijan and Turkey-proposed and Georgia-supported Caucasus stability pact, which envisioned different principles of formation.

Further developments in the region, Russia's introduction of a visa regime with Georgia and signals to Azerbaijan on such a possibility, as well as the growing military cooperation with Armenia and the deadlocked conflict resolution in the Caucasus, diminished the probability of the pact.

The policy of the Caucasus states showed that Armenia impedes greater security in the region, since its territorial claims and the reliance on Russian military urges them to take the position of force unacceptable for Azerbaijan. The principles of the Caucasus stability pact and the conflicting issues between the two countries are not compatible.

Creation of the joint Russian-Armenian military forces and continued military control over a part of the neighboring Azerbaijan elevate the risk of resumption of military action and rule out the fulfillment of the ideas widely favored in Istanbul summit.

7.Security relations between Azerbaijan and NATO

The Azerbaijan society from the very first day of independence sought NATO's support for its independence and security with the purpose of avoiding possible external intervention. Baku maintained bilateral contacts with NATO officers within the verification team of CFE treaty which they started to inspect in eastern Europe in 1993²⁴⁹. Azerbaijan joined the PfP framework in May 1994 as part of foreign policy orientations with the purpose of developing bilateral relations and integrating with Euro-Atlantic organizations. The framework was considered the right niche for security concerns in an effort to strengthen political independence, territorial integrity and to pursue and defend sovereign rights.

Azerbaijan's joining the PfP was also stipulated by the difficult situation in Azerbaijan in May 1994 as the country was struggling for liberation of its occupied lands and opposing the return of Russian troops initiated by Defense Minister Grachev.²⁵⁰

Azerbaijan's desire for greater NATO role was unilateral, premature and unreal and received inadequate responses from NATO.

On the contrary, Azerbaijan was cautious of the NATO-Russian dialog on security arrangements in light of NATO's eastward expansion, which ignored the interests of Azerbaijan envisioned in the CFE treaty. That, in turn, allowed Russia great advantages in the southern Flank zone, which could be a real threat to Azerbaijan's security in case of military escalation in the region.

The process of NATO's enlargement itself also caused a heated debate in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan did not at all mind NATO's enlargement, but since Azerbaijan was an OSCE member it also pursued the policy of greater and effective OSCE role in the future security of the Euro-Atlantic area. So, Azerbaijan, while supporting NATO's eastward expansion, expressed a wish "as modus operandi" for the states within the OSCE, not as a new structure".²⁵¹ The policy could be explained by the OSCE involvement in the Nagorno Karabakh issue and arguments of those lobbying for greater security from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Since NATO was perceived as a hostile organization for a part of former Soviet people and especially Russians, the trustworthy organization could be the OSCE with the purpose of strict implementation of its principles through its multinational forces. However, the recent events in the Balkans proved that OSCE with its fragile procedures could hardly take any decisive action.

The Alliance's January 10-11, 1994 Brussels summit put an end to the debates in Azerbaijan as well and opened partnership coordination cell at Mons for security cooperation.

However, NATO kept an eye on the Caucasus developments, expressing support for the integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, condemning the acquisition of land by force. During its June 1994 Ministerial meeting of North Atlantic Council in the final communiqué, NATO expressed its position on the Caucasus:

"The situation in South Caucasus continues to be of special concern. We condemn the use of violence for territorial gains. Respect for territorial integrity sovereignty and independence of Armenia Azerbaijan and Georgia is essential to the establishment of peace, stability and cooperation in the region. Peaceful and just solution on ongoing conflicts in the region can only be reached through efforts under the aegis of OSCE and UN." So, although NATO expressed its clear position on the issue, it distanced itself leaving the conflicting parties within the structures of UN and OSCE.²⁵²

NATO's previous statement dated back to 1992, when armenian forces captured Shusha and continued to attack to Nachichevan in May 1992²⁵³.

In April 1996, the Azerbaijan president visited the NATO headquarters to seek wider cooperation. During his visit, he outlined Azerbaijan's interests asking Secretary General to consider specifically the following issues²⁵⁴:

- to help in creating a modern civil defense program;
- to assist in training the Azerbaijani contingent for participation in international-peacekeeping operations;
- to explore the issue of NATO involvement in peacekeeping operations in Nagorno Karabakh after the signing of peace settlement :

In response, the NATO Secretary General J. Solana visited Caucasus in early 1997 on a get to know mission, which promoted Azerbaijan's active participation in PfP exercises and training. Azerbaijan's participation in PfP sponsored exercises and training dramatically increased from 75% in 1997 to 100% in 1998.²⁵⁵ Azerbaijan itself hosted PfP training programs in Baku taking part in numerous activities.

The Azerbaijan parliament group joined NATO Inter-parliamentary Assembly as an observer to push Azerbaijan's concerns at the parliamentary level. The Azerbaijan Atlantic cooperation Association joined the Atlantic Treaty Association bringing the importance of NATO membership to the Azerbaijani public opinion. Due to the activities of AACA, the issue of NATO became number one issue in the Azerbaijan media in the fall of 1997..

Azerbaijan military and civilian officials have been sent to NATO led Garmish Center for security studies in Germany forming first NATO educated officer group in the republic. Azerbaijani peacekeeping platoon have been trained and dispatched to Kosovo within the NATO led operations under the Turkish forces.

After the Lisbon summit of OSCE in December 1996 the great powers have actively been involved in Azerbaijani security and boundary issues and Azerbaijan had taken advantage of that and started to actively pursue its interests in international arena expressing its own priorities:

In his address at inaugural meeting of Euro-Atlantic partnership Council in Sintra, Portugal 30 May 1997 Azerbaijani foreign minister stated that Azerbaijan regards “ Integration of Azerbaijan into European and euro-Atlantic political and economic structures as well as security system as one of the basic directions of its foreign policy”²⁵⁶ Azerbaijan supporting enhanced role for PfP called upon NATO “ to take a new line for the states with the justified security concerns “ hinting Azerbaijan calling to conclude separate agreement between Azerbaijan and NATO²⁵⁷.

Consideration of regional issues have been decided to consider within the EAPC Action Plan which has expressed growing interest south Caucasus region. Opening of NATO information office in Baku have been proposed as a first step for deepening the relationship.

Azerbaijan has started to have 16+1 dialogue with NATO on its security issues and also within the dialogue between NATO and the countries of GUUAM. Azerbaijan continued to reiterate its will for bilateral connections with NATO and other countries during the Luxembourg meeting of EAPC May 1998.²⁵⁸

Azerbaijani president has established Governmental Commission on cooperation with NATO and created its own peacekeeping units which was used in NATO led activities in Kosovo. For expansion of NATO led training decided to participate at PfP planning and review process in favor of deepened relationship with NATO²⁵⁹

Azerbaijan has sent its diplomatic missions to Brussels and Mons trying to show seriousness of its orientation on Azerbaijan- NATO cooperation in an effort to form its army within the NATO standards.

However, as some experts believe “ NATO may be used as an instrument of western and American power in the Caucasus” which is not always coincided with the interests of the regional states namely Azerbaijan²⁶⁰.

Whether NATO will use its power for removal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijan?.

The question is highly debatable in Azerbaijan and proponents of NATO still continue to

believe skeptically on that. Supporters of NATO 's role have built their arguments on NATO -Russia confrontations which is unlikely. Overwhelming view is that NATO will try to defend its own interests if that would be case rather than to intervene into the interstate hostilities..

As has been stated in numerous statements of NATO officials including Secretary General, NATO was not going to play any role in Armenia-Azerbaijani conflict which is Azerbaijani number one security issue.. However, the air campaign against the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians had inspired the hope in Azerbaijan for NATO 's involvement in Caucasus against the Armenian military targets. The debates on this issue had affected the environment in Armenia which resulted in additional immediate deployment of sophisticated weapons such as S-300 and Mig 29 air-crafts in Armenia²⁶¹ in response to possible development of Kosovo scenario. Armenian president's rare visit to NATO headquarters and assurances from there had served for calming suspicions in Armenian society .

Those alarms have indirectly been expressed in highest level in Russian government justifying the deployment of abovementioned weapons by referring to NATO campaign in Serbia. Russian response has particularly alarmed Azerbaijan in terms of possible action by NATO against Armenia ²⁶². Azerbaijani observers noted here two major conclusions. One was that Russians will indirectly oppose any withdrawal of Armenian troops if international community will pressure them.. Second Russia will take advantage of NATO's actions in Serbia for implementing its own goals in Caucasus so that under the pretext of Armenia's defense would strengthen its military presence in the south Caucasus for a long time.

Both conclusions are dangerous development for Azerbaijan since Armenian side will rely on the continued Russian military presence and a military aid and in its turn will not ready for negotiated settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijani crisis..

During the last visit of Secretary General of NATO Lord Robertson again reiterated the notion of Russian mediation in the region very welcomed which has been accepted as a continuation of deadlock for an uncertain period²⁶³. During the visit the Secretary General called on ²⁶⁴ to carry out military reform and reduce its armed forces the development which is highly questionable in a circumstances while the country is at the state of war. Azerbaijan has active military cooperation with Turkey both on bilateral and within PfP program. There has been formed The Council on Military Cooperation (Askeri Ish Birliyi Koordinasyon Kurulu) with its office in Baku which coordinates the training of Azerbaijani officers in Turkey and in Azerbaijan. The military training is being conducted according to NATO standards. Turkish Military schools have been hosting Azerbaijani students since 1992. Turkey has been serving as a link between Azerbaijan and PfP program since Turkey is Liaison country for Azerbaijan in NATO. Azerbaijan does not have security treaty with Turkey similar that Armenia has with Russian Federation.

Reported news that Turkish General Staff set up a working groups²⁶⁵ with the Pentagon to boost closer military cooperation in Caucasus of the two NATO members would serve for lasting stability in the region which was in fact outlined Demirel's security pact. The Azerbaijan defense and foreign ministers' statements in favor of the NATO membership intensified the Russian-Armenian military cooperation and arms supplies, but the statements did not receive adequate support and reaction from NATO. As many

observers believe, the statements were intended to apply additional pressure on Russians to reconsider their position toward Armenia, but the developments show that both Russians and Armenians have taken advantage of these statements for a yet closer military relationship.

Building of the Azerbaijan army in accordance with NATO standards also caused heated debates from military and civilian experts arguing that the transition of the army to NATO standards requires corresponding weaponry from NATO countries. Since the country is still at war with Armenia, NATO countries are reluctant to sell sophisticated weaponry to Azerbaijan. Under such circumstances, Azerbaijan may lose the military markets of the former union republics²⁶⁶. Besides, former Soviet-trained officers and newly-trained ones in Turkey would create additional difficulties for the army capabilities. The lack of a clear message from NATO and Azerbaijan's reluctance to maintain closer military cooperation with Russia have been impeding a clear-cut security policy in Azerbaijan.

8. GUUAM

Formation of GUUAM framework has been the result of the post-Soviet relationship between these countries and Russia. The countries of GUUAM have been directly and indirectly had grievances on Russia for her alleged support of secessionist armed movements inside those countries and discord for Russia's attitude of their sovereignty.²⁶⁷

The common position have been developed during the CFE treaty discussions in Vienna beginning from 1996 and further in October 1997 at the Council of Europe session they declared the formation of formal group of GUAM countries with the aim of promoting peace, democracy and rule of law rejecting ethnic intolerance, separatism and religious extremism which have spread to parts of former Soviet Union area.

They pledged to cooperate multilaterally for peacekeeping efforts and for peaceful settlement of conflicts expressing their determination to confront the risks and threats to peace and security at the national, regional and global level. The sides agreed to jointly combat terrorism and violence and broaden their cooperation on Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor and develop interaction within EAPC and PfP program of NATO²⁶⁸. Initially formation of GUAM was considered by some analysts as a counterbalance to Russia's activity in the region and the will of these states to create close economic, political relationship and increasing military cooperation. Azerbaijan had special interest in emergence of such framework since Russian government took unilateral position of armament of Armenia leading the efforts for peaceful end of the cease fire agreement to deadlock and position of strength from Armenian side.

Unwillingness of taking back illegally transferred weapons to Armenia and concentration of large amount of forces within the northern borders of Azerbaijan and necessity of secure transportation of Caspian energy resources through Georgia to Turkey added additional concern for Azerbaijani overall security.

The Russian government itself had "promoted" such development within CIS since their policy of uncertainty towards the former fellow republics and ineffectiveness of the Russian president prompted the countries to seek for closer cooperation. The

development also served as a will of these states through GUAAM to attract more international attention and investment creating new zone of cooperation with EU and United States.²⁶⁹

Russia's disapproval was obvious and Armenia's position has served indication of that. Armenia expressed no interest to GUAAM which would benefit more her interest by cooperating neighboring her states. In case of Armenia's joining to the GUAAM they could find the points of cooperation that they desperately need with Azerbaijan despite the fact that Azerbaijan is rejecting any cooperation without settlement of the conflict. However, the Armenia's participation would ease the polarized relations in the region in favor of the environment where could be developed more secure framework for Caucasus and would benefit from good potentials of each other for durable peace and security in the region.

Growing cooperation of GUAAM countries at the level of political and military relationships have occurred in 1999-2000.. Their efforts for non-proliferation , blocking narcotics traffic , fighting ethnic and religious extremism and closer cooperation with Euro-Atlantic structures had attracted more attention from US government which has announced of allocation of \$45 million for GUAAM development²⁷⁰ .

The allocation has been made due to US Senate's Defense and Security Assistance Act which contains the section dealing with GUAAM and providing 8.5 mil in the FY 2001 and 37 mil in the FY2002²⁷¹ .

Organizationally GUAAM has only one loose Committee of National Coordinators consisting of mid-level officials of member states had several meetings in member states capitals lacking any supranational bodies so far. Institutionalization of GUAAM agreed by the presidents at New York summit²⁷² in September 2000 willing to conduct regular semiannual meeting and the heads of states and foreign ministers and appropriate agencies²⁷³ . They discussed the initiative on free trade zone among the GUAAM countries which resulted in foreign ministers Vienna meeting in late November by the draft agreement proposed by Georgia.

Structuring of GUAAM and establishing organizational bodies has been adopted in joint communiqué during the OSCE foreign ministers meeting in Vienna ,Nov.26 2000. Public Consultative Council which could be political body of the new structure, Free Trade Zone of GUAAM countries and Consular Convention for GUAAM countries in case of emergency proposed for the consideration of the GUAAM summit in Kiev in spring 2001²⁷⁴ . That meeting had its special feature in terms of their representation in OSCE meeting and speech of Azerbaijani Foreign minister on behalf of GUAAM accusing OSCE in ineffectiveness in dealing the conflicts in GUAAM countries which continued to be threat to regional security.

The meeting of GUAM foreign ministers with the US state secretary and GUAAM-US dialog has been initiated The idea of joining to GUAAM Turkey , Bulgaria and Romania²⁷⁵ expressed by would serve for securing the transport routes planned from Caspian region through Georgia and Ukraine to Turkey and Central Europe accordingly. Formation of peacekeeping units of GUAAM countries would be reliable guarantee for secure transportation of energy resources from the emerging market in Caspian. Although the statements of GUAAM countries excluded any military aspects of the alignment Georgian defense ministry stated that the cooperation among the grouping does exist adding that they serve for joint defense of Eurasia transport corridor.²⁷⁶

Ukrainian Defense Minister further outlined plans of establishing a GUUAM peacekeeping battalion²⁷⁷ consisting of Georgian-Azerbaijani-Ukrainian units. The idea was that the battalion once formed would report to the UN or OSCE on its peacekeeping activities as a part of a multi-national force in the Caucasus conflict zone or on pipeline security from Baku to Georgia.

Prospects of developing GUUAM into a regional organization are rather vague due to recent developments in GUUAM member-states. After being elected as Russian President, Vladimir Putin enthusiastically tackled the process of restoration of intensive relationships with CIS countries that represent a particular importance to Russia. Moscow's new policy is more pragmatic and is built on bilateral relations rather than multilateral structures, which promoted the former Russian government within CIS. The older methods of ensuring Russia's dominance through multilateral systems proved ineffective due to the differing orientations of CIS countries. The methods did not serve Russia's national interests either, but were addressed to satisfying imperial thinking of internal forces... For this reason the warming relations with Russia and Ukraine and complex internal situation in Georgia and Moldova and their strong dependence on Russia slowed down the once intensive dialog within GUUAM. In the wake of Russia's effective engagement with GUUAM countries, functioning of a separate entity of GUUAM is unlikely.

Azerbaijan's involvement in entities isolating Russia is undesirable and would not serve to boost Azerbaijan's national security on the whole. Millions of Azerbaijanis living throughout Russia without visas and earning money for their families in Azerbaijan could become another leverage to be used against Azerbaijan for bringing the country to a real security disaster. Corruption, weak economy and the absence of the rule of law have torpedoed the development of real institutions of statehood in Azerbaijan, which could provide jobs to millions of its citizens. Any turn in Russian-Azerbaijani relations could trigger violence or expulsion of Azerbaijanis from Russia, which threatens to push the country into uncertainty at the current stage.

Latest developments in Moldova and Uzbekistan's hesitation over further cooperation have brought to question the effective organizational structure of GUUAM.

9. Azerbaijan-US security dialog

A senior US official indicated in his interview that Azerbaijan is not a top priority for US in the region. The United States is interested in secure transportation of Caspian energy resources from the region and security of the whole region is important for further economic involvement. The United States is interested in political independence of the Caucasus nations and seeks ways to invigorate their security through strengthening of political institutions and creating effective participatory governmental system. Therefore, free elections and observance of the rule of law have been a bone of contention between the Azerbaijan and US governments, which the latter sees as a foremost prerequisite of stability and security of Azerbaijan.

The United States is concerned with the developments in the North Caucasus and considers the military activities there could spill over the neighboring Azerbaijan and Georgia posing a threat to the independence of both countries.

The United States is involved in Azerbaijani part of the Caspian energy projects and is interested in finding accord among coastal states on the Caspian sea status. The United States supports the multiple pipeline policy in the region, one of which should run from Baku to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. The security of energy resources and their secure transportation could be a vital element in Azerbaijan's overall security.

The US government and Congress leaders have expressed their interest in "boosting bilateral military cooperation through NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

Azerbaijan's "geo-strategic importance in the region has repeatedly been emphasized as it possesses immense oil reserves and is a transit country playing the role of gateways between Europe and Asia"²⁷⁸

However, the US-Azerbaijan security relations are limited due to the US Congress's Section 907, which restricts government to government assistance to Azerbaijan and impedes bilateral military relations. Although the US administration has opposed it in its statements, the restriction has turned the USA into a biased mediator in its efforts as a co-chairing country in the OSCE Minsk Group, established to broker a negotiated settlement to the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict.

The US-Azerbaijan security dialog emerged through the CFE Treaty Flank package discussions in Vienna in 1996, where Azerbaijan opposed to the NATO-Russian agreement on Flank issue, which could seriously tell on the security of Azerbaijan and contradicted the previously agreed provisions of the Tashkent agreement. After US assurances expressed in a joint US- Azerbaijan statement, Azerbaijan signed the Flank agreement making reservations on issues concerning Azerbaijan's security.²⁷⁹

A US-Azerbaijan statement released during President Aliyev's visit to Washington in August 1997 says "both parties agreed to explore the opportunities of expanding security cooperation, including through the bilateral security dialog inaugurated in March 1997". The Azerbaijan foreign ministry officials pay regular visits to Washington to develop the matters, which meets both bilateral and international interests.

Azerbaijan received a high level US military delegation in March 1999 in the wake of the calls to establish a NATO or US military unit in Azerbaijan. Head of US European command General Charles Wax visited²⁸⁰ Azerbaijan and some air force units in an effort to assess the situation for the future military to military cooperation.

However, Azerbaijan did not get complete understanding on part of the US over a billion dollars worth of arms transfer to Armenia and on latest arms supplies from Russian bases in Georgia to Armenia. In its statement, the US state department referred to "some pieces of Russian equipment" transferred to Armenia from Russia's Georgian bases, which included dozens of tanks and heavy artillery units. The United States considers the region as a single unit and believes relocation of Russian troops to some miles does not represent a threat to security globally. But from the Azerbaijan perspective that is a threat to its very existing since the country is in a state of war with Armenia.

The US defense department and the Azerbaijan foreign ministry signed weapons security agreement²⁸¹ on Sept 28, 1999, pledging cooperation in counter-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and related materials. As a result of this agreement, the US defense department and customs service will train and equip the Azerbaijan border guards and customs officials in preventing and detecting mass destruction weapons at border checkpoints. Some of this equipment has already been delivered to the Azerbaijan Customs Ministry.

The US defense department decided to deliver two patrol boats to guard waters in the Caspian sea, something that drew fire from Iranian side. The fact is that the boats are 16m long and cannot accommodate weapons. According to US officials, the cutters could help Azerbaijan protect its borders and prevent the illegal transport of components mass destruction weapons and are to be delivered as part of a cooperation program between Azerbaijan and USA²⁸².

Section 907 prohibits the training of the Azerbaijan military personnel. Here Iran and the Russian Federation are equally reluctant to maintain any military cooperation with the United States. The statements made by the Azerbaijan government and non-governmental officials stirred harsh feelings both in Russia and Iran, which condemned bringing American military components to the region.

Iran with its rhetoric against the United States has chilled relations with Azerbaijan in the wake of alleged US military presence in the region, which endangers its security.²⁸³

Russia considers the Caucasus to be its traditional sphere of influence and is not ready to accept any foreign military deployment, not to mention the US one next to its borders. In any case, deployment of such troops or contingents requires radical changes leading either to military escalation or peacekeeping activities in the region within the process of peaceful settlement.

While assessing the Azerbaijan-US security cooperation, it should be indicated that the relations do not serve to establish or bring any US bases or troops to the area. Azerbaijan has repeatedly advocated for the removal of all foreign bases from the Caucasus and establishment of security pact among the Caucasian countries.

Azerbaijan is interested in training its officers in US military schools, cooperating in anti-terrorism and drug trafficking drives in the region, which could be done through bilateral cooperation or within the PfP program, but paradoxically Section 907 retards such activities as well.

Chapter 5.

Russian Arms for Armenia

The scandal in the Russian government circles around an illegal delivery of arms worth \$1 billion from Russia to Armenia revealed unprecedented facts. If you look at the chart below very attentively you will see that each of its lines brings new deaths and tears of orphans, widows and mothers.

The cost (in US Dollars according to average commercial prices) of military technique, arms, weapons and other kinds of military property delivered by Russia to Armenia

Name	Cost	Number	Total cost
1. PU OTR (starting installations of	210.000	8	1.680.000

operational-tactical rocket complexes)			
R-17 rockets for PU OTR	210.000	32	6.720.000
2. ZRK (zenith-rocket complexes) ..Krug"	300.000	27	8.100.000
Rockets for ZRK	300.000	349	104.700.000
3. Rockets for ZRK ..Osa"	20.000	40	8.000.000
4. Tanks T- 72	1.200.000	84	100.800.000
5. BMP(fighting machines of infantry)	280.000	50	14.000.000
6. Howitzers D-30 (caliber -122 millimeters)	52.000	36	1.872.000
7.Howitzers D-20 (caliber -152 millimeters)	40.000	18	720.000
8. Howitzers D-1 (caliber- 152 millimeters)	50.000	18	900.000
9. RSZO (reactive installments of volley fire) ..Grad"	250.000	18	4.500.000
10.Mortars	12.000	26	312.000
11. PRZK (portable rocket-zenith complexes) ..lg1a"	40.000	40	1.600.000
Rockets to PRZK 40.000 8.000.000	40.000	200	8.000.000
12. Heavy grenade missiles	2.500	20	50.000
13.Machine-guns	400	306	122.400
14. Sub-machine guns	120	7.910	949.200
15.Pistols	60	1.847	110.820
16.Shells (various	400	489.160	195.664.000

types) on average			
17. Shells ..Sh" to BMP-2 on average	30	478.480	14.354.400
18. BM PTUR PTUR on average	330.000 8.400	4 945	1.320.000 7.933.00
19. Hand grenades	30	345.800	10.374.000
20. Cartridges (various types) on average	1	227.253.000	227.253.000
Total about			720.039.0.00

Other samples of arms, weapons,
technical) and military property about 270.000.000

Altogether (including transportation
and other expenses) about 1.000.000.000 \$US

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