

RAND CORPORATION AND WE: ARMENIA-TURKEY RELATIONS

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The end of the Cold War has not diminished Turkey's strategic importance – as many initially feared – in American eyes. On the contrary, Turkey's strategic importance has increased, not decreased.

*S. Larrabee, RAND Corporation,
February, 2010*

The recent developments directed to establishing Armenia-Turkey relations are arguably one of the most important factors (if not the single most important factor) shaping the future of our region. Countries of the region and world power centers alike pay close attention to this issue. On the other hand, the studies of RAND Corporation in the recent decades have repeatedly had serious influence on the U.S. politics, sometimes even forming or transforming the U.S. strategic approaches and the very mindset in a wide range of both international and domestic problems.

Therefore, it should be no surprise that this article aims at analyzing the most recent and relatively comprehensive publication by RAND Corporation regarding Turkey's role in our region and the current process of normalizing Armenia-Turkey relations.

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1. Troubled Partnership: U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change

On February 3, 2010 the presentation of Stephen Larrabee's research report *MG-8893-AF* *Troubled Partnership: U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change* [1] took place at RAND Corporation. The research has been conducted within the Strategy and Doctrine Program of RAND for fiscal year 2007, most likely as part of a larger "Troubled Partnerships: The Growing Challenge of Managing U.S. Security Relationships and Implications for the United States Air Force" study¹. The research has been carried out within the framework of *Project AIR FORCE* and was sponsored by the Director of Operational Planning, Policy and Strategy, Regional Issues Directorate, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, Plans and Requirements, Headquarters United States Air Force [1, pp iii-iv].

The main points and conclusions of [1] are presented below without any comments. The translation closely follows the original. Words that are absent in the English original, but allow better equivalence of the Armenian translation are given in square brackets. Our observations are only in footnotes, whereas some analysis and comments follow in the last part of the article.

US - Turkey Relations

According to [1], in recent years U.S. - Turkish relations have undergone serious strains and even deteriorated. In the view of some analysts it has been conditioned by loss of Turkey's strategic significance in American eyes since the end of the Cold War. Mr. Larrabee's opinion is different – on the contrary, Turkey stands at the nexus of four areas strategic importance, which have become increasingly critical to U.S. security since the end of the Cold War: the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus/Central Asia, and the Persian Gulf region. In all these areas, as Mr. Larrabee argues, Turkey's cooperation is vital for achieving U.S. policy goals. The origins of many of the strains in U.S. – Turkey relations and a sharp rise in anti-American sentiment in Turkey can be traced back to the following three circumstances.

First, Turkish officials seriously feared that the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, and perspective of creation of a Kurdish separatist state in northern part of the

¹ "Troubled Partnerships: The Growing Challenge of Managing U.S. Security Relationships and Implications for the United States Air Force". It could be asserted with a high degree of confidence that by its spirit and substance this study inherited and logically continued the study R-244 that constituted the erstwhile fame of RAND in building the U.S. international military cooperation and strategy. The fact that issues related to İncirlik and other military bases run like a golden thread through almost all pages of the report, comes to prove that.

country posed a threat to Turkey's territorial integrity. These fears have been exacerbated by the resumption of an insurgency by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has stepped up cross-border terrorist attacks against Turkish territory from sanctuaries in northern Iraq. These terrorist attacks are Turkey's number-one security concern.

These strains have been compounded—and to some extent reinforced—by differences over policy toward Iran and Syria. Whereas the United States sought to isolate Iran and Syria, Turkey has consistently pursued a policy of rapprochement with Iran and Syria. This divergence between political approaches began to manifest itself before the assumption of power in Ankara by the Justice and Development Party in 2002, but it has become more pronounced since then.

Finally, though concerned by Iran's nuclear program, Turkey however, is strongly opposed to a military strike against Iran. [In the viewpoint of Turkey] it would lead to destabilization of the Middle East. Mr. Larrabee provides details on this issue, arguing that: "A U.S. military strike against Iran would create a crisis in U.S.-Turkish relations and could prompt the Erdoğan government to halt or curtail U.S. use of Turkish military facilities, particularly the air base at İncirlik." [1, pp. xii, see also pp. 36-37]¹

Summarizing these circumstances, Mr. Larrabee states that U.S. defense cooperation with Turkey has undergone a downturn in the last few years. For instance, Congress has held up a number of major weapon sales to Turkey due to Turkey's human-rights policy and policy toward Cyprus. Generally, this defense-industry relationship has stagnated lately. Since a sale of 17 Seahawk helicopters in fall 2006 finalized, nothing much has been seen in this area². Turkey has begun to regard the United States as a less-than reliable defense partner and has expanded its defense relationships with countries that impose fewer procurement restrictions, particularly Israel and Russia [1, pp. xii, see also pp. 77-78].

What are the suggestions made in [1] for revitalizing U.S.-Turkish [strategic] cooperation? There are total 18 of those, formulated by exploring the issue in 7 different dimensions. These dimensions are

¹The probability assessment of such strike by Israel and analysis of its ramifications are not addressed in [1], although no doubt such analyses have been implemented within the framework of the mentioned larger study. It is also worth mentioning that no review whatsoever on Israel's policy with regards to Turkey and Caucasus is presented in [1]. In our opinion this is a serious shortcoming in comparison with Mr. Larrabee's earlier study conducted in 2003 [2]. The latter informs that at the beginning of the new century "Israel has expanded its role in Eurasia, especially with Azerbaijan. Israel strongly supported Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh war... Cooperation in the intelligence field has intensified and there are some indications that Israel may have supplied arms to Azerbaijan." The current status of this issue is not clarified in [1].

²Actually, Mr. Larrabee means only U.S. *commercial* sales of arms to Turkey. Arms worth \$15 billion to be supplied under inter-government agreements are still quite impressive.

1. Turkey and Northern Iraq, the Kurdish Challenge [1, Ch. 3];
2. Turkey and the Middle East [1, Ch. 4];
3. Turkey vis-à-vis Eurasia and Caucasus [1, Ch. 5];
4. Turkey and the EU [1, Ch. 6];
5. Turkey and Greece/Cyprus [1, Ch. 6];
6. U.S.-Turkish Military Cooperation [1, Ch. 7];
7. Democratization and Turkey's domestic reforms.

The most interesting dimension for us is Turkey vis-à-vis Eurasia and Caucasus, analysis of which are presented in the next section of this article.

Turkey and Northern Iraq, the Kurdish Challenge

There are five proposals directed to revitalizing Turkey-U.S. relations in this area. First, the United States should increase its political and intelligence support for Turkey's struggle against PKK terrorism. According to Mr. Larrabee, U.S. support for Turkey's struggle against the PKK is regarded by Turkish officials as the litmus test of the value of the U.S.-Turkish security partnership.

Second, the United States should put greater pressure on the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) [in Northern Iraq] to crack down on the PKK and cease its logistical and political support of the group. In Mr. Larrabee's opinion, this would allow weakening the growth of anti-American sentiment among the Turkish public.

Third, the PKK threat [for Turkey] cannot be resolved by military means alone. Hence, it must be combined with social and economic reforms that address the root causes of the Kurdish grievances. According to [1], the Erdoğan government's "Kurdish Opening," launched in the summer of 2009, represents an encouraging sign in this context.

Fourth, the United States should strongly encourage and support Turkey's efforts to open a direct dialogue with the leadership of the KRG in northern Iraq. Important steps in this direction have been taken since late 2008. However, the process is fragile and needs strong U.S. support. Mr. Larrabee writes: "There can be no stability on Turkey's southern border over the long term without [some] accommodation between the Turkish government and the KRG. This does not mean that Turkey should recognize an independent Kurdish state, but for regional stability to exist, Turkey needs to work out a *modus vivendi* with the KRG. Ultimately, this can only be achieved through a direct dialogue with the KRG leadership."

And fifth, as the United States withdraws its forces from Iraq, it needs to intensify efforts to defuse tension between the KRG and the central government in

Baghdad. This growing tension represents a serious threat to Iraq's viability as an integral state and could seriously complicate Turkey's security challenges. The time factor is of decisive importance here. The U.S. military presence in northern Iraq has more or less acted as leverage for the U.S. on the situation on the ground in the country. However, United States should maintain some military presence in northern Iraq as long as possible without violating the terms of the Status of Forces Agreement signed with the [Iraq's] Maliki government¹.

Turkey and the Middle East

There are three proposals in [1] regarding the Middle East regional processes. First, U.S. policymakers should avoid portraying Turkey as a model for the Middle East. It makes the influential Kemalist circles of Turkey uncomfortable because they feel it pushes Turkey politically closer to the Middle East and weakens Turkey's Western identity. In addition, they fear that such propaganda [by the U.S.] will be countered by strengthening political Islam in Turkey and erode the principle of secularism over the long run. The latter concerns are particularly strong within the Turkish armed forces.

Second, the United States should continue to express a readiness to open a dialogue with Iran and Syria and to engage both countries in diplomatic efforts to help stabilize Iraq.

Third, Washington should also intensify its efforts to persuade Tehran to abandon any attempt to acquire nuclear weapons.

Turkey and the EU

In the dimension of EU-related processes there are two suggestions formulated in [1]. First, the United States should continue to support Turkey's membership in the European Union. The successful completion of this process would help put to rest the claim that the West is innately hostile to Muslims. Meanwhile, the opposite process would strengthen the anti-Western forces in Turkey, which is in the interest of neither the West nor Turkey.

Second, given the sensitivity of the issue of Turkey's EU membership among EU member states², the United States should support Turkish membership through quiet diplomacy behind the scenes and avoid overt pressure and arm-twisting.

¹In other words, after U.S. President Obama announced to world the timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, the "countdown timer" for this issue is on. The necessity to avoid this time pressure was the reason for the former U.S. president George W. Bush administration's staunch refusal to announce any Iraq withdrawal timetable. Their approach was "the time will come when the mission is over." (see also below)

²Mr. Larrabee first of all means France, Germany and Austria [see 1, Ch. 9, p. 112]

Turkish-Greek relations and Cyprus

Two suggestions are put forward for the issue of Greece and Cyprus as well. First, the United States should intensify efforts to get Greece and Turkey to resolve their differences over the Aegean. At a time when NATO faces serious challenges in Afghanistan and the post-Soviet space, the last thing the United States needs is a new crisis in the Aegean, says Mr. Larrabee. Second, the United States should also encourage and support the intensification of the intercommunal dialogue being conducted under UN auspices between the two Cypriot communities. Progress in this issue would give Turkey's EU membership bid critical new momentum.

U.S.-Turkish Military Cooperation

In this regard two proposals are formulated in [1]. First, in the wake of the Obama visit¹, the U.S.A. should initiate a broad strategic dialogue with Ankara about the future use of Turkish bases, particularly İncirlik. Mr. Larrabee mentions in this aspect that given Turkey's growing interests and increasingly active policy in the Middle East, Ankara is likely to be highly sensitive about allowing the United States to use İncirlik and other bases for Middle East contingencies. The United States therefore cannot assume that it will have automatic use of Turkish bases in Middle East contingencies unless such use is regarded as being in Turkey's direct national interest.

Second, ballistic missile defense could be an important area for future U.S.-Turkish defense cooperation. In light of the growing threat posed by the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran, the United States should explore missile-defense [systems installation] options [in Turkey], both bilaterally and through NATO. Mr. Larrabee thinks that this would ensure that Turkish territory is protected against the growing threat posed from ballistic missiles launched from the Middle East².

¹(in the wake of ...). Mr. Larrabee alludes to President Obama's visit to Turkey in early April 2009.

²Unfortunately, this conceivably sensational proposal for our region from RAND Corporation has not been duly covered in either our local or foreign media (save the brief message in the February 19, 2010 issue of The Financial Times; note that the presentation of [1] took place on February 3, 2010). Neither anything is mentioned about it in Chapter 7 of [1] that elaborates on U.S.-Turkey military cooperation. Generally, it appears this proposal does not belong to the context of the subject matter report. There is an impression that it was a last-minute addition responding to some signals from the Pentagon or White House.

Democratization and Turkey's Domestic Reforms

The following proposals are made in [1] in this aspect:

1. The United States should encourage democratization and domestic reform process in Turkey;
2. The United States should not overreact to the growth of religious consciousness in Turkey.

2. Turkey and Us According to RAND

Having gained some understanding about six of the seven dimensions in proposals for revitalization of U.S.A.-Turkey strategic cooperation as presented in [1], we shall also review the proposals made in “Turkey vis-à-vis Eurasia and the Caucasus” dimension that are of most interest for us. There are only two of these and they are quite laconic. These proposals are presented at the end of this section, and here we shall explore the analyses which have led Mr. Larrabee to the mentioned two proposals.

Turkey vis-à-vis Eurasia and the Caucasus

The analysis on Turkey vis-à-vis Eurasia and the Caucasus dimension are concentrated in Chapter 5 of [1], which in the body of the report are quite remarkably titled as “Russia and Eurasia” instead. The review is carried out in five directions:

1. The Russian Factor
2. Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement
3. The Armenian Genocide Resolution
4. The Broader Regional [Relations] Dimension
5. The Energy Dimension¹

The following is mentioned regarding the *Russian Factor* [1, Ch.5, pp. 48-51]. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the initial Turkish euphoria about the prospects for expanding Turkish influence in the Central Asia has been tempered during presidency of Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev in Russia. Russian influence in Central Asia proved stronger and more enduring than Turkish officials had anticipated². At the same time Turkey's relations with its historical adversary

¹In Chapter 5 of [1], the number of pages addressing issues related to Armenia and all Armenians (5 pages) is equal to that regarding energy problems, exceeds by one page that of the Russian Factor (4 pages) and is significantly more than the number of pages on regional problems (1 page). Thus, technically it turns out that 40% of relations in “Turkey vis-à-vis Eurasia and the Caucasus” dimension are conditioned by Turkey's problems with Armenia and Armenians.

²This is true for elsewhere, too. Note that publication [1] was presented well before yet another coup was staged in Kyrgyzstan and perspectives for the USAF Manas airbase became unclear. This circumstance proves adequacy of such assertion made in [1].

Russia¹ have improved markedly during V. Putin's presidency, especially since joint declaration on the "Deepening of Friendship and Multi-Dimensional Partnership." Currently Russia supplies 65 percent of Turkey's natural-gas imports and 40 percent of its crude-oil imports. Construction projects in Russia account for about one-fourth of all projects carried out by Turkish contractors around the world².

Moreover, on a number of issues related to Central Asian and Caspian security, Turkey's position is closer to Russia's than to U.S.A.'s, for example, with regards to the George W. Bush administration's typical efforts to promote democracy. Turkey fears that this could destabilize the regimes and lead to increased regional turbulence and political unrest. Some Turkish strategists have begun to look to Russia as a possible strategic alternative. Although these views represent a minority, support for this "ostensibly insane" position has grown in recent years³. However, Mr. Larrabee argues that a serious strategic realignment away from the West toward Russia is unlikely for four reasons:

1. Mistrust of Russia is deeply embedded in the Turkish historical consciousness.
2. Turkish and Russian goals and ambitions conflict in a number of areas, and particularly the Caucasus (a region in which Turkey has deep and longstanding strategic interests).
3. Third, Russia and Turkey are energy competitors in the Caspian and Central Asia. Russia wants to control the distribution and export lines of energy resources in those regions and has opposed such schemes as the Transcaspian and Nabucco projects.
4. A realignment toward Russia and a repudiation of the policy of Westernization would represent a radical departure from the fundamental principles of Kemalism and would be anathema to the Turkish military elite. In Mr. Larrabee's opinion this is the most important contradiction.

Summarizing this section Mr. Larrabee states that in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Georgia⁴, Turkish-Russian relations will be strongly affected by the

¹"Over the last several centuries, Turkey and Russia have fought 13 wars against each other, most of which Turkey lost. ... Stalin's aggressive policy toward Turkey early in the Cold War, was the driving force behind Turkey's decision to join NATO in 1952" [1, p. 48]. Mr. Larrabee's conspicuous identification of Ottoman and Russian Empires with Turkish Republic and USSR/Russian Federation respectively is noteworthy.

²"Construction contracts against energy and electric power supply" formula is characteristic to the energy policy of Turkey. Moreover it is often used as a sanction of sorts. For instance, Turkey suspended imports of electric power from Bulgaria after some Turkish companies were left out of tenders for construction projects in Bulgaria.

³The following article by Burak Bekdil is quoted here: *Burak Bekdil*, "An Incursion Which Is Not—and Russophiles in Ankara," Turkish Daily News (Istanbul), June 8, 2007.

⁴This is how it is exactly worded in the original (In the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Georgia...).

evolution of Russia's broader ties to the West, especially the United States. He quotes Ian O. Lesser's observation¹ that since the end of the Cold War Turkey no longer has had the luxury of not having to choose between its Western and Eurasian interests, particularly those in the Caucasus. In this regard Mr. Larrabee notes that sharpening of U.S.-Russian competition would make it more difficult for Turkey to balance these competing interests, particularly in the Caucasus, and increase the pressure on Turkey to choose.

As far as *Turkish-Armenian rapprochement* is concerned [1, Ch. 5, pp. 51-54], the section begins with an interesting paragraph: "The five-day war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 unleashed a new set of regional dynamics in the Caucasus. On the one hand, it shattered the old political balance in the region and strengthened Russia's role as an *Ordnungsmacht* (regional hegemon)² in the Caucasus. On the other hand, it created new challenges for Ankara and sparked a new activism in Turkish policy toward the Caucasus designed to strengthen regional stability and mitigate the destabilizing political dynamics unleashed by the Russian invasion."³ In this respect, continues the author of [1], "The most important manifestation of this new activism [of Turkey] has been Ankara's attempt to improve relations with Yerevan" that have been strained by two issues in particular: (1) Armenia's campaign to brand Turkey guilty of genocide for the mass deaths of Armenians in 1915⁴ and (2) Armenia's invasion and occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. In the aftermath, as Mr. Larrabee states, Ankara closed its border with Armenia and suspended [its own?] efforts to establish diplo-

¹ Ian O. Lesser, "After Georgia: Turkey's Looming Foreign Policy Dilemmas," *On Turkey*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, August 26, 2008a, p. 2

² The German geopolitical term *Ordnungsmacht* does not mean so much "regional hegemon" as presented in English [1, p. 51]. A more correct translation would be "law enforcing or order keeping force; a "policeman" if anything (remember the 19th century phrase "Russia the gendarme of Europe"). Also, it is very remarkable to see a German geopolitical term appear out of the blue in this report, especially in the section about Turkish-Armenian rapprochement. Such things never happen just by chance in works of analysts like Stephen Larrabee. What is more important, things like that never take place accidentally in our region either (see below).

³ Turkey's infamous "Caucasian Platform" is undoubtedly referred to here, because today hardly anyone remembers the 2000 Turkish-Georgian "South Caucasus Stability Pact" that was brought to an early grave. Then again, it would be worth for some of our homegrown analysts and figures to remember about it.

⁴ The phrasing "*Armenia's campaign to brand Turkey guilty of genocide for the mass deaths of Armenians in 1915*" [1, p. 51] with a clumsy logic and awkward English syntax is used in the original. Of course, this is because Mr. Larrabee had to do it this way, rather than because he lacks good command of his mother tongue or basic logic (mass deaths caused by what? Maybe as a result of fatigue caused by lavish lifestyle?). The Armenian translation attempts to maintain this awkwardness. One may imagine what uproar it might have raised, had an expression referring to some sort of mysterious mass deaths of Jews in 1941-45 would have appeared in RAND's reputable publications. Mr. Larrabee's language was more courageous in 2003, when he was referring to "the legacy of the massacre of Armenians by the Ottoman forces in 1915-1916" [2, p. 106].

matic relations with Yerevan. However, since the Russian invasion of Georgia¹ in August 2008, Turkey has intensified its effort to improve relations with Armenia. This effort was given important new impetus by President Gül's historic visit to Yerevan, setting off an intensive round of diplomacy aimed at normalizing bilateral relations. Mr. Larrabee specially mentions that this visit was the first visit ever to Armenia by a Turkish head of state². The author continues that on April 22, 2009, after more than a year of behind-the-scenes diplomatic talks, Turkey and Armenia released a joint statement saying that the two sides had agreed on a framework for a roadmap to normalize relations. According to Mr. Larrabee, this framework includes:

1. establishment of diplomatic representation in each country,
2. a gradual reopening of the Turkish-Armenian border,
3. Armenian recognition of Turkey's international borders,
4. establishment of a historical commission to investigate the disputed events of 1915³.

And here Mr. Larrabee provides a quite noteworthy footnote clarification: "The timing of the publication of the joint statement—two days before the celebration of Armenian Remembrance Day, a day on which the U.S. president traditionally issues a statement commemorating the mass deaths of the Armenians killed in 1915⁴ - suggests that the joint statement was primarily designed to forestall the use of the word "genocide" in Obama's statement and defuse the genocide issue in advance [in the agenda] of Obama's trip to Turkey on April 6–8, 2009⁵."

¹One gets an overwhelming sense that the August, 2008 aggression of Georgia against South Ossetia and Russian peacemakers stationed there, and the military response of Russia to it has left a deep impression on Mr. Larrabee and many other analysts in the U.S., as well as elsewhere. Indeed, implied as a decisive factor in regional developments, "August 2008" is mentioned at least 9 times in Chapter 5 of [1]. Undoubtedly, Russia's recognition of S. Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence further deepened this impression (not to mention the current developments in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, recent agreements on Russia's Black Sea Navy, etc.).

²Wouldn't it be more adequate to say that "The process aimed at normalizing bilateral relations was given an important new impetus by Armenian president Sargsyan's historical invitation to Turkish president Gül to visit Armenia and the latter's acceptance of the invitation." Furthermore, "this is was the first invitation ever of an Armenian leader to a Turkish head of state." Generally speaking the efforts of Mr. Larrabee (and not only his) to credit the initiative of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement almost entirely to Turkey are so obvious and lopsided that they make one suppose he (and other analysts) are somewhat confused about this issue.

³It is apparent that Mr. Larrabee got somewhat carried away by *his own* description of this framework. The published originals do not contain the wording "gradual reopening of the border" and "disputed events of 1915." However, even being carried away so much, Mr. Larrabee quite properly avoids mentioning "occupied territories of Azerbaijan", "Nagorno Karabakh problem" or anything like that.

⁴(... mass deaths of the Armenians killed in 1915). Again we see this clumsy logic and phrasing.

⁵Note that Mr. Larrabee's logic becomes slippery not only with formulations related to the Armenian Genocide. It is clear that at least in our universe, a statement issued on April 22, 2009 cannot "defuse in advance" anything planned and implemented on April 6-8, 2009, even such an important thing as the agenda item of the U.S. president's trip to Turkey is.

Afterwards, [1] lists the important benefits from U.S.-Turkey strategic cooperation viewpoint that would stem from normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. First, it would enable Armenia to reduce its economic and political dependence on Moscow. Second, it would give new impetus to Turkey's EU membership bid. Third, it would enable Armenia to be integrated into regional economic and energy schemes from which "it is currently excluded." Finally, it would defuse pressure to pass the Armenian Genocide Resolution currently before the House of Representatives [of the U.S. Congress].

However, Mr. Larrabee stresses, normalization of relations with Armenia is far from a done deal [in Turkey]. This has caused serious strains in Turkey's relations with Azerbaijan. Baku fears that it will lose important leverage in the negotiations with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh if Ankara reestablishes diplomatic ties to Yerevan, and it has linked its support for Turkish-Armenian rapprochement to prior progress toward a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. In an attempt to allay Azerbaijani concerns, Ankara has assured Baku that the Turkish-Armenian border will not be opened until Yerevan withdraws its troops from Nagorno-Karabakh¹. [From this point on] Ankara sees the opening of the border and progress on Nagorno-Karabakh as parallel and mutually reinforcing processes. This is likely to complicate the process of normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, Mr. Larrabee states².

Russia could also pose an obstacle to full normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, Mr. Larrabee thinks. Indeed, this circumstance would reduce Yerevan's need for Moscow's support and open up prospects for Armenia to expand its ties to the West³. Such a development is not in Russia's interest because it would reduce Moscow's leverage over Yerevan and its influence in the Caucasus more broadly. Thus, at some point, Moscow could decide that the rapprochement entails too many risks to its interests in the Caucasus and put pressure on Yerevan to retrench, causing the process of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation to cool or falter⁴.

¹ Mr. Larrabee here makes a reference to Emrullah Uslu's May 14, 2009 article (*Emrullah Uslu*, "Erdo-gan Reassures Azerbaijan on Turkey's Border Policy with Armenia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 6, No. 93, May 14, 2009). Thus, willingly or not, Mr. Larrabee clearly verifies Turkey's obvious departure from the framework of the "roadmap" that was a result of "more than a year of behind-the-scenes diplomatic talks." That is why in his text above Mr. Larrabee baselessly adds the phrase "gradual reopening of the border", involuntarily becoming the devil's advocate.

² As the saying goes, *he must have second sight*.

³ Unfortunately, Mr. Larrabee does not specify these new prospects for Armenia to expand its ties to the West. If this is about Armenia's full membership in NATO, then with all due respect we suggest that in this regard Mr. Larrabee recalls RAND's another very interesting study (see [3], also [4]). And after all, did the Georgians "get to first base", so we follow suit?

⁴ *All is right, what is right*, as the English (and advocates of the right-wing forces in the U.S.A.) say. It is pity though that Mr. Larrabee fails to mention the January 12, 2010 ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia. He could have done that since the timing allowed, and he must have done that since the content called for it.

After listing the internal difficulties and barriers to Turkish-Armenian rapprochement both in Turkey and Armenia, Mr. Larrabee finally gets to the announcement of the two well-known protocols [1, p. 54]. The author mentions that in the first one “the two sides promised to establish diplomatic relations on the first day of the first month after the ratification of the protocol and to open the border *within two months of ratification of the protocol*.”¹

The mere three paragraphs about the *Armenian Genocide Resolution* [1, p. 55] point out the following. The Turkish-Armenian rapprochement process is further complicated by the Armenian genocide issue in the U.S. Congress, which the Armenian Diaspora in the United States regularly seeks to introduce. These resolutions have been sharply condemned by the Turks and have been a source of serious discord in U.S.-Turkish relations. In the fall of 2007, the Bush administration narrowly averted a [rise of a] serious crisis with Ankara only by a last-minute, all-out lobbying campaign that prevented the Armenian Genocide Resolution (H.R. 106) from coming to a vote on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. The resolution was introduced again in 2009. Mr. Larrabee continues that during the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign, Obama supported the resolution (as did Hillary Clinton). However, as president, Obama has given priority to strengthening ties to Turkey and carefully avoided specific reference to genocide in his statement on Armenian Remembrance Day on April 24, 2009. This suggests that he is unlikely to support passage of the [U.S. Congress] resolution in the near term.

Summarizing this section Mr. Larrabee notes that passage of the H.R. 106 resolution would deal a serious blow to the Obama administration’s efforts to put U.S.-Turkish relations on a firmer footing, and it could prompt the Turks to take retaliatory action, including, potentially, imposing constraints on U.S. use of Turkish facilities.² It could also seriously set back the process of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation currently under way and undermine the more open attitude toward addressing the Armenian issue that has been emerging in Turkey in the last few years³.

¹ Italicized by us – A.M. From the precise quotation of this part of the protocols it becomes clear that opening of the border has nothing to do with any aspects of the “Karabakh issue,” and this should have made Mr. Larrabee to reword his aforementioned statements. Oh well, all of us are human and imperfect.

² In Mr. Larrabee’s assessment 70% of U.S. troops, military cargo and materiel destined for Iraq transits through İncirlik Air Base [1, p. 113]. We have to record that avoiding the use of the word “genocide” by the U.S. president on April 24, 2009 and 2010, and yet another (potential) failure to pass the Armenian Genocide Resolution in the Congress have paradoxically been predestined since November 2008, when the Democratic Party won the presidential elections. It turns out that the tenets of most interest for *us* in this party’s electoral campaign are not the promises of B. Obama and H. Clinton to support one or another aspect of the Armenian Cause, as some people might have assumed particularly among the Armenian diaspora of the U.S.A., but rather the pledge to withdraw American troops from Iraq and the return to *Realpolitik*.

³ Mr. Larrabee here quotes an article by Şaban Kardaş (Turkey Confronts a Disputed Period in Its History. Şaban Kardaş Eurasia Daily Monitor, Vol. 5, No. 240, December 17, 2008. Notice the chronology), according to which Turkey has opened its Ottoman archives pertaining to the period under question to scholars (foreign as well as Turkish) and that beginning in 2009, Armenian language and literature will be taught at Turkish universities.

Mr. Larrabee starts the section on the *Broader Regional Dimension* [1, p. 56] with the following claim: “Turkey’s drive to improve relations with Armenia has been part of a broader effort by Ankara to enhance peace and stability in the Caucasus on a regional level. The centerpiece of this effort has been the Erdoğan government’s initiative for a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform¹ launched in the immediate aftermath of the Russian invasion of Georgia.”

However, Mr. Larrabee continues, the initiative appears to have been slapped together rather quickly “with little effort to coordinate it with [Turkey’s] key Western allies.” Moreover, it has a number of weaknesses that are likely to limit its chances of success. First, having just suffered a Russian military invasion, Georgia has little interest in joining a regional scheme that could enhance Russia’s economic and political involvement in the Caucasus. The unresolved territorial conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh poses a second important obstacle to the realization of the plan, contends Mr. Larrabee². Russia’s recognition of the independence of the Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia poses a third important obstacle that is likely to limit the success of the initiative. The Russian action sets a precedent for separatism that few *countries* in the region are willing to legitimize. This is particularly true for Turkey because [this precedent] could encourage and legitimize Kurdish separatism in Turkey³. Finally, as Mr. Larrabee writes, the initiative does not include the United States, the EU, or Iran, all of which are important *actors* in the Caucasus. These actors do not appear to have been consulted before the initiative was launched, and their support for the initiative has been lukewarm at best. Hence, the initiative does not seem likely to meet with much immediate success, the author concludes. However, Mr. Larrabee adds that Turkish authorities regard it as an additional vehicle for

¹Strangely, Mr. Larrabee (and some others) fail to acknowledge the fact that under Turkey’s stubborn refusal to recognize the Armenian Genocide, such a peculiar initiative by Turkey to “enhance peace and stability” *among us* would be akin to a call by the Third Reich Reichsführer-SS H. Himmler to the Jews for “establishing peace and stability.” Oh, immortal Aesop, indeed “the fox is put in charge of guarding the chicken coop.” However, Mr. Larrabee probably has some feeling like that, as he makes hay of this initiative by Turkey in the subsequent lines, although based on some other considerations.

²It is unfortunate that Mr. Larrabee does not wish to see a more adequate and logical formulation of this statement, that is, Azerbaijan’s appeals to Turkey and the latter’s response to them constitute a serious hurdle for the accomplishment of the program proposed by Turkey itself.

³The fact that Turkey has been deeply impressed by Russia’s recognition of S. Ossetia’s and Abkhazia’s independence (and not only by that) is hard to remain unnoticed. However, it would be quite interesting to learn about the calculations that bring Mr. Larrabee to an assessment that “few *countries*” in the region would be interested in this precedent. Alas, these calculations, as well as Mr. Larrabee’s definitions and ideas on *countries* in our region are missing from the subject matter report of RAND (for example, how, by what and why *countries* in our region differ from *states*, especially in this era of collapsing transnational colonial systems and awakening of national mindsets?). Perhaps, these could be found in RAND’s series of publications on *Nation Building*, but this is out of the scope of this article.

engaging Armenia, and they hope that it may help promote greater regional cooperation over the long run.

As already usual, starting the section on the *Energy Dimension* [1, pp. 57-61] with a reference to the “Russian invasion of Georgia,” the author then mostly speaks about Nabucco project and other parallel projects¹.

* * *

Summarizing all these observations, Mr. Larrabee formulates the RAND’s proposals for revitalizing U.S.-Turkish strategic cooperation in the “Turkey vis-à-vis Eurasia and the Caucasus” dimension:

1. The United States should support recent efforts to promote an improvement in relations between Turkey and Armenia, particularly the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border.
2. The Obama administration should work closely with Congress to prevent the passage of an Armenian genocide resolution².

3. Alternative Turkish Futures according to RAND

What remains for gaining a full understanding of RAND’s publication, is to examine the scenarios of Turkey’s future development (alternative futures) set forth in Chapter 9 of [1]. There are four of those:

- a) pro-Western Turkey;
- b) an “Islamized” Turkey;
- c) a nationalist Turkey;
- d) military intervention.

Let us set it from the very beginning that in the medium term the “Nationalist Turkey” scenario is considered the most probable one in [1], so we shall begin with it. As above, our review closely follows the original. Our comments are provided in the footnotes.

¹ All these issues have been and are being thoroughly covered in the “21st Century” journal and the website of Noravank Foundation. Consequently, we shall not focus on them too much.

² As seen, these proposals pertain solely to Armenia and Armeniacy. Thus, in “Turkey vis-à-vis Eurasia and the Caucasus” general dimension, Turkey’s problems with Armenia and Armenians comprise not just 40% as one could have concluded from the volume of studies (see above), but entire 100% as it follows from the proposals formulated based on these studies.

Future scenario: A Nationalist Turkey

Disappointed and frustrated by the EU's continuing tendency to impose new obstacles to its membership, Turkey would abandon its quest for EU [full] membership but still maintain strong economic and trade ties to Europe, accepting some form of "privileged partnership" with the EU along the lines currently proposed by the Christian Democratic Union in Germany and by [president] Sarkozy in France. Turkey would maintain important defense ties to the United States but pursue a more independent policy, especially toward the Middle East and Central Asia. Ties to Russia would be strengthened in the economic area, and defense cooperation between the two countries would be expanded. Turkey would also adopt a tougher position toward the Iraqi Kurds and be more willing to take unilateral military action against the PKK.

This scenario would make Turkey a more difficult partner for the U.S., and U.S. use of Turkish bases would be more constrained. Politically and militarily, the United States would not be able to rely on Turkish support in use of the İncirlik and other bases, particularly on issues related to the Middle East.

This scenario is the most likely development over the medium term—especially if Turkey's relations with the United States and the EU continue to deteriorate. Signs that Turkey is moving in this direction would include a visible increase in popular support for nationalist political parties; an intensification of anti-Western rhetoric in the Turkish press; a failure to repeal Article 301 of the Turkish penal code¹; a more overtly hostile attitude toward minorities, particularly the Kurds; a resurgence of nationalist rhetoric over Cyprus; a weakening of rapprochement with Greece; growing antipathy toward the EU; and a weakening of ties to the United States and NATO.

Future scenario: an Islamized Turkey

In this scenario, Turkey would increasingly stress its Muslim identity, although would not go the way of Iran or adopt the shari'a as a fundamental principle of government. Its ties to the West would weaken, while those to the Islamic world would strengthen. This could come about if (1) the Erdoğan leadership, which is composed of moderate Islamists, were replaced by a more radical Muslim leadership, (2) the EU continued to throw roadblocks in the way of Turkish membership, and (3) the United States failed to maintain sustained support for Turkey's campaign against the PKK.

¹This article stipulates criminal punishment for insulting so-called "Turkishness".

This scenario would have important negative implications for U.S.-Turkish relations. Turkey's ties to the West—and specifically to the United States—would significantly weaken. The U.S. ability to use Turkish bases would be sharply reduced, probably terminated. Loss of İncirlik would seriously impede the U.S. ability to conduct [military] missions in Iraq. United States would have to seek alternative military bases in the region. On many issues—especially those related to the Arab-Israeli conflict—Turkey would openly adopt a pro-Arab position. Turkish defense and intelligence cooperation with Israel would be sharply curtailed, probably ended. Security cooperation with Iran and Syria would increase. Turkey would withdraw from NATO and abandon efforts to join the EU.

Mr. Larrabee opines that the chances of such a scenario materializing, however, are low—provided that the United States shows enough sensitivity and wide support to Turkey's most pressing security concerns, particularly its problems with the PKK.

Signs that Turkey was moving in a more-Islamist direction would include a weakening of secular control of education and the judiciary; a weakening of the military's influence in Turkish politics; increased domestic polarization between secularists and Islamists; growing pressure to prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol; an intensification of Turkey's ties to Iran and other radical Muslim regimes; a significant strengthening of Turkish support for the Palestinian cause; an intensification of Turkey's ties to radical groups, such as Hezbollah and Hamas; and a decision by Turkey to withdraw from NATO.

Future scenario: A Pro-Western Turkey

In this scenario, Turkey would become a member of the EU or be well on its way to achieving membership. The EU would abandon the goal of becoming a strong federal entity and become a looser confederation of nation-states, making Turkish membership in the EU easier to achieve and more politically acceptable to EU members¹. Turkey's human rights record would significantly improve, civilian control of the military would be strengthened, and the economic gap between EU members and Turkey would be narrowed.

This scenario would anchor Turkey in a broad Euro-Atlantic framework. It would also provide an important bridge to the Muslim world for the West. However, over the long run, for security issues Turkey would increasingly look to Brussels, not

¹ It has to be noted that according to RAND, success in Turkey's bid for EU membership implies a certain structure of EU, that is: a looser confederation based on ideas "variable geography" or "concentric circles," and requires some "behind the scenes" directing of processes inside EU [1, pp. 111-112]. Naturally, this approach is at odds with the vision for "strong Europe," an approach supported in France and especially Germany.

Washington. Over time, Turkey's policy would become more Europeanized, and Ankara would be even less willing to follow the U.S. lead on matters that affected Turkey's relations with Europe.

Important signs that things develop in this direction would include: continued momentum toward political reform in Turkey, particularly repeal of Article 301 of the Turkish penal code; a more forthcoming attitude in Turkey toward minority rights, particularly the rights of the Kurds; stronger civilian control of the Turkish military; visible progress toward a Cyprus settlement.

Military Intervention: future scenario

In this future scenario an escalation of political and social tensions in Turkey leads to intervention by the Turkish military. Such [internal] confrontation could take place if the AKP takes actions seen by the military as crossing important red-lines. There are two possible variants of the intervention scenario: one is a "soft coup," in which the military would mobilize social pressure against an AKP-led government, eventually forcing it to resign and the other is a direct military intervention. The latter it is not very likely as the military has been sobered by [the experience of] its previous direct interventions. In addition, these circles [in Turkey] have little enthusiasm for governing directly, and in recent years, they have preferred to rely on indirect methods to achieve their goals¹.

However, repeating the "soft coup", as the military did to force Prime Minister Erbakan's ouster in 1997, would be much harder to do against the AKP. Unlike the AKP, Erbakan's party had incomparably less popular support. Thus, the military could not count on mobilizing social pressure against an AKP-led government. Moreover, in Mr. Larrabee's opinion, AKP's landslide victory in the July 22, 2007 election represented a direct slap [by the Turkish society] in the face for the military who had submitted the "midnight memorandum" on April 27, 2007².

In any case, direct military coup would create many difficulties for the United States. It would have a negative impact on Turkey's bid for EU membership and provoke a crisis in Turkey's relations with the EU. And here Mr. Larrabee continues in quite a remarkable manner: "[in this case] Congress might impose sanctions or hold

¹ In confirmation of Mr. Larrabee's observation, it has to be noted that with the recent developments related to "Ergenekon," the short-term probability of a direct military coup in Turkey apparently declines in further.

² Parenthetically, let us notice that in our domestic specialized publications it is hard, if not impossible, to find any analysis of parallels in a wider geopolitical context between the processes of the 1997 "soft coup" ouster of Turkey's Prime Minister Erbakan on one hand, and resignation of the Republic of Armenia first president L. Ter-Petrosian a year later, on the other hand. That being said, we do realize there were considerable differences between the two processes, but at the same time we reckon that the analysis of their no less important similarities could have been very useful.

up the delivery of arms to Turkey. Passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution [by the U.S. Congress] would become more likely.”¹

Summarizing the examination of this scenario, Mr. Larrabee finds that even in the case of direct military intervention there is no guarantee that the military would pursue a pro-Western course. Moreover, it is more likely that they would pursue a more nationalistic course, would take a harder line toward the Kurdish issue, overturn or reverse the AKP achievements, pursue a more interventionist policy toward the KRG and be more inclined to adopt a tougher line on Cyprus².

4. We and Turkey: the Time to Get Serious

Anyhow, April is a difficult month for Armenians. It is not easy in Turkey either, and even in the U.S.A. it causes some headache for the staff at the Office of the President and State Department³.

All in all, our times are not simple (as if they have ever been). Indeed, the world becomes more complicated and unstable under the burden of the numerous problems of global scale. Future developments are hazy and full of dangers. New geopolitical power centers emerge, national inter-state relations and regional conflicts aggravate, and competition intensifies for the natural resources. Tabloids, movies and television, even reputable academic publications are flooded with colorful depictions of all sorts of *Armageddons* that humankind is heading toward, with detailed and affectionate descriptions of pessimistic scenarios for the future. Some prominent intellectuals in different continents became bywords for their books, articles and films on the subjects of “The World without West,” or “The World without the U.S.A.,” or “The World on the Brink of a Precipice.” They even amassed some

¹ Thus, according to RAND, the higher likelihood of the U.S. Congress passing the Armenian Genocide Resolution is perceived as a mere element of U.S. sanctions directed against direct military coup in Turkey. This is *Realpolitik* in its sordid nakedness.

² Note that any of the characteristics pertaining to all 4 scenarios have nothing to do with the rights of Armenians in Turkey or with the processes of establishing relations and rapprochement between Republic of Armenia and Turkey. The same holds for Turkey-Syria relations. Such approach startles. It profoundly contradicts to other conclusions made by Mr. Larrabee in [1]. It appears that the reason for such a blatant contradiction is that these scenarios of “modelled future” have been composed before August 2008; a date that Mr. Larrabee so much likes to evoke.

³ “If you want to know, for the people of Earth (in our context, of the U.S.A. – A.M.) massacre is a very unpleasant thing. They don’t like reading about that or things like that in morning newspapers. One doesn’t feel good to read about massacres while drinking coffee in mornings. Such news may ruin the whole day. Three-four massacres, and one may get so anxious that all of a sudden might vote for another candidate in next elections,” – writes with a bitter sarcasm Robert Sheckley, one of the most gifted science fiction writers of the 20th century in his 1965 marvellous short story “*Shall We Have a Little Talk?*” (see [5] – the excerpt above is translated back from the Armenian edition, as no copy of the English original was available). It is worth to be included in our handbooks on geopolitics and history of colonial system (as well as linguistics).

wealth by doing that, not to mention the newly-made prophets who tirelessly foretell every day and in every language the coming of a new world order.

What does this all mean and what does this imply for us in practical terms?

In pragmatic sense all of this derives from the reality that the bipolar (Communist states vs. the West) and monopole (U.S. hegemony) world orders have come to end. However, we think what is more important, is that since November 2008 the giant pendulum of the U.S. political and public thought swings from *messianism* to isolationism, heralding the start of a new phase in political history of the world. There is a reason why some veterans experienced in international relations forecast return of Europe to the state of affairs prevalent in 19th or even 18th century. In any event, diving into the pathos so typical to the current analytic journalism one may argue that there is a single reality underlying all this talk about the “imminent new world order” – that *the messianic America leaves the world*. It abandons many regions of the world, including Caucasus and maybe our whole region; its beloved brainchild the “Greater Middle East.” It leaves its place to a more pragmatic U.S.A. (some would say to the U.S.A. that has failed in its historical mission). In short, the U.S. will be adopting a policy of so-called realistic¹ and pragmatic weighing of balance between various geopolitical interests; the *Realpolitik*.

Obviously, this “ideological retreat” of the U.S.A. will not happen overnight or over a year; it may take time and numerous nuances of this or that application of “*smart force*.”² A vivid manifestation of these nuances for us was the U.S. political support to Armenia in Turkish-Armenian rapprochement on one hand, and U.S. president’s “careful avoidance” of the “G-word,”³ exactly as prescribed by RAND’s publication discussed above, on the other hand. Understandably, this strategic retreat may reverse at some point in future. Nevertheless, many things would have to change in the world for that, and first of all a considerable shift would be needed in the American public. Before that, this ideological and if anything, moral retreat is going to be the main geopolitical factor in our reality over the short to medium term. In practical terms this means two things for us.

¹ It has to be noted that no reality is as flimsy and prone to distortions as the one at the times of establishing “realistic politics.” This is because at this very time it becomes critical who exactly, how and based on whose interests will determine what the reality is, what is real, and hence, what is realistic. As it was said in China of the Warring States Period: “Chaos reigns in country when *fighters for order* show up. Injustice reigns in country when *soldiers of justice* show up.”

² The term “smart force” has been frequently used by the U.S. President B. Obama and Secretary of State H. Clinton to describe the current foreign policy of the U.S.A. By the way, it has to be added that the idea of “smart force” would have to come up sooner or later in some “think tank” (sorry for the pun).

³ “*The G-word*” is euphemism for the word *Genocide* that was used last April by the White House spokesman. It was immediately copied in pages of many U.S. and international editions. Do the authors of this euphemism realize what a horrendous, offensive and immoral trick and deed is that? Although it is consoling to know that two of the greatest and most pious presidents, the benefactor (and Democrat) president Woodrow Wilson and the crusader (and Republican) president Ronald Reagan had recognized the truth about Armenian Genocide.

* * *

First, we believe it is necessary to accept and realize the painful fact that out of some objective and subjective reasons Armenia and Armenianness have failed to make the issue of the Armenian Cause and restitution a political reality during the whole 20th century (especially at the beginning and the end of the century) and the first decade of the new century, especially when *messianism* reigned in the U.S.A. and when this country truly made the history on the global theater. In its turn, among other things this was because the Armenian structures in the U.S.A. constantly and firmly supported only one party; the Democrats, regardless of in what phase the giant pendulum of the U.S. public thought was, and which party embodied the messianic ideas.

We are deeply convinced that recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Cause, being calls for justice and morality above all, were (are) most likely to become a political and geopolitical reality only when the *messianic* United States realized (realizes) its historical and sublime mission in the entire world and before the world. This was the case during W. Wilson's presidency¹, at the time of the Atlantic Charter² and during R. Reagan's presidency³. In this context the partisanship of a U.S. president is secondary. It is a lot more important to be privy to the fundamental system of values and drivers in that country; act in harmony with them, and be in phase with the constant periodical fluctuations of these forces. And not to act with monotonous steadiness thus dropping out of the history's beat, be in *antiphase* and fail to create a beneficial resonance where *our* demand for justice would at last coincide with that of the reality.

Meanwhile, as long as some high-flying representatives of strategic and analytical communities in the U.S.A., Russia and elsewhere identify or confuse empires with republics in response to the realities reigning around the world, Armenia and all Armenians must be alert, vigilant and balanced. We *have to* implement policies that balance *all* active geopolitical vectors in our region, and be strong and focused. We cannot afford relying only on the U.S.A., NATO and EU as Saakashvili's Georgia does, or counting mainly on the U.S.A., Turkey and Israel as father and son Aliyevs' Azerbaijan does.

Meanwhile, as long as Ankara does not recognize the homeland-stripping genocide of Armenians perpetrated by Turkey, Armenia and all Armenians may, or

¹ But not at the time of Brest-Litovsk Treaty

² But not during the Yalta Conference

³ But not during Clinton's presidency, when the Aliyev-Shevardnadze-Netanyahu insane doctrine of "Central Asia-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey-Israel" unified energy and geopolitical region was developed and launched, effectively initiating efforts to regionally isolate Armenia, Iran and Russia. Now it can be safely stated that these were futile efforts [see more in [4]].

rather must perceive the “deep and long-standing strategic interests of Turkey in Caucasus” as a strategy toward a “final solution” to the “Armenian Question”, and as a direct, serious and immediate threat to our national interests. Repeating some of Mr. Larrabee’s words, a centuries-long mistrust of Turkey is deeply embedded in the historical consciousness of Armenia and Armenianness.

Finally, it is paramount to avoid at any costs the fruitless and dichotomic problem statement of whether it should be “Armenia’s development through making concessions in the Armenian Cause” or “developing Armenia without any compromises”. This is actually a fallacy that does not adequately reflect the reality and leads to a deadlock.¹ We believe that instead we have to pursue the following logic and persuade the regional *actors* to stick to it as well. Recognition of the Armenian Genocide, first of all by Turkey, is a serious guarantee for ridding the Caucasus of the development restraints, for establishing a real and sustainable economic and political cooperation in the long run for the entire region. This is a task for all Armenians, and if anything, even for the progressive humankind as a whole. Without solving this problem an undisturbed course of the 21st century would be impossible – neither more nor less.

* * *

The factor conditioned by the retreating messianic U.S.A. is important for us in practical terms by the following, as well. Modern geopolitics “would not tolerate a vacuum” in the same manner as the nature. The vacuum created in our region and the Caucasus by the American retreat has to be filled by some other force or combination of forces.

Since almost the beginning of the U.S. presidential elections year and especially since summer 2008, Russia, Germany, Turkey, Israel and Georgia all realized well that things were heading this way. Do not be surprised by the list of these very countries. In one of our articles, interpreting the “Farley’s Law” for geopolitics we have incidentally stated: “From the summer of the U.S. presidential elections year to the beginning of the next year the most painful problems of modernity pop up, conflicts aggravate, processes and trends that have been previously fuzzy get exposed and unmasked with most vivid, often tragic consequences” [4, p.24]. This is espe-

¹ Remember the problem statement «War or Peace?» not by Count Tolstoy (he used the much wiser conjunction “and,” and never asked useless questions), but the one that happened in our not so distant past and was posed at a very wrong time. Remember the unproductive and hence, dangerous dispute between L. Ter-Petrossian and V. Manukyan on “whether Armenians are a unique nation or not,” the negative effects of which predictably did not wait for long to materialize. Meanwhile, a sober perception of reality devoid of momentary tensions and based on complementarity principle would have immediately prompted that over the last 5000 years of the human civilization there were only 300 years of peace (6.0%), and that Armenians are undoubtedly a unique nation with their very own mission, exactly as many other nations of the world are. So there is no need to fuss over it.

cially true for presidential elections that are expected to change the strategic policies of the U.S.A. The August 2008 events and ensuing processes that still continue in the “Greater Middle East” and especially the Caucasus come to prove the aforesaid.

Indeed, when Georgia realized that the defeat of the Republican Party in forthcoming U.S. elections was imminent and enormous lobbying¹ efforts to gain the support of this very party might turn to dust, it then rushed to embark on S. Ossetia military adventure motivated by the legacy of mini-imperialistic ambitions left from comrades Jughashvili, Ordzhonikidze and Beria. This adventurism seriously threatened the security not only in the Caucasus, but also in the larger region, and possibly even in the whole world².

Russia, being fully aware of the impending strategic retreat of the U.S.A., also realized the “moment of truth” has come for it in the Caucasus. It responded decisively to the Georgian aggression, sending “shockwaves” around the region and globe³. Turkey that has been consistently widening and improving relations with Russia since 2004, impressed by the decisive Russian counterblow to Georgia’s aggression, launched hasty attempts to rediscover and reconsider its influence in the Caucasus. Confusion in Turkey deepened by Russia’s recognition of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, Armenian president’s historical invitation to his Turkish counterpart and Armenian initiatives directed toward normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations, which in all likelihood were greatly supported by Russia from the very beginning. Azerbaijan has followed these events with bated breath. Realizing that it might lose leverage in negotiations with Armenia around Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Azerbaijan conditioned its strategic, energy-related, political and other support to Turkey in matters of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement and opening of the border by a progress in these negotiations in its favor. The condition of this sort contradicting to the letter and intent of the “roadmap,” in fact wrecked the current phase of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement⁴, a logical colon for which was

¹ I remember the ironic grin on one of my colleagues face whenever I started talking about unbelievably effective work of the Georgian lobby in the U.S.A., especially among the exceptionally influential Jewish-American *neocons* of the Republican Party.

² Amusingly, in the March 27, 2008 *The New York Times* article “*Georgia on their minds*,” Mr. Larrabee opposed German Chancellor A. Merkel’s blunt opinion that “countries that have unresolved conflicts cannot become members” of NATO, and fervently insisted on urgent necessity for Georgia’s NATO membership, considering it “highly unlikely” that “Moscow may formally recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states.” (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/27/opinion/27iht-edlarrabee.1.11471355.html>). Well, it is amusing now, but at that time a slightly different course of events might have thrown the entire region into an unthinkable nightmare.

³ Not to be confused with those of “*Oil shockwaves*” simulation.

⁴ It has to be noted that since the Azerbaijani aggression in response to NKR’s exclusively peaceful and legal expression of its self-determination right, this has been second time by now that Azerbaijan’s actions seriously threatened security in the Caucasus and the entire region, and pushed back the much-desired prospects for establishment of a lasting peace, sustainable development and cooperation. Isn’t it enough; are Shahdeniz or other Caspian oilfields worth that much? Does oil cost more than life and peace between people?

put down by the Armenian president's April 22, 2010 decree. We call it a colon, rather than full stop, because we are confident that the process of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement will continue. It must continue to the benefit of peoples living in the Caucasus and the larger region.

Finally, Israel re-emphasized the issue of American involvement in its strategic goals, bringing to the forefront the oil factor and the necessity to punish Iran. Before that, it hastened to invade Gaza strip once again, toughened the stance on construction of new Jewish settlements and actually, contested the idea "two peoples – two states". In the meantime Germany also clearly realized that the U.S. strategic retreat is imminent. Being tired of EU incapacity and deformity, and upset by the small political role it has to play in the Union's political activities, this European giant began directing its geopolitical attention to Russia and beyond; the Caucasus and Middle East¹.

The vacuum created in the Caucasus by the retreating *messianic* U.S.A. will most likely be filled by a balanced combination of geopolitical power vectors of Russia and Germany, as well as Iran and Turkey. The fact that Germany has an opportunity and starts to play a geopolitical role in our region is something new for us. We suppose this very circumstance made Mr. Larrabee use the term *Ordnungsmacht*, perhaps subconsciously, in the RAND's publication discussed above. It is good that Germany's increasing geopolitical role in our region has not remained unnoticed by our domestic analysts. It is worth drawing attention to probably the first publication ever in this regard – [6]. Having endorsed the analysis presented there, we would like to add the following.

It is important for us to remember and remind others that in the 20th century the strategic interests of Georgia had come in conflict with Armenia's strategic and national interests at least on three occasions, and Georgian actions had posed direct, serious and immediate threats to Armenia's interests and Armenian people. Armenia had paid a high geopolitical, strategic, national and moral price for that. In the short history of the 21st century Georgian strategic² interests had conflicted with national interests of Armenia at least once, and yet again Armenia had to pay the price. The root for all of this can be traced back to the strategic plan of German Empire's General Staff to isolate Russia from the Caucasus and Middle East by creating a single

¹ Remember the brilliant phrase: "Germany and Russia, these two giants stare at each other like in a mirror for so many decades, dreamily waiting for the real strategic dialogue to come."

² The phrasing "Georgian strategic interest" is used here, because we are absolutely sure that in the past decades the Republic of Georgia did have strategic interests, but was never able to adequately formulate its national interests, as it failed to develop and carry out a national policy of its own. In case of the Republic of Armenia, we believe these two concepts are almost synonymous.

Christian buffer state in the Caucasus; the Orthodox Georgia. The plan also included to have a single Muslim state comprised of Caucasian Tartars, which is current-day Azerbaijan. As seen, there was no room for either Armenians or Armenia in this vision. This could have been left with a safe conscience to the judgment of historians and geo-politicians who study the history of his issue, if the following important circumstance was not there.

Geopolitical constructs are highly durable. Once formulated by “power centers” and brought to life in time of change, they never disappear with the end of a given political situation and completion of processes. They arise again at new times of change. For us and our region such times of change occurred during the agony of the Russian Empire in early 20th century and collapse of the USSR at the end of the 20th century. And reemergence of old geopolitical constructs did not wait for long take place. We are referring to the “Aliyev doctrine” conceived in mid-1990s by a former Soviet Politburo member and KGB leader H. Aliyev, a former Politburo member and Soviet foreign minister E. Shevardnadze, and a number of Turkish, Jewish and American strategists. It was about linking Azerbaijan and Central Asia with Turkey, Israel and Europe through energy, economic, political ties and ultimately, through security guarantees and systems, cutting the Caucasus from Russia, distancing the whole region from Russia and Iran¹, and choking Armenia to death. Although based on the currently open sources no German participation has been recorded in this, it cannot go unnoticed that the “Aliyev doctrine” and the early 20th century vision of German Empire’s General Staff are as like as two peas in a pod.

Therefore, the return to Caucasus of Germany – the EU’s most powerful nation, Turkey’s old-time friend, and Georgia’s EU guardian – is understandable, welcome and helpful for us only under a condition that it should neither promote the current split in Caucasus, nor encourage Armenia’s “exclusion from regional energy and economic projects.” It must aim at full regional integration of Armenia, Iran and Russian Federation without threatening to strangle us to death or “twist our arms.”

Generally, it can be asserted with a high degree of confidence that in the short term a feverish activity will unfold in our region to fill up the aforesaid vacuum. The highest profile visits to the region will take place at an unprecedented frequency; media will be flooded with all sorts of analyses of those, etc. In the upcoming helter-skelter, we believe it is critical to fix in a few fundamental truths that outline the geopolitical foundation of our regional *reality*.

¹ Phrasing is not ours; found in the *OREA CEI-9812* document prepared by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in December 1998 and declassified in April 2007.

In response to NKR's exclusively peaceful and legal expression of its self-determination right, Azerbaijan launched a military campaign in which Armenians won a decisive victory¹. This country would have to either unleash a new war, or develop its *modus vivendi* with a sovereign Karabakh, very much in the way it is proposed in [1] to Turkey with regard to KRG. The only country in the region that has a "Karabakh problem" is Azerbaijan². Armenia does not have such a problem.

Turkey undertook a warfare action against Republic of Armenia by blocking its border with Armenia in 1993, and hence, denied itself any moral and logical basis for acting as a mediator in settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, at least until it reopens the border with Armenia without articulating any third party problems. Furthermore, Turkey faces a deep identity crisis and has territorial disputes with Greece, Cyprus, Syria and Iraq. Although currently inactive, the territorial dispute with Armenia is not settled either. Turkey continues to vehemently deny the fact of the homeland-stripping Armenian Genocide. Such stance deprives our whole region of strategic development prospects.

Georgia utterly failed in developing and putting into action a national accord within its post-Soviet borders. By taking on a military adventure it posed a threat to peace and stability in the region and triggered a direct challenge to retaining its territorial integrity.

Iran's isolation from regional developments leads to a situation that the region "has developed abnormally."³ Russia-Armenia-Iran economical, energy, cultural, political and geopolitical cooperation is an effective strategic factor stabilizing and bringing balance to our region. It may expand and involve a Russia-Armenia-Turkey component that would complement the inevitable development of Turkey-Iran cooperation. Germany is in a position to support and contribute to this.

Before the West's indifferent eyes Armenia continues to suffocate because of the forced blockade and being "excluded" from the development of regional infrastructures. The main strategic factor for security of the Republic of Armenia was, is and will remain the combat readiness of Armenian troops in Artsakh and at Armenian-Azerbaijani border. In the short to medium term Armenia's security system in the international realm will remain anchored in the treaty with the Russian Federation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. In the past two decades the West failed to provide a strategic alternative for this problem in the Caucasus region,

¹ Phrasing is not ours; found in NATO and Caspian Security: A Mission Too Far? RAND, Project Air Force. 1999.

² That is if we disregard H. Aliyev's saying "One Nation, Two States" so much liked by the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan. It is hard to understand why Mr. Erdoğan is unable to say the same thing for Armenia and Artsakh.

³ Phrasing is not ours; found in the OTI 99-10031 report prepared by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in November 1999 and declassified in April 2007.

not least because of adopting and implementing the fundamentally faulty and ultimately unrealistic “Aliyev doctrine.”

In summary, using Mr. Larrabee’s example, let us remark that since August 2008 many things have changed in the Caucasus, in the whole region, in our way of thinking and calculations. The most significant change is that it finally can be stated: it is time to get serious. This time has come for Armenia, for Turkey and for the world.

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