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## INTRODUCTION

Diaspora refers to a scattered population or community that shares a common origin heritage and resides outside their ancestral homeland. But, not all groups living abroad can be considered a diaspora. For example, more than 30 million Azerbaijanis living in Iran cannot be considered a diaspora. Because the area where they live is the motherland of that population. Migration is one of the main factors in the formation of diasporas.

In modern times, a large and strong diaspora is one of the national treasures of the country. From this point of view, Armenia can be considered a lucky state. Armenians live overseas are 2.5-3 times more than Armenian population in Armenia. The Diaspora contributes to Armenia in almost every area, from the protection of Armenia's political goals to its economic development. However, the powerful diaspora, along with its strengths, also reveals its negative features, especially if a country like Armenia, which is not so politically and economically strong, has such a powerful diaspora.

Thus, in this research, the relationship between a strong diaspora and a state that is not of the same strength, or even weaker than diaspora, is studied on the example of Armenia. One of the areas in which the Diaspora has the greatest influence on Armenia is Armenia's foreign policy. As well as the Diaspora's support for Armenia in its foreign policy, the confrontation of interests between the Diaspora and Armenia often occurs. In addition to taking into account the opinion of the Diaspora in foreign policy, Armenia even has to relinquish its sovereignty to some extent in foreign policy issues in favor of the Diaspora. In my research, I will try to study the Diaspora-Armenia relations and the extent to which the Diaspora influences Armenia's various foreign policy priorities.

**Actuality and novelty:** Since Armenian-Diaspora relations are not so common in the world (weak state-strong diaspora). I think there is a need for further research in this matter. On the other hand, given diaspora's possible participation in the current and future political processes in Armenia and the active influence of the diaspora on the ongoing negotiation process with Azerbaijan, the research in question is quite relevant.

Even though there are some books, articles, and research works available related to this thesis, I did not come across any research papers or articles on this particular topic while I was doing my research. For this reason, I guarantee the novelty and uniqueness of my research.

The main question of the research is as follows: *To what extent do the influences of the Armenian diaspora on the main foreign policy priorities of Armenia differ from each other?*

I will also try to analyze the following issues in my research:

1. Exactly who can be considered a diaspora;
2. The impact of the process of historical formation of the Armenian diaspora and its present structure on its current strength;
3. How the Diaspora has benefited Armenia in the international arena;
4. What are the issues that are strongly influenced by the Diaspora in the foreign policy of Armenia;
5. In which foreign policy priorities Armenia is trying to maintain its sovereignty;
6. To what extent did the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War reveal the Diaspora's potential of influence;
7. Diaspora's approach to the changing regional processes and foreign policy directions after the Second Karabakh war

Finally, I would like to emphasize the hypothesis of my research. I came to the conclusion from this research that *although the Armenian diaspora has a strong influence on Armenia's foreign policy, the facilities of the Diaspora are significantly reduced when the Russian factor and the Karabakh issue arise*. In my research I will try to prove the validity of this argument with various facts.

**Data collection:** The research work is based on 2 main data collection form: 1) *Documentary analysis*: Through this method, the researcher records the results of the research work based on the information collected from various resources. This method is the most widely used method of this research. 2) Another widely used method is *self-analysis*. This method is based on the researcher's own analytical ability to analyze the facts based on his scientific knowledge and background, and the conclusions he draws on this basis.

**Methodology:** 1. *Historicity method*: Historical facts were analyzed through this research method. As an example, the effects of the process of the historical formation of the diaspora in the current Armenia-Diaspora relations were mentioned.

2. *Comparison method*: This method was used during the comparative analysis of the Armenian diaspora with other influential diasporas. The differences and similarities between the Armenian Diaspora and the Jewish Diaspora are detailed in the §2.2. part of the research.

3. *Surveys and Polls*: This method was used to determine the direction of public opinion in the diaspora and within Armenia. In order to assess the public opinion towards Russia and Turkey in particular, the polls conducted in Armenia have been included.

4. *Case studies*: With this method, the position of individual diaspora groups was analyzed, and the priorities of each of them in the direction of Armenia's foreign policy were noted under certain conditions.

Numerous books, articles and various internet resources were used in the research. More widely used sources are Policy Forum Armenia “Armenia-Diaspora Relations, 20 Years since Independence” (2010); Fatih Aydogan "The Influence of The Armenian diaspora on The American Foreign Policy" (2018); Aram Terzyan (2019) “Russian policy, Russian Armenians and Armenia: ethnic minority or political leverage?”; Eduard Melkonian (2011) “Imported Politics: Diaspora Political Parties in Armenia’s Domestic Landscape” and others.

**Theoretical background:** The place and role of states and non-state actors is one of the most important issues in the theory of international relations. If realism and constructivism accept nation-states as the main actors, liberalism argues that international politics is formed as a result of the interaction of many various actors. It is the second direction that accepts the role of the Armenian diaspora (generally influential diasporas) as a transnational actor in world politics. Robert Cohen and Joseph Nye, the founders of neoliberal institutionalism, were the first political scientists who systematically investigated the approach of non-state transnational actors. Today, influential diasporas are one of the most important examples of non-state transnational actors. The scope of influence of diasporas is one of the examples that reveal the clear advantage of liberalism in this matter. From this point of view, the Armenian diaspora is capable of playing an important role in global politics as much as a nation-state like Armenia. Due to the influence of the diaspora, the Armenian authorities have to give up important parts of their sovereignty to diaspora. Thus, in the globalized world, the nation-state factor is almost completely out of order.

**Transnationalism:** This theory refers to the fact that individuals and communities can maintain social, economic, and cultural ties across borders in the era of globalization and transparent borders. Transnationalism emphasises the importance of multidimensional global flow and exchange of ideas, resources, and national identities. Transnationalism promotes the protection of national identities in the matter of migration. This is an important factor in the continuation of ties of diasporas with the motherland. Since the concept of nationalism in the Armenian diaspora is constantly protected by the church and institutes, the Diaspora adheres to the “Armenian questions” and has the opportunity to play a certain role in the foreign and domestic politics of Armenia.

**Constructivism:** Constructivism focuses on the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping international relations. In the context of Armenia-Diaspora relations, constructivism highlights the importance of shared Armenian identity, historical memory, and cultural norms in fostering solidarity and cooperation. It emphasizes the role of narratives, symbols, and

collective memory in shaping the relationship between Armenia and its diaspora, as well as their shared understanding of Armenian national interests and aspirations.

Chapter I covers the research of some scholars in the study of the concept of diaspora. Thus, there are 2 groups of research in the study of diasporas. The first group of studies covers the 70s and 90s of the 20th century and is based on the research of prominent diaspora researchers such as Robin Cohen, James Clifford, and William Safran. The second group of research - the new studies of the diaspora - began in the late twentieth century.

**Structure of thesis:** The research paper consists of introduction, 2 chapters with 3 sections in each, conclusion and bibliography. Section 1 of Chapter 1 examines what the diaspora is in general and whom does the Diaspora consists of. Section 2 discusses the Armenian migration and formation of the Armenian diaspora, and Section 3 discusses the general structure of Armenian diaspora institutions and organizations.

Chapter 2 is devoted to Armenian-Diaspora relations and interactions. Section 1 discusses the activities of the Armenian diaspora and its contribution for Armenia. Section 2 examines the role of the Diaspora in Armenia's foreign policy till Second Karabakh war, in which issues it has greater influence on the Armenian state, and vice versa, in which issues the Diaspora's influence on Armenia is limited. Finally, Chapter 2, Section 3, discusses the Armenia-Diaspora relations during and after the 2020 Karabakh war and the Diaspora's stance on the current processes.

The Conclusion section summarizes the author's conclusions about the research. The References section lists all the references used in the research.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AND CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA

#### §1.1. What is the concept of “diaspora”?

Diaspora is a Greek word. The word "dia" means through, across, and "spore" means to sow. In ancient Greece, the word “diaspora” originated in connection with agriculture and meant the scattering of seeds into the soil. Later, this term became more general and aesthetic, referring to the citizens of powerful Greek city-states who left their country to explore other lands or to march and colonize them (ThoughtCo, 2020). In the 5th century BC, Herodotus and Thucydides used the term “diaspora” when referring to Greek colonies in Asia Minor and the Mediterranean (Dufoix, S., 2008, p.4)

Another important role in the development of the term “diaspora” in the modern sense was played by Jews. Thus, in Hebrew, the word “galut” was used to mean the exile of Jews from their lands by Assyrians, Babylonians and then Romans (Jewish Virtual Library). After the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) was translated into Greek in the 3rd century BC, the term “diaspora” began to be used to mean the forcible exile and migration of Jews. Although it later applied to all migrant Jews, it was not until the last century that the term “diaspora” began to apply to other nations living outside their homeland and preserving their ethnic identities.

Since the 1960s, a number of scholars have tried to explain the term “diaspora” in detail. However, there is still no common definition of this term. According to Mary V. Alfred, the diaspora has historically been characterized by migration and exile, preserving its language, traditions and affiliation, as well as a permanent desire to return to its country of origin. Mary V. Alfred also accepts the use of the term diaspora in reference to the long-term exile of Jews and later to all Jews living outside Israel, and states that the term was only later applied to other nations (Alfred Mary V., 2015, p.88).

According to Clifford, the term “diaspora” originated in connection with the exile of the people (mainly, about the Jews) and has long been used in this context. Only since the last century voluntary migrant workers, working groups, refugees, asylum seekers, and so on. also belonged to this group (Clifford, J., 1994, p.33). Robert Brubaker also notes that the development of the term “diaspora” has expanded in recent years. Until the beginning of the



last century, the term diaspora was mostly used to refer to Jewish immigrants (especially, forced immigrants), but today it refers to almost all groups living permanently outside the homeland. With one example, Brubaker explains that at the beginning of the last century, 17 of the 18 books on the diaspora were about the Jewish diaspora, while in 2002, only 20 of the 253 books on the diaspora were devoted to the Jewish diaspora (Brubaker, R., 2005, p.14). Researches on the Greek and Armenian diasporas have been particularly extensive.

In the 1970s and 1980s, prominent diaspora researchers such as Robin Cohen, James Clifford, and William Safran sought to identify commonalities for the diaspora. For example, according to Cohen, diasporas should have the following characteristics.

1. Expulsion from one's homeland (especially for traumatic reasons, such as war, but also in search of work or better living conditions);
2. To have a common memory and vision about the history, life and goals of their homeland;
3. To keep in touch with the origin country for the welfare, security and development of their homeland, to be interested in the main problems of their cognates and motherland<sup>1</sup>;
4. Always wish to return to their homeland and, if possible, return to their homeland;
5. To be accepted as a foreigner and partially isolated by the host country because they aren't assimilated in the host country;
6. To treat their compatriots living in the host country with special sympathy and kindness;
7. To expand pluralism and multiculturalism in the host country (Cohen, R., 1999, p.17).

Safran and Clifford's approaches are largely consistent with the above. According to Safran, the diaspora consists of compatriots living outside the homeland and having a common memory and opinion about their history and origins. Diaspora groups, no matter how long they live apart from their homeland, want to return to their homeland in the end. They see the ancestral country as their spiritual abode. It is these features that distinguish members of the diaspora from migrants (Brubaker, R., 2005).

The approaches of these three scholars play an important role in clarifying the concept of the diaspora. However, these approaches are considered traditional and differ in some respects from recent diaspora studies. This is due to the recent emergence of the technological revolution, followed by transnationalism and globalization.

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<sup>1</sup> last two points play a very important role in preventing the assimilation of diasporas

It is clear from the above example that the traditional approach focuses on the formation of the diaspora through forced migration, especially through migration to escape war or other disasters or to escape from poor living conditions. Thus, it prefers to approach the diaspora in a narrower way. However, in the current era of globalization, an important part of migration is voluntary migration (Reis M., 2004, p.83). Therefore, it is impossible to deny the role of this type of migration in the structure of the diaspora.

Another feature that distinguishes new diaspora researches from traditional ones is the assimilation factor. Thus, in previous studies, the authors emphasize that the diaspora is gradually assimilated into the host country in which it is necessary to form strong ties with the motherland to prevent or minimize this process. However, in new researches, the necessity of the concept of assimilation is significantly reduced due to globalization and the technological revolution. Because, now it is much easier to communicate with the motherland and its compatriots there. Technological development allows the diaspora to establish close ties with the homeland by living abroad. Therefore, although the influence of the cosmopolitan approach in the modern world is growing, diasporas are becoming more tolerant of the loss of identity and assimilation. However, even if they are partially assimilated, they retain the name of the diaspora. For example, a significant part of the Italian diaspora in Latin America, are now completely or partially assimilated, and most now speak Spanish, but their Italian roots maintain their sympathy for Italy (Rogers B., 2005, p.3).

Another difference is about the desire of the diaspora to return to their homeland. Traditional research is quite conservative on this issue and emphasizes the need for diaspora groups to return to their home countries if the time and conditions are appropriate. However, in the era of globalization, with the effect of postmodernism, the desire of diasporas to return to their homeland decreases significantly. While their degree of assimilation is considerably reduced, they bring more benefits to their homeland by living abroad as well. These benefits include supporting the country of origin politically and communicating the country's problems more widely and effectively to the host country and international community, as well as significant economic assistance. Thus, remittances sent to their homelands by diaspora groups play a very important role in the GDP of some countries (for example, Armenia). In addition, the diaspora plays an important role in expanding the country's trade relations, promoting foreign direct investment in the country, opening new enterprises in the origin country.

An important issue in the study of diaspora is what is important in the formation of the diaspora. While some researchers attribute the important role in the formation of the diaspora to their common and often traumatic history, others believe that the main role in the formation

of the diaspora is the ability of scattered groups to work together and the intensity of relations between them (Anteby-Yemini, L. & Berthomière, W., 2005, p.268).

The classification of diasporas has also been one of the main controversial issues in this type of research. The main topic of discussion is on what characteristics diasporas can be classified. For example, Micheal Bruneau divides diaspora organizations into groups according to their main field of activity. In this sense, he distinguishes 4 diaspora groups: 1) entrepreneurial (economical) structured diasporas (eg. the Chinese diaspora); 2) religious and historical structured diasporas (the Greek or Jewish diasporas); 3) political structured diasporas (for example, the Palestinian diaspora); 4) racial and cultural structured diasporas (for example, the Black diaspora) (Bruneau, M., 2010, pp. 4-5)).

Gabriel Sheffer, who developed the theme of political diasporas, divides them into two groups: state-based (Palestinian diaspora, Tibetan diaspora) or non-state diasporas (Anteby-Yemini, L. & Berthomière, W., 2005, p. 264). Some diaspora researchers agree that although the diaspora may seem like a state-related concept, there are also diaspora groups representing non-state actors. Especially in recent years, these groups are growing significantly. In all types of these diasporas, the concept of nationality disappears, people can exist uniting around their political views, language, religion and so on. in foreign countries. For example, the White diaspora, the Black diaspora, the Gay diaspora, the Terrorist diaspora, the Liberal diaspora, the Conservative diaspora, as well as the purely religious, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Catholic, Confucian, etc. diasporas can be an example of these diasporas (Aydogan, F., 2018, p.13). Another group of diaspora types is diasporas belonging to the ethno-linguistic category. For example, communities such as Anglophone (English), Lusophone (Portuguese), and Francophone (French) are also referred to by many diaspora researchers as a type of diaspora (Brubaker, R., 2005, p.3). In ethno-linguistic diasporas, people are able to act together on the basis of linguistic unity, leaving aside the phenomenon of nationality. The Anglophone diaspora accounts for 13% of the world's population (as a mother tongue), the Lusophone diaspora for 270 million, and the Francophone diaspora for 235 million. If we take into account those who speak these languages as a second language, this number will increase many times. The existence and prestige of these diasporas is undeniable.

One of the most appropriate versions of the classification of diasporas was suggested by Robin Cohen: 1. Labor diaspora - diasporas represented abroad mainly by cheap labor, such as the Indian diaspora (but in recent years, brain drain emigrations from India have also increased significantly); 2. Imperial diasporas - these diasporas are formed by the migration of

influential and rich people; 3. Trade diasporas (eg. Chinese, Lebanese diasporas); 4. Cultural diasporas - diasporas formed by brain flow; 5. “Victims” diasporas (Armenian diaspora) (Cohen, R., 1999).

The nation to which the diaspora belongs has a great influence on its activity. Diasporas build their activities to protect the interests of their nations. However, this can have ominous consequences, especially when the nation and nationalism have a greater impact on the diaspora. To better understand, let's look at the Armenian diaspora in the context of our topic. The activity of the Armenian diaspora is based solely on the interests and control of the nation. Any member of the Armenian diaspora who violates the national priorities and identity of Armenia is seen as a betrayal of the Armenian nation. Therefore, a member of the Armenian diaspora has no choice but to adopt a nationalist identity. Armenia's strong economic and political dependence on the diaspora also raises expectations from Diaspora. This puts more pressure on the Diaspora and further restricts its mobilization.

In terms of the number of diasporas, India has the largest diaspora in the world. According to a 2019 UN report, the number of Indians living outside India is 17.5 million. In 2018, the total amount of remittances sent to India by the entire Indian diaspora was \$78.6 billion (the total amount of remittances worldwide was \$689 billion). However, despite their large numbers, much of the Indian diaspora is low-income. Therefore, the organization in the country where they live, as well as the number of lobbying activities, is not so strong. The second largest diaspora in the world is the Mexican diaspora with 11.8 million (excluding refugees). 98% of them live in the United States. The third largest diaspora is the Chinese diaspora with a population of 10.7 million. The Chinese diaspora began to shaping mainly after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 (The Times of India, 2019).

Along with the number of diasporas, their ability to influence the foreign and domestic policies of the host country and the country of origin, as well as the lobbying activities of the diasporas, differ significantly. In this regard, it should be noted that the diaspora with a richer history also has a greater reputation. For example, the Jewish and Greek diasporas owe their current strength to historically numerous migrations. The Armenian diaspora is also one of the most influential and promising diasporas. Although there are historically numerous Armenian migrations, the formation of the Armenian diaspora mainly occurs after the First World War. They have gained considerable political leverage over the course of a century. Another strong diaspora is the Irish diaspora. The most important stage in the formation of the Irish diaspora was the Great Famine, which took place in Ireland in 1845-52. During these years, 1-2 mln. Irish left the country, and many migrated to the United States and Australia. Mass migration

in the 19th century has led to the emergence of an influential Irish diaspora in the United States, Australia, and some European countries.

### **§1.2. Causes and stages of mass migration of Armenians**

The Armenian diaspora has one of the most influential diaspora organizations in the world, playing an active role in the political process, at least as much as the Armenian state. Armenian diaspora living in the foreign states contributes to the ensuring of the national interests of Armenia. The number of people of Armenian origin living outside motherland is more than twice the Armenia's population. Thus, while the current population of Armenia is less than 3 million (2.8 million), in other parts of the world there are about 6-7 million Armenians (Armenians in the World Today, 2014). Even some Armenian sources claim that the number of Armenians living overseas is 10-11 million (Bolsajian, M., 2018, p.30).

However, it should be noted that some Armenians living outside the Armenian state are not considered members of the Armenian diaspora by Armenian historians. These include Armenians living en masse in Turkey, Iran and Georgia (especially in Javakheti) and the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Armenian historians and authors state that these Armenians lived in their "historical homeland", in a part of "Greater Armenia" (Aydogan, F., 2018, p.20). Together with this population, the number of Armenians living outside Armenia can be estimated at about 10 million.

In general, Armenians divide their "historical lands of Greater Armenia" into two parts: Western and Eastern Armenia. Western Armenia includes Eastern Anatolia, especially Cilicia, Turkey. Of course, the people who live and lived in this area, as well as those who migrated later and their descendants, are called Western Armenians. Eastern Armenians include the Armenians living present-day Armenia, part of South Azerbaijan (Iran), the Javakheti region of Georgia, and the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. However, in general, along with the Armenians living in the territories I mentioned, the Armenians living in all the former USSR republics are also included to Eastern Armenians.

The Armenian diaspora was able to form a sub-culture and adapted to the living conditions of different countries. That is, for example, Armenians living in Russia (Russian-Armenians), although adapted and assimilated into the Russian environment, have largely preserved their identity. This is also typical for Armenians living in other parts of the world. The main reasons why Armenians are not fully assimilated to the host country may be the fact that nationalism is always at the forefront of the Armenian community, the "Armenian cause"

is the responsibility of every Armenian, highly organized diaspora groups, build their own schools and other social infrastructure and the protective and unifying role of the Armenian Church. The fact that Armenian nationalism is strong enough weakens the assimilation of Armenian communities outside Armenia. Nationalism also plays an encouraging role in the organization of the Armenian diaspora. Well-known Armenian diaspora researcher Khachig Tololyan emphasizes that the nationalist character of Armenian diaspora communities has become transnationalism due to globalization. As a result, Diaspora Armenians are able to adapt more quickly to the environment in which they live, and on the other hand, they are able to maintain their identities (despite their partial assimilation)(Tololyan, K., 2014, p.44).

Of course, the Armenian diaspora owes its current prestige to the historical formation and organizing. For this, it is necessary to look at the mass migration of Armenians in modern times. Ancient Armenian migrations alleged by most Armenian historians and diaspora researchers, including Khajik Tololyan (Tololyan, K., 2014, p.37) cannot play a role in the formation of the Armenian diaspora, as they were assimilated long ago.

A number of historians note that the process of “diasporization” of Armenians began in the middle of the 19th century. From that time on, young Armenians, especially those living in purported “Western Armenia”, emigrated to Europe and the United States to study or engage in missionary activities. Some of these Armenians settled in Europe and became one of the forces encouraging future Armenian migration. Others returned home in a new revolutionary spirit. Therefore, Armenians living in both Ottoman and Tsarist Russia soon began to organize and later revolt (Nalbandian L., 1963, pp.44-46).

However, the first wave of mass migration of Armenians in modern times began after the alleged Armenian Genocide. This period is the first stage of the real formation of the Armenian diaspora. The event that gave impetus to the migration of Armenians (as well as to the so-called Armenian Genocide according to the Armenians) during this period was the “Tehcir” law adopted in the Ottoman state in May 1915. Armenians interpret this law as the deportation of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and their massacre during this deportation. However, the “Tehcir” law was in fact a law on resettlement and relocation, not exile, as interpreted by the Armenian scholars. The law provided for the relocation of part of the population to other areas within the Ottoman Empire to ensure the security of the state, as well as the Armenian population. The word “tehcir” also means to relocate one group of people within the state to safer places (for this population) in order to protect the security of one group. In other words, the law was in fact a step taken to protect the life and security of Armenians on the one hand, and to stop the treacherous actions committed by them on the

other (Esat U., 1988, pp.460-461). There were some plausible reasons for the adoption of the law. Thus, in World War I, Russia was on opposite fronts with the Ottomans. Amidst fierce fighting going on between them on the Anatolian front, Ottoman Armenians cooperated with the Russians, fought on their side and organized revolts against the Ottomans. Armenian espionage and uprisings on the border with Russia forged difficulties in the ongoing war. For this reason, it was planned to relocate this part of the Armenians, who engaged in treason and rebellion, to other Ottoman territories such as Syria, Lebanon and Iraq (Akca E. Y., 2011, p.22). In fact, if we look at the essence of the Tehcir law, it seems that it does not directly address the Armenians. The law applied to all citizens who opposed the government. As the Armenians were more active in this case, the resettlement applied to them more. The law provided for the protection of the resettled population, the protection of property, and the consideration of the wishes of the people during the resettlement. From the early days of the migration, the state provided all the necessary needs for this population (Aydogan, F., 2018, pp.22-23).

Of course, not all traitorous Armenians during the First World War could be treated so kindly. There were a few number of Armenian spies and insurgents executed or arrested. However, the claim of Armenian historians that more than 1.5 million Armenians were killed by the Ottomans is an absurd claim.

Thus, part of the population displaced from the Ottoman Empire settled in many parts of the Middle East. Others migrated to the United States and European countries. Some of them migrated directly from the Ottoman Empire, others indirectly - first to the Middle East, and in the 1920s to the United States or Europe. From the Middle East Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and from Eastern Europe Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, and Cyprus stood out in terms of the number of Armenian immigrants. In the second half of the 1910s, Armenians migrated to European countries were in the minority because of the outbreak of World War II in Europe and the subsequent economic hardships. Due to the stability in the United States, about 100,000 Armenians emigrated to the United States during this period (Pezeshkian A., 2011, p.10).

The main feature that distinguishes the first wave of the Armenian diaspora is the large participation of Western Armenians in this migration. In the 1920s and 1930s, the socio-economic situation of the majority of Armenians living abroad was much worse than that of Armenians in Soviet Armenia. Many migrant Armenians live in refugee camps, and most were poor. Returning to Soviet Armenia seemed even more frightening. At a time when even the local population was subjected to repressions and massacres in the USSR, the migrant

population was also at “high risk of treason”. Mostly middle-class Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire immigrated to the United States. However, after this migration, many of them also became poor.

The second wave of Armenian migration occurred after the Second World War. This phase is the period of westernization of the Armenian diaspora. Thus, in the 1950s, the center of gravity of the Armenian diaspora gradually began to shift from the Middle East to the West, especially the United States. In the 1950s, Armenian immigrants were mainly descendants of people who settled in the Middle East in 1910-20. Armenian sources note that, as in all migration waves, Armenian migration occurred during this period for mandatory reasons. The Arab-Israeli war is considered to be the main reason for the migration from the Middle East to the United States and other Western countries in the 1950s. According to Pezeshkian, about 8,500 Armenians were forced to immigrate to the United States in the 1950s due to the Arab-Israeli conflict (Pezeshkian A., 2011, p.11). In 1950-60, the main directions of Armenian migration were towards the United States, Canada, the European Economic Union (especially France), Australia and South America.

The second important direction of Armenian migration in the 1950s was Soviet Armenia. The majority of Armenians deported to the Middle East in 1910-20 already considered Soviet Armenia as their homeland. Therefore, the desire to return to their homeland increased. In the first years after World War II, many Armenian migrants, as well as refugees and immigrants from other Soviet republics, began to return en masse. This was due to Stalin's repression subsided after the war. After World War II there was also a serious need for foreign labor during the reconstruction in the USSR, which had lost serious manpower in the war. For this reason, the USSR leadership allowed the exodus of immigrants. Between 1947 and 1949, approximately 105,000 Armenian migrants, mostly settled in the Middle East, emigrated to Soviet Armenia (Tololyan, K., 2014, p.44). Most of these migrants were descendants of Armenians who emigrated from Turkey in the 1910s. No mass contacts had been established between the Western and Eastern Armenians until now, because both groups were part of different empires. It is known that these migrations to Armenia increased the number of Armenians in the ethnic composition of Armenia. Instead, during these years, by order of the USSR leadership, 100,000 Azerbaijanis were deported from Soviet Armenia to Soviet Azerbaijan. So, there were no serious problems with the resettlement of Armenian immigrants. The population that immigrated to Armenia during these years was only 10% of Armenians who emigrated since the 1910s (Aydogan, F., 2018, p.28).



The third wave of Armenian migration dates back to the late 1980s and 1990s. Unlike other waves of migration, the main population involved in this migration was Armenians living in Soviet Armenia, then the Republic of Armenia. Armenians link this migration to traumatic reasons too: the 1988 Spitak earthquake and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which began that year. People who lost their homes as a result of the earthquake and war were forced to migrate overseas. According to these Armenian authors, the foundations of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as well as the migration of Armenians abroad, were laid by the so-called "Sumgait Pogrom" events of February 1988. Ironically, some Armenian researchers see the events in Sumgait as an Armenian tragedy, even continuation of the "Armenian genocide" (Bolsajian, M., 2018, pp.31-32). Allegedly, after these events, Armenians who did not feel comfortable in Azerbaijan, including some Karabakh Armenians, were forced to migrate abroad.<sup>2</sup>

However, these Armenian authors ignore or deliberately do not want to mention that tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis were killed by Armenians during the Karabakh war and the Khojaly genocide. As a result of the war, one million Azerbaijanis became refugees or internally displaced persons. Why didn't such an influx of refugees facilitate the mass migration of Azerbaijanis to the United States or other politically stable countries? On the contrary, the Armenians, who won the war and had less casualties than Azerbaijan, fled to the United States. During wars, people often leave their homeland and migrate abroad when there is no other way out, otherwise they face the risk of death. In this regard, it is impossible to justify the migration of Armenians in the First Karabakh War. Because First Karabakh War did not spread to Armenia. Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas could simply move to Armenia.

In the 1990s, a large number of Armenians came to the United States, European countries, Australia and so on. But the Russian Federation ranked first according to the number of Armenian immigrants. About half of the Armenians currently living in Russia have migrated since 1991 (about 1 million) (Tololyan, K., 2014, p.44). Due to the difficult economic conditions in the country and the inability of the Ter-Petrosyan government to prevent emigration, the population of Armenia was rapidly declining. Emigration from Armenia did not decrease in the following periods, on the contrary, it increased. For example, while the average annual emigration was 23,000 between 1995 and 2001, this number was 32,000 between 2002 and 2011. In 2001-2011, the population of Armenia fell from 3.2 million to 3 million (Migration Policy Centre, 2013, p.1).

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<sup>2</sup> The incidents in Sumgayit were in fact committed by a group of Armenians, led by Eduard Grigorian, as a provocation in order to deepen the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

Russia is currently the country with the largest Armenian diaspora. About 2.5 million Armenians live in Russia. The number of the Armenian diaspora in the United States is more than 1.5 million. However, before World War I, the number of American Armenians was only about 50,000. France is the third most influential country of the Armenian diaspora (about 500,000). In addition, Georgia (450,000), Ukraine (400,000), Lebanon (230,000), Australia (168,000) and Turkey (100,000) also are notable for the number of Armenians or Armenian descents.

### **§1.3. The main organizations of the Armenian diaspora**

The Armenian diaspora owes its strong reputation on the world stage, along with its large number, to its high level of organization. Such a strong organization of the Armenian diaspora is due to the fact that Armenian nationalism has always been protected in the Armenian community, both inside and outside Armenia, and the "Armenian issues" (issues related to the vital interests of the Armenian community - leading the "Armenian Genocide") is especially acute among Armenians living abroad.

Armenian diaspora organizations began to form in the second half of the 19th century. Starting from the middle of the 19th century, Armenians living in the Ottoman empire began to mobilize and form their own socio-political organizations. These organizations were intended to develop the Armenian national consciousness and then to create an independent Armenia. During this period, the Armenian national movement was led by two forces. The first group was Armenian students studying abroad, who witnessed the revolutions of 1848. Some of these students returned to spread revolutionary ideas, while others remained in Europe, where they founded the first diaspora institutions. The second force was the Armenian Church. The church played an unprecedented role in uniting the Armenians and awakening the national consciousness (Aydogan, F., 2018, p.25).

Today, the Armenian diaspora includes organizations with a very different structure and character. Within the Armenian diaspora organizations traditional diaspora organizations, non-governmental and humanitarian organizations, lobbying organizations, Armenian terrorist organizations can be attributed.

#### ***Traditional diaspora organizations***

Traditional diaspora organizations have a great reputation in the Armenian community, both within Armenia and in the Armenian diaspora. Although these organizations emerged and operated in the Ottoman and Russian territory in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they continued their activities outside Armenia for a long time due to their deportation from the Ottoman Empire and the USSR. After Armenia became independent, they returned to Armenia and began to be represented as a political party. However, even today, the bulk of their activities are concentrated not in Armenia, but in foreign countries. Today, 3 traditional Armenian organizations exist: the Dashnaktsutyun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation / ARF), Ramkavar-Azatakan (Liberal Democratic Party) and Hunchakian (Social Democratic Party).

The Social Democrat Hunchakian Party (SDHP) is the oldest Armenian political party. Unlike other traditional diaspora organizations, the Hunchakian Party was founded by the Armenian diaspora in 1887 in Geneva, Switzerland. Later, it started working in the Ottoman Empire. The main goal of the party was to achieve the independence of “Western Armenia”, and then to create “Greater Armenia”, which would unite the Armenian communities in Russia and Iran. Russia also played an important role in the organization's activities. Russia, which aimed to split the Ottoman Empire and take possession of the Balkans and Turkish straits, was closely interested in expanding the influence of such political parties. The founders of the Hunchakian party were all Eastern Armenians educated in Europe. They adopted the ideas of Marx and Engels, which were popular in Europe at that time. Therefore, the Hunchakian party embraced the strict Marxist ideology as its guiding ideology. Shortly after the party was founded in Europe, it began to function as a revolutionary organization in the Ottoman Empire and as an underground in Russia. The main area of activity was Anatolia and today's Armenia (Chalabian, A., 1988, p.58). In World War I, the Huncakian party played a major role in the uprisings against the Ottomans. Hunchak members obstructed the war and attacked Ottoman troops. Thus, they were one of the main factors influencing the resettlement of Armenians.

After being deported from the USSR and Turkey, the SDHP had to continue its activities abroad for a long time. The organization was influential in the Middle East, the United States and Australia.

Another organization is the most influential organization in the history of Armenia, the Dashnaktsutyun or the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF). Dashnaktsutyun has offices in all countries where the Diaspora is active. It was founded in 1890, in Tbilisi. The main purpose of the organization was to gain the autonomy in the territories inhabited by

Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, and then to realize the idea of a “Greater Armenia”. The initial period of activity of the Dashnaks is connected with “Western Armenia”. However, during the Russian Revolution of 1905, the Dashnaks were organized in the Russian Empire.

The Dashnaks played an active role in the establishment of the Republic of Armenia in 1918. At that time, they were the main ruling force in Armenia. However, in November 1920, the Dashnak rule in Armenia came to an end. Soviet Armenia was created. Although some Dashnaks adopted Bolshevik ideology, others chose to emigrate. ARF continued to operate in foreign countries. Until the re-independence of Armenia, it advocated anti-Soviet and anti-communist ideas (Melkonian, E., 2011, p.88). The ARF was also distinguished from other organizations by its extreme nationalist ideology. During the Cold War, the countries where it was most influential were Lebanon and Syria.

Today, ARF is the core and most radical part of the Armenian diaspora. Most of the Armenian diaspora bodies are influenced by ARF. This influence manifests itself in everything from lobbying activities to Armenian terrorist groups. At the same time, within Armenia, it is one of the important members of the Armenia alliance, which is the current opposition.

Finally, the third traditional and existing organization is the Ramgavar Liberal Democratic Party. The Ramgavar party was founded in 1921 in Istanbul by members of the Armenakan party (founded in 1885), the Azatakan (Liberal) group, which left the SDHP, and the Democratic Ramgavar party. During the Cold War, the Ramgavar party was the second most influential diaspora organization after the ARF. Unlike others, the Ramgavar Liberal Democratic Party promotes the ideologies of liberalism and capitalism. In this sense, it acts more as a central wing party, contrary, ARF and Hunchakian represent the left wing. However, the ARF does not embrace Marxism and, unlike leftist parties, has a strong nationalist structure.

With the expansion of national independence movement in Armenia in 1990, there was an opportunity for traditional diaspora organizations to return home. Since 1990, all three diaspora organizations have established their own local political parties in Armenia and began to struggle to come to power. During this period, ARF's reputation was much stronger than other diaspora organizations. Because the ARF, with its strong nationalist ideology, has always won the sympathy of local Armenians by taking a radical position in the Karabakh conflict.

Ter-Petrosyan's administration was not sympathetic to diaspora political parties. If the prestige of these organizations was strengthened, the prestige of ANM would be weakened.

During the Ter-Petrosyan government, the Ramgavar and Hunchak parties advocated Ter-Petrosyan's policy in order to build electorate, but the ARF severely criticized Ter-Petrosyan's policies, especially his pro-Turkish foreign policy. As a result, relations between the ARF and the Ter-Petrosyan administration deteriorated rapidly, and the ARF in Armenia were banned in 1994. All its bodies and media corporations were closed. ARF leaders and some activists were arrested. The ban lasted until Kocharyan came to power in 1998.

Although they do not currently have as much influence in Armenia as the ruling parties, diaspora organizations, especially the ARF, are significantly shaping foreign and domestic policy of Armenia (check Chapter II for details).

### ***Lobbying and umbrella organizations***

Lobbying is an initiative by a group or an agency to influence the decisions and actions of government officials and government policy in general. Lobbying has become a topic of discussion, especially in recent years. The lobbying capacity of the diaspora is one of the most important components of its power. In this sense, the lobbying opportunities of the Armenian diaspora are quite wide. In particular, there is a strong Armenian lobby in the United States, Russia, France, as well as in some Latin American countries, the BENELUX countries and Australia. Of course, the more democratic a country is, the more lobbying opportunities there are. In this sense, the Armenian lobby is more active and influential and organized in the United States and France than in Russia, where more Armenians live.

There are two major lobby groups representing the Armenian diaspora in the United States. The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) is the oldest and most influential lobbying organization of the Armenian diaspora in the United States. The organization was founded in 1918. Dashnak members fleeing from Turkey and Soviet Armenia played a key role in the establishment of the organization. The ARF also has a broad influence on the current activities of ANCA. For this reason, ANCA is one of the main supporters of the idea of a "united" and independent Armenia. ANCA currently has 45 offices in 25 states in USA (Zarifian, J., 2014, pp.507-508).

Another lobbying organization is the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) established in 1972. This group operates on a more general spectrum than ANCA. AAA works to strengthen the integration of American Armenians into the US society. Political lobbying is its secondary mission.

The "Armenian issues" play a major role in the activities of both ANCA and AAA. These include Armenia's political and economic development, the recognition of the so-called

Armenian Genocide, the recognition Nagorno-Karabakh as a sovereign territory, the expansion of US economic assistance to Armenia, and efforts to make US-Turkish relations as tense as possible (Aydogan, F., 2018, p.50). In this regard, the two organizations are trying to operate in cooperation.

There are also some differences and disputes between the two organizations. First, the difference manifests itself in political priorities. The AAA considers the interests and priorities of the United States to be important in all matters, including those related to Armenian-Americans and the Armenian nation. In other words, an issue that does not interest the United States is not in the focus of the Assembly. At the same time, the AAA seeks to ensure the interests and solve the problems of the Armenian-American communities rather than Armenian state. However, the issues that ANCA attaches importance to are only the protection of the interests of the Armenian-American community and the Armenian state. US interests are not the main priorities in this organization (Zarifian, J., 2014, p.507).

ANCA is more radical than Assembly. They have radical intentions, such as the full recognition of the Armenian genocide by the United States, Turkey's apology and compensation for the "genocide", and even the "restoration of Greater Armenia" (Bolsajian, M., 2018, p.35).

Of course, the main way for lobby groups to influence government officials, especially congressmen, is to have a broad electorate. That is, the more population a lobby group represents, the more important that group is to government officials. Because in return for fulfilling the promises of lobby groups, they also get a wide electorate for re-election. From this point of view, ANCA has a broader electorate and is more active than all other Armenian lobby groups. Therefore, the opportunities to influence the US Congress are much wider than the Assembly. The Assembly pays more attention to the quality of the electorate rather than the quantity. The AAA is trying to influence US government bodies in this way by attracting Armenian businessmen and other celebrities. But, of course, for congressmen, it doesn't matter if the voter is rich and famous. Therefore, the Assembly uses its opportunities to influence the executive branch of the US government.

Indeed, the ANCA and the Assembly have a fairly broad reputation in US society. They often use their facilities on through petitions and meetings with government officials. The Armenian Caucus<sup>3</sup> has a strong presence in Congress and has members from both Democrats and Republicans. The clout of the ANCA and the Assembly is commensurate with the number of Armenians living in the States. That is, the more American Armenians there are in

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<sup>3</sup> Caucus is the basis of lobbying, discussions where congressmen meet for a common goal. Although more members of the House of Representatives are present, senators sometimes attend these meetings informally.

a state, the more extensive activities of ANCA and AAA. In this regard, Armenian lobby groups in California, home to more than 200,000 Armenians, have great potential.

As a result of the active impacts of the Armenian lobby on California, from 1983 to 1991, the governor of the state was American-Armenian George Deukmejian. According to his decision in 1985, April 24 is marked as the day of remembrance of the "Armenian Genocide" and the state flags are lowered to half in the state (Kantarci, S., 2004, p.216). On the same day, Congressmen attend commemorations of the so-called genocide, and the President of the United States speaks of "tragedy" (but traditionally refrains from using the term "genocide"). Given the growing influence of Armenian-Americans in the United States since the 1980s, government officials have often promised to be pro-Armenian in their policies.

The European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAFJD) is a major part of the Armenian diaspora in Europe. EAFJD is an umbrella organization uniting diaspora groups operating in various European countries. Therefore, the main activity of the EAFJD is not to raise the issues about Armenia in individual European countries, but in the European Union, and to promote the so-called Armenian Genocide and other Armenian questions (Armenpress, 2002). The EAFJD seeks to strengthen relations between the EU and Armenia and to assist in the implementation of economic and political reforms in Armenia with the support of the EU. The EAFJD has strong lobby groups that have an influence over the Members of European Parliament.

The Armenian diaspora in France is widely organized and almost every region has its own diaspora-lobby groups. Forum of Armenian Associations of France and Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations in France (CCAF) can be mentioned as umbrella diaspora organizations in France.

The Armenian diaspora in Russia, despite its large number, is not very strongly organized. The main reasons behind this are the fact that the majority of Armenians living in Russia belong to the lower class and are not interested in diaspora activities, as well as significant limitation of lobbying activities in Russia. The Union of Armenians in Russia, chaired by Ara Abramyan, should be highlighted as the most influential umbrella diaspora organization.

The Armenian diaspora has a large number of non-governmental, non-profit, educational and other organizations. One of them - the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) was founded in 1906 in Egypt and later moved to New York. The organization implements humanitarian, cultural and educational programs for the protection and promotion

of the Armenian identity, Armenian national heritage and culture both in Armenia and abroad. As a non-governmental organization, AGBU is the second most unifying organization among Armenians living abroad after the church. Therefore, the Armenian government is constantly trying to use the power of the AGBU in relations with the diaspora.

### *Armenian terrorist organizations*

Speaking of Armenian diaspora organizations, one should mention Armenian terrorist organizations, one of the most important types of these organizations. In fact, there are dozens of Armenian terrorist organizations. Because most of the organizations that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries took part in either the 1905-06 massacres or the 1918 genocide against the Azerbaijani civilian population, or the guerrilla attacks against the Ottoman civilians. From this point of view, although their goals are different, these organizations, including the above-mentioned Hunchakian, Dashnaktsutyun, Ramgavar (Armenakan-Ramgavar-Azatakan) organizations, can be considered terrorist organizations. In addition, small Armenian terrorist organizations, known solely as terrorist organizations and closely associated with ASALA, also operate in various countries around the world. For example, the Armenian Liberation Movement, founded in France in 1991, the Armenian Union, founded in Moscow in 1988, and other terrorist organizations (The Supreme Court of Azerbaijan Republic).

But two major Armenian terrorist organizations cannot be overlooked: the Armenian Secret Army for Liberty of Armenia (ASALA) and the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG). ASALA is undoubtedly one of the most influential organizations in Armenian history. ASALA was founded in 1975 in Lebanon by Agop Agopyan. The civil war in Lebanon began that year played a major role in the organization and military development of ASALA. The main goals of ASALA were the acceptance of the "Armenian Genocide" by Turkey, Turkey's compensation, the establishment of an independent Armenian state and its gradual transformation into a "Greater Armenia" (Hunsicker, A., 2006, p.431). Turkey would be forced to accept the genocide. ASALA would both retaliate by committing terrorist acts against Turkey and forcing the Turkish government to see the Armenian determination.

ASALA was created as an alternative to Dashnaktsutyun, which has a wide reputation in the Middle East. Unlike the Dashnaks, ASALA had ultra-leftist ideology. It embraced Marxist-socialist and anti-imperialist ideas. According to ASALA, Dashnaktsutyun was just a



toy in the hands of world imperialism. However, ASALA, like ARF, was in favor of strengthening its nationalism in the Armenian community.

From 1975 to 1994, ASALA committed 110 terrorist acts in 22 countries (182 in unformal records). In all, 46 people have been killed and 299 injured in ASALA attacks over the years. Of these, 42 were Turkish citizens (mostly diplomats), and the other 4 were citizens of other countries (taking into account only official records) (International Journal of Social Sciences, 2019, p.62). Most of them were ambassadors (Turkish ambassadors in France, Vatican and Yugoslavia), consuls, attachées and embassy staff. In the 1980s, some reports and publications of US government agencies listed ASALA as a terrorist organization (United States Department of State: Report, 1989, p.57).

ASALA forces led by Monte Melkonian also took part in the First Karabakh War. Many Armenians who took an active part in the Khojaly genocide were actually members of ASALA. In 1994, ASALA announced that it was ceasing operations. However, former ASALA members have created new terrorist groups around the world.

The Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) was established in 1975 as a terrorist organization and operated until 1987. Like ASALA, they have targeted mostly Turkish diplomats. The assassination of Turkish Los Angeles Consul-General Mehmet Baydar and Consul Bahadır Demir in 1973 was later taken over by member of JCAG. In 1975, JCAG carried out the largest teract of its activities. Turkish Ambassador to Austria Danish Tunalıgil was killed by JCAG members (International Journal of Social Sciences, 2019, p.63).

The JCAG was ideologically opposed to ASALA. Dashnak members played an important role in the establishment of the organization. Dashnagsutyun members created this terrorist organization in the Middle East for fear of ASALA's growing influence. There have even been armed clashes between ASALA and JCAG forces in Lebanon and Palestine. In 1983, the organization was renamed the Armenian Revolutionary Army.

### ***The Armenian Church***

The Armenian Church plays a special role in the Armenian diaspora. Beginning in the 1930s, religious divisions among diaspora Armenians deepened. Some diaspora Armenians, especially the Dashnaks, rejected the Armenian Apostolic Church (Echmiadzin) and created a new Armenian Church, the Antelias Church (Armenian Catholicate of Cilicia - based on the Armenian Church in the Ottoman Empire). The reason was asserted that the USSR allegedly

used the Echmiadzin Church for its own purposes. ARF members were the most radical group in this regard. They tried to direct Armenians abroad to the new Armenian church (Vartanyan O., 2013). However, the prestige of the Echmiadzin Church outside Armenia remained too much higher.

Now Etchmiadzin Church operates both in Armenia and abroad. For this reason, it was divided into two parts, Eastern (in Armenia) and Western (outside Armenia). The Armenian Church of Antelias operates abroad and is directly run by ARF leaders (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, p.52). The main part of the activities of both churches outside Armenia is connected with the United States and the Armenians here.

The church plays an important role in preserving the identity and language of Armenian culture and in the solidarity of Armenians living abroad. The Church has also become one of the elements in Armenian politics. The Armenian Church was one of the greatest levers of influence for diaspora leaders and Armenian government over ordinary members of the diaspora since independence. I will talk about this in detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DIASPORA AS ONE OF THE DOMINANT FORCES IN ARMENIA'S POLITICAL LIFE AND FOREIGN POLICY

#### **§2.1. Diaspora-Armenia relations and diaspora's supports for Armenia in the international arena**

Today the Armenian diaspora plays a vital role in the existence and development of Armenia. The Armenian government is always trying to make the most of the potential of the diaspora. The benefits of the Diaspora for Armenia are reflected in almost every field. This includes political support - introducing Armenian national priorities to the world community, ensuring Armenia's interests in foreign countries, adoption of bills in favor of Armenia in foreign countries and international organizations, strengthening Armenia's relations with the world community, as well as economic support - economic and financial assistance to Armenia, to assist in the expansion of trade relations of Armenia, to encourage states and transnational companies to invest in Armenia, and etc.

After gaining independence, Armenia began to pay special attention to Diaspora-Armenia relations. In the early years of independency, the Ministry Foreign Affairs of Armenia was the main body responsible for relations with the diaspora. A department for relations with the diaspora was established under the Foreign Ministry. Also, diaspora departments have been established in many ministries and universities. In 2008, a new ministry, the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, was established. Thus, the authorities of the Diaspora Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were transferred to this Ministry (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, pp.10-12). After Nikol Pashinyan came to power, this ministry was abolished and replaced by the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs in 2019. The incumbent High Commissioner is Zareh Sinanyan.

In Armenia's National Security Strategies 2007 and 2020, diaspora is emphasized as one of the important elements in Armenia's political, economic and cultural life, as well as in Armenia's foreign policy. Looking at the National Security Strategy 2020, it is once again clear how dependent Armenia is on the Diaspora. The Diaspora is portrayed as one of the tools to help Armenia's democratization process (although most diaspora members are not happy with the democratization process in Armenia). Another important role of the Diaspora in the National Security Strategy is to contribute Armenia to strengthen its relations with the other states and the international community and to announce the "realities of Armenia" to the

world. Deterioration and weakening of relations between Armenia and the Diaspora pose one of the major threats to Armenia's security. Preventing the assimilation of the diaspora and maintaining ties is one of the important goals of the Armenian state (National Security Strategy of Republic of Armenia, 2020, pp.20-22). Only a few countries' National Security Documents mention so much about the role of the diaspora.

After gaining independence, the Armenian government tried to gain more support and trust from the Diaspora by giving positions to influential members of the diaspora in Armenian government agencies. Even in the Ter-Petrosian period, when relations with the diaspora were not very good, these appointments were frequent. For example, the first Armenian Foreign Minister was Raffi Hovhannisyanyan, who was born in the United States and moved to Armenia after independence. Gerard Libaridian (Lebanese-born) worked as an adviser to Ter-Petrosyan and was one of the key figures in the negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh (Papazian T., 2006, p.248). This policy was largely pursued by Ter-Petrosyan's followers.

One of the important steps taken by Armenia in expanding ties with the diaspora was the adoption of the law on dual citizenship in 2007. A law allows individuals over the age of 18, of Armenian descent, and who have lived in Armenia for at least three years to acquire Armenian citizenship as second citizenship. However, there are a number of problems in the law. Thus, representatives of the diaspora living abroad have to come to Armenia to vote in elections even if in case of dual citizenship. Difficulties of voting in elections and the requirement to live in Armenia for 3 years for dual citizenship create problems for members of the diaspora in accepting Armenian citizenship. One year after law passed, only about 1,000 people have applied for dual citizenship (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, pp.11-12).

As much as Armenia is interested in expanding ties with the diaspora, the Diaspora is also trying to expand its efforts for Armenia. It is true that the Diaspora is often accused of inaction by Armenian political scientists (especially during the Karabakh wars). In general, the work done by the Armenian diaspora since independency of Armenia is not proportional to its strength and number, but it would be wrong to call the Armenian diaspora passive. Let's talk about the work done by the Diaspora for Armenia over the years.

### ***Recognition of the "Armenian Genocide"***

The alleged Armenian genocide is now recognized by 32 countries, including the Germany, France and Russia (Armenian National Institute). Most of the attempts to recognize

the so-called Armenian Genocide have focused on the US federal government and US states. Of course, the recognition of alleged genocide by a world superpower can be considered a great success for Armenia and its diaspora. The Armenian diaspora wants to undermine the US-Turkey alliance with the official recognition of the "Armenian genocide" by the US. It should be noted that the attempts of the Armenian lobby to recognize the so-called genocide in the United States have been somewhat successful. This is mainly at the states level. As a result of long work in the United States, the Armenian lobby was able to get the recognition of the "Armenian Genocide" by all of 50 states, and some even passed resolutions on Remembrance Day and the genocide (Armenian National Institute).

At the congressional level, the Armenian lobby has too many opportunities, so congressmen are more eager to recognize the Armenian genocide. The resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide by the United States was first discussed in the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 2007, but was not submitted to the House of Representatives after pressure from Turkey (Hulse C., 2007). But in recent years, the Armenian lobby has become more active in official recognition "genocide" by the US. Relatively degraded relations between Turkey and the US (especially in connection with the scandal over the purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia) have also led to a more frequent discussion of the Armenian Genocide in Congress. In October 2019, The Resolution "Affirming the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide" was passed to the House of Representatives, with 405 votes in favor and 11 against (H.Res.296, 2019). The resolution was a proposal to the government to recognize the genocide. The resolution was then passed to the Senate in December 2019 by Resolution "Expressing the Sense of the Senate that it is the Policy of the United States to Commemorate the Armenian Genocide Through Official Recognition and Remembrance", which was also adopted unanimously. Thus, the United States recognized the Armenian Genocide at the congressional level (S.Res.,150).

At the level of the US federal government, the recognition of the "Armenian Genocide" is not as easy as in the individual states. Because in the international arena, Turkey is seriously hindering the US recognition of the genocide. However, this does not mean that former US administrations refused to recognize the Genocide because it is exaggerated. Of course, the main issue is not to damage relations with Turkey. A broken alliance with Turkey would be a major blow to US interests, especially in the Middle East. Therefore, the US presidential administrations are reluctant to officially recognize this so-called genocide. However, every US president remembers the "Armenian massacre" on every April 24 and expresses his sorrow, but does not call these events genocide. Only Ronald Reagan, till Biden

called the events of 1915 during the World War I a “genocide” in his speech in 1981 (Armenian National Institute). (Longley, 2020) (Longley, 2020) (The Supreme Court of Azerbaijan Republic)

Despite the bias of the US Congress, the Trump administration refused to sign the resolutions. But incumbent president Joe Biden, in his speech on April 24, 2021, used the term “genocide” when addressing to the events of 1915. Although Biden's decision was made to increase pressure on Turkey, it can hurt Turkey-US relations and NATO's activities. But in general, I do not think that the United States, as well as Armenia (in terms of volatile relations with Turkey) will benefit from this.

In France, one of the countries with the strongest Armenian diaspora and lobby, a bill was passed in 2001 recognizing the events of 1915 as a genocide. The French president also confirmed this law. Even more absurdly, in 2006 the bill to penalize and arrest those who denied the alleged genocide was passed by the National Assembly, but was rejected by the Senate. In 2012, the same bill passed the Senate at the request of Armenian pressure groups, and was finally overturned by the French Supreme Court on the grounds that the law was unconstitutional (Economic Development Foundation, 2012). Nicolas Sarkozy's pro-Armenian policy was continued by his followers, which also significantly strained relations with Turkey.

The Armenian diaspora is also working hard in international organizations for the recognition of the “Armenian Genocide”. There is no UN resolution on the events of 1915 alone. However, in 2015, the European Parliament expressed its support for the Pope's speech on the “genocide of 1.5 million Armenians” in 1915 and called on Turkey to show more respect for the history and heritage of Armenia (European Parliament resolution, 2015). The Council of Europe also decided to recognize the Armenian genocide in 2001. The organization also called on Turkey to accept these events and normalize relations with Armenia (Doc. 9056 2nd edition, 2001). Of course, the strong influence of France and Germany in these organizations and the pro-Armenian policy of these countries led to such decisions.

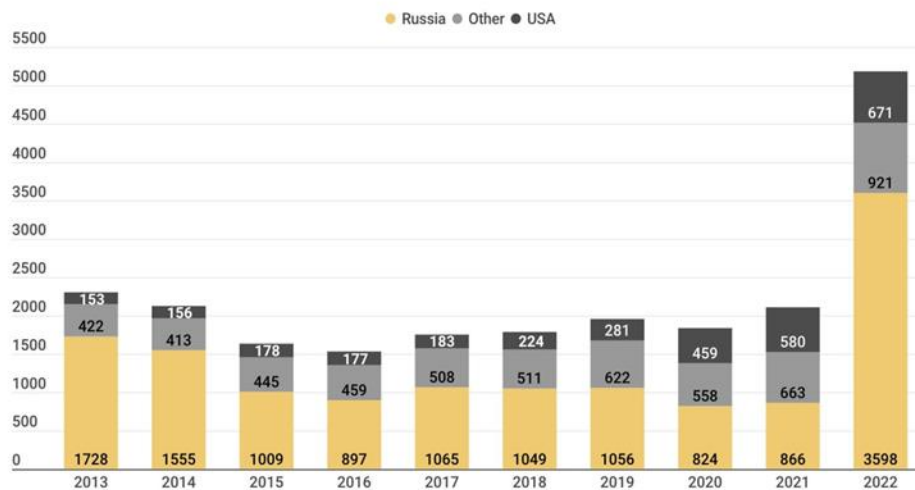
### ***Economical and financial contributions of Diaspora to Armenia***

Armenia makes extensive use of the Diaspora's magnitude and grandeur in the economic sphere. Today, the Armenian economy is heavily dependent on remittances from Armenians living abroad. According to the Central Bank of Armenia, in 2022, the remittances coming into Armenia reached 5 billion 190 million dollars. This is equal to 12% of Armenia's

GDP (for the difference, this figure is 2.8% in Azerbaijan) (Personal remittances, received – Armenia). After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began in February 2022, a large number of Russian citizens left the Russian Federation and many of them moved to Armenia because of Armenia’s membership to the CIS, which increased the total amount of funds coming to the country from Russia. 70% of all remittances come from Russia. On the one hand, Russia provides jobs for the unemployed Armenians, and thanks to the Armenian workers in Russia, it leads a large amount of money to flow into Armenia (Table 1.).

Table 1.

Personal Bank Remittances to Armenia (US\$ millions)



Central Bank of Armenia

As for the financial assistance of the Diaspora, Armenians in the West, post-Soviet countries and other parts of the world are actively involved. This assistance reached Armenia during the Spitak earthquake, the Karabakh wars and other difficult times. A number of funds and institutions have been established to facilitate the gathering and sending of financial aid of the Diaspora to Armenia. An important fund in this regard is the “Hayastan” All-Armenia Fund. The Fund was established in 1994 in California as a result of the joint efforts of diaspora groups and the Armenian government. The main purpose of the fund is to support the reconstruction of the Armenian economy and improve the welfare of the population in the country. Especially at that time, there was a serious need for such a fund to reduce the economic losses of the war. The foundation operates with the help of Armenians in the United States and other countries. Despite the fact that it was initially taken seriously by people of

Armenian descent, gradually the amount incoming to the fund began to decline significantly. Due to the sharp decrease in the Fund, even the Armenian state had to transfer money to the fund in order to maintain it (News.am, 2015). During the Second Karabakh War, only 102 million dollars were gathered despite the efforts of the Armenian government and the Diaspora outside the country (Khachatryan,T. & Hovhannisyan A., 2021).

The Armenian diaspora is also trying to promote or increase the amount of economic and financial assistance to Armenia by powerful states. In this regard, the Armenian pressure groups in the United States, France, the EU leadership, Russia and others works hard. After Armenia's independence, pushing the United States to provide financial assistance to Armenia was an important part of Armenia's foreign policy. The Diaspora has also achieved significant success in this area. As a result of the activities of lobby groups such as ANCA and AAA in the 1988 Spitak earthquake, the Congress decided that the United States should provide \$10 million in aid to Armenia. Another \$40 million was attracted to Armenia through US non-governmental organizations (Armenian Assembly of America, 2018).

Since 1991, the United States has consistently provided an average of \$80-90 million financial assistance to Armenia. The difference is obvious when comparing US financial assistance to Azerbaijan and Armenia. While the United States provided a total of \$1.2 billion in financial assistance to Armenia between 1992 and 2002, only \$165 million was provided to Azerbaijan during these years (Beynəlxalq Münasibətlərin Təhlili Mərkəzi, 2021, p.386). Although the strategic importance of Azerbaijan (due to its geographical proximity to Iran and Russia) and Georgia to the United States increased during the Bush administration financial aid didn't increased so much, but the activities of the Armenian lobby led to a significant increase in financial aid to Armenia. Only after the Georgian-Russian conflict in 2008 did US economic assistance to Georgia increase significantly. Assistance to Armenia again increased by 22% in 2016 as protests against Sargsyan's government sparked.

It should also be noted that, especially in recent years, the United States has allocated funds in addition to Armenia for the population in the so-called "Artsakh Republic". For example, 5 million in 2016 and 2017, and 8 million in 2018 were sent to the so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" (Aydogan, F., 2018, p.93). It is clear that this assistance was also provided by France. It is unacceptable for states that do not recognize the independence of Karabakh to provide such assistance.

The European Union countries, especially France are one of the countries providing financial assistance to Armenia. In recent years, the EU's economic assistance to Armenia has increased as part of democratic reforms. Since the signing of the Comprehensive and



Enhanced Partnership Agreement in 2017 (ratified in 2021), which envisages the expansion of cooperation, the average annual EU grants have reached 65 million euros (Eastern Partnership fact sheet, 2021). The EU and the Armenian diaspora in Western countries are major supporters of democratic reforms in Armenia.

### *Activities of the Diaspora in the First Karabakh War and its aftermath*

On the eve of Armenia's independence, two important events, in particular, promoted the development of relations between Armenia and the Diaspora. One of them is the 1988 Spitak earthquake in Armenia. The quake killed between 25,000 and 60,000 people. 40% of the Armenian population was affected by the earthquake. As a result of the earthquake, the Armenian economy collapsed.

The Armenian diaspora intensified its performance after the earthquake. Funds were set up to provide the earthquake-affected population with first aid, food and other necessities, and then to rebuild the country. In total, as a result of special efforts of the Diaspora (especially, the foreign diaspora), \$500 million in aid was sent to Armenia from 113 countries (Parks M., 1989). The Armenian people commenced to have a special sympathy for the Diaspora. Armenian leadership concluded that the Diaspora would play an important role in the future development of Armenia.

Soon a new issue entered the Diaspora's agenda. It was a "liberation movement" that flared up in Karabakh. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict became a decisive phase in the mobilization of the Armenian diaspora, raised the Armenian nationalism within the Diaspora and allowed them to unite for a common cause. On the eve of the First Karabakh War and during the war, the Diaspora tried to convince the world that the struggle of the Armenians was justified. However, this was largely ineffective. UN resolutions on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict stressed the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories. The Armenian side did not comply with the resolutions, claiming that the lives of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh were in danger, and continued to seize new territories each time (Papazian, T., 2006, p.238).

In general, many Armenians claim that the Diaspora's support for Armenia in the Karabakh movement and then in the First Karabakh War was not as great as in the Spitak earthquake. This support includes humanitarian and financial assistance and the adoption of bills in favor of Armenia in host countries. According to Armenian authors, with more active activity of the Diaspora, it would be possible to end the First Karabakh War faster and with

less losses and to inform the world about "the realities of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh" more purposive.

However, it should not be noted that the Diaspora's support for Armenia during and after the Karabakh war was completely limited. Most of the aid funds created during the earthquake were active during the Karabakh war. Diaspora groups, especially the ARF and its affiliates, provided comprehensive assistance to Armenian soldiers. In particular, the ARF recruited hundreds of volunteer fighters from foreign countries (most of whom were not Armenians, but mercenaries). Experienced Armenian military fighters who took part in the Lebanese Civil War from the Middle East also came to Karabakh through the ARF, whose main task was to provide military training to the fighters (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, pp.14-15).

Another issue of the diaspora's activity regarding Karabakh was the recognition of the independence of the so-called separatist regime in Karabakh. However, this baseless plot was completely unsuccessful. Throughout its life, "Nagorno Karabakh Republic" was not recognized by any sovereign state.

### ***Section 907***

The whole international community agreed that Karabakh belongs to Azerbaijan. However, some influential countries of the world have continued their prejudiced and irrational policies on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. A clear example of this is Section 907, which is evidence of the bias of the United States as a result of another activity of the Armenian lobby. Back in 1991, during his visit to Azerbaijan, US Secretary of State James Baker stated that Azerbaijan would be deprived of US financial and other assistance, citing Azerbaijan's preparations for war and the serious pressure and concern on the Armenian community in Karabakh (Guliyev, S., 2004, pp.85-86). However, what Azerbaijan did was just to protect its territory, which is considered its own by the international community.

On October 24, 1992, the US Congress passed the "Freedom Support Act". The law provided for political and economic, as well as material and technical assistance from the United States to newly independent states that emerged as a result of the collapse of the USSR in order to carry out democratic reforms and build a market economy. The bias in the law was that the former Soviet republics were treated in the name of "Russia and other post-Soviet states" (U.S. Public Law 102-511, 1992).

However, in July 1992, Senator John Kerry (later US Secretary of State) proposed to Congress a new amendment to the Freedom Support Act. Incumbent US President Joe Biden

was also one of the biggest supporters of this amendment in Congress at that time. The amendment bans all US direct aid to Azerbaijan. Congress passed this amendment and added it to the existing law under the name Section 907. After that, the United States stopped providing assistance to Azerbaijan at the state level. The reason was that Azerbaijan allegedly imposed an economic and political blockade on Armenia and the Armenian community in Karabakh, putting pressure over this people (Mamedov, N. 2007). For this reason, this section was intended to provide assistance to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan is even described in the law as an "aggressor state," and it was stated that the law would continue until the Azerbaijani government stopped its current policy (Aydogan, F., 2018, pp.100-102). Azerbaijan became the only post-Soviet country deprived of US assistance for economic and democratic development. After that, US aid to Azerbaijan began to be provided only through some non-governmental organizations.

With Section 907, the Armenian lobby was able to achieve three trends in US foreign policy. The first was the suspension of US government aid to Azerbaijan. Second, with this amendment, Azerbaijan began to be perceived by the US authorities as an aggressor state, and finally, third, Nagorno-Karabakh was shown as a separate region from Azerbaijan (although US had recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan).

There were two main reasons for the adoption of Section 907. The first of these, of course, was the intense activity of the Armenian lobby and pressure groups in the United States. Another reason was that the US authorities had limited information about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Mamedov, N., 2007).

However, this was not the last prejudiced document adopted against Azerbaijan in the United States. On February 17, 1993, the House of Representatives adopted Resolution 86. The document envisages increasing economic aid to Armenia and continuing restrictions against Azerbaijan. The resolution also stressed the need to lift the blockade imposed on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh by Turkey and Azerbaijan (Guliyev, S., 2004, p.131-132).

Despite the biased approach of the Congress, which is influenced by the Armenian lobby, US cabinets have sought to maintain their neutrality in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, refraining from calling both sides as aggressors and supporting a solution to the conflict through the OSCE. After the events of September 11, 2001, Azerbaijan declared its support for the United States in the fight against international terrorism. Azerbaijan also provided logistical support to US and allied forces. As a result, on October 24, 2001, Congress authorized the President of the United States to waive the Section 907 each year.

## **§2.2 The impacts of diaspora on Armenian politics until the Second Karabakh War**

As the role of the diaspora for the motherland has increased in the era of globalization, technological revolution and "transparent borders", states have recently tried to pay more attention to the development of relations with the diaspora. The common feature that unites all these states is that the diasporas owned by these states operate under their dictation. Diaspora organizations act as an embassy in a foreign country, subordinate to the central government of the country of origin. But the example of Armenia is very different. Because the Armenian diaspora began to be formed and organized long before the Armenian state became independent, the attempts of the resulting Armenian state to subordinate the diaspora organizations to its authority are impossible. Because these organizations were not created at the dictation of the Armenia, and even Armenian state had no role in this. In this sense, the Jewish diaspora and the Armenian diaspora may look similar. However, there is a serious difference between these two diasporas too. The central government of Israel is very effective in relations with the diaspora. The state, which has been independent for more than 70 years, could, of course, make progress in "subduing" strong diaspora organizations. On the other hand, the Israeli government and the Diaspora operate in a deep unity. The Diaspora is reluctant to take actions that will irritate Israel and the state of Israel is unwilling to disturb the Diaspora.

The example of Armenia looks unique in this sense as well. Because the Armenian government is in a sense subordinate to the Diaspora instead of subjugating the diaspora organizations.

If we look at the influence of the Diaspora on Armenia's foreign policy on the eve of Armenia's independence and in the post-independence period, we can see that in some cases the position of the Diaspora coincided with the Armenian government and resulted in successful Diaspora-Armenia cooperation. However, when the positions of diaspora groups and the Armenian leadership are inconsistent on any foreign policy issue, or when there is no common position within the diaspora itself, this is often accompanied by great difficulties for Armenia.

Armenian-Diaspora relations are fundamentally different from those of other countries. This is primarily due to the existence of a very strong diaspora, a weak state that depends on help of the diaspora and under the influence of it. Of course, this unequal structure of relations, while benefiting Armenia, furthermore imposes some restrictions on Armenia in a number of areas, including the foreign policy arena. As much as the Diaspora has to protect

Armenia's national interests, Armenia also has to protect the interests of the Diaspora and not pursue a foreign policy that contradicts it.

During the Cold War, Armenian authors used the notion of "internal and external diaspora" referring to the diaspora. The internal diaspora meant Armenians living outside Armenia but within the Soviet Union. Most of them lived in Russia. The foreign diaspora included world Armenians living outside the Soviet Union (excluding Armenians from Iran and Turkey). Armenians, who belonged to the internal diaspora, lived in a single USSR, although they were outside Armenia. For this reason, the activities of this diaspora were not so much noteworthy. That's why foreign diaspora was considered the real diaspora (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, p.8). Even after the collapse of the USSR, this distinction still somehow remains. Indeed, although the diaspora in Western countries is always positively mentioned by both Armenian authorities and Armenian authors, the strong diaspora in Russia and the Middle East is not given the same attitude. Because the Western diaspora promises modernity and the future. Meanwhile, the fragmentation and lack of solidarity in diaspora on some issues make it very difficult for Armenian state to pursue an appropriate foreign policy.

### ***Impacts of the Diaspora during the Ter-Petrosyan and Kocharyan administrations***

On the eve of and after Armenia's independence, there were a number of problematic and incompatible points in the Diaspora-Armenia relations. Also, the lack of unity of position within the diaspora has led to different approaches of diaspora representatives and parties on individual issues. Many Armenian authors do not accept the stance of the Diaspora when the Karabakh conflict flared up in 1988. The Armenian diaspora initially feared that Armenia's radical actions on the Karabakh movement could end in disaster. This was not just a defeat in a war. It was also connected with the participation of Armenians in rallies, actions and riots about Karabakh issue. Some in the diaspora saw possible Soviet military intervention to Armenia. Although the Diaspora was a supporter of the annexation of Karabakh to Armenia and the restoration of "historical Armenian lands", this unification could have faced serious obstacles during the Soviet era. Therefore, in a joint communiqué of some diaspora organizations in October 1988, they spoke on behalf of- the USSR, calling on the Armenians to stop riots, strikes and other radical actions for Karabakh (Libaridian, Gerard J., 1991, p.129).

However, following protests by leading representatives and organizations of the Karabakh liberation movement in Armenia (such as The National Self-Determination Union),

some diaspora groups expressed support for Armenians in the Karabakh movement, and even held rallies in the United States and elsewhere (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, p.13). Thus, for the first time, such a division within the diaspora showed itself.

During his first days in power, Ter-Petrosyan sought to improve relations with Turkey in order to reduce his economic and political dependence on Russia. The growing Turkish economy could make a significant contribution to Armenia's economic development. Turkey was also interested in developing relations with Armenia. It is no coincidence that Turkey was the third country to recognize Armenia's independence. As a clear result of the desire to improve relations with Turkey, the issue of genocide recognition was removed from foreign policy priorities during the Ter-Petrosyan administration. (Terzyan, A., 2016, p.147). The unstable situation in Georgia and the broken relations with Azerbaijan dealt a serious blow to Armenia's trade with Russia. For this reason, the Ter-Petrosyan administration's attempt to normalize the situation with Turkey was truly a rational choice.

However, this decision caused deep anger in the Diaspora and caused discontent of the Diaspora with the Armenian government. The Armenian diaspora owes much of its historical formation to Turkey. The main goal of the diaspora organizations established during the last century was to achieve the recognition of the “Armenian genocide” and to receive an apology and compensation from Turkey. Even some members of the Armenian diaspora went beyond and created their own terrorist organizations on the way of fight. In this situation, the statements against Ter-Petrosyan by members of the diaspora expanded. Diaspora organizations began to strengthen ties with the opposition in Armenia.

Ter-Petrosyan initially seemed willing to compromise, even on the Karabakh issue. In an interview with the Turkish newspaper “Cumhuriyet” in 1992, Ter-Petrosyan stated that his main intention regarding Karabakh was to protect the security of the Armenian population, without touching on issues such as Karabakh's independence (Papazian, T., 2006, p.238). But, the Karabakh war and the atrocities committed by Armenia changed Turkey's position on Armenia. Turkey has decided to suspend diplomatic relations with Armenia.

Ter-Petrosyan feared that diaspora organizations would further restrict Armenia's already limited foreign policy capabilities. The Diaspora was forming a strong opposition within Armenia against the ruling Armenian National Movement Party. Diaspora organizations have established their own local parties in Armenia. In particular, the local organization of the ARF was gaining fame in Armenia. As a result of ARF's anti-government rhetoric, Ter-Petrosyan stepped up pressure on them. According to Ter-Petrosyan, the main goal of this “external-controlled” organization was to seize power in Armenia and put it in a

foreign-controlled position. As a result, in 1994, the ARF in Armenia was closed. This gave a new impetus to the mistrust between diaspora groups and the Armenian government.

Although Ter-Petrosyan was re-elected in 1996, this time he received only 51.7% of the vote (compared to 83% in 1991). The main reason for this was the deteriorating relations with the diaspora and the extremely bad socio-economic situation in the country. Opposition groups, with the support of the Diaspora, began holding rallies claiming that the vote was rigged. 200,000 people joined the protests in the capital Yerevan. Protesters even entered the parliament building. Ter-Petrosyan's deployment of the army took a heavy toll on his reputation (Melkonian, E., 2011, p.85). Thus, during Ter-Petrosyan's rule, although there were favorable conditions for the development of relations with the diaspora, it was not taken seriously.

Diaspora's bad relations with Petrosyan also affected his resignation. Thus, in 1997, the OSCE Minsk Group proposed “phased settlement” option for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This solution provided for the gradual return of the districts around Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, then the return of the population to the Karabakh, and finally the determination of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. This step-by-step solution was one of the most progressive steps taken so far to resolve the conflict peacefully. Both Heydar Aliyev and Levon Ter-Petrosyan accepted this solution. Although there were hopes that the conflict would be resolved, Armenia soon abandoned this decision.

Members of the Ter-Petrosyan administration began to protest against the decision. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan, Interior Minister Serzh Sargsyan, Defense Minister Vazgen Sargsyan, opposition forces, diaspora organizations and their local groups, and even some members of Ter-Petrosyan's party demanded the president's resignation. Army forces did not defend Ter-Petrosyan. Ter-Petrosyan resigned in February 1998 to escape the resulting government crisis (Papazian, T., 2006, pp.246-247). The fact that the Diaspora provoked the opposition, then government officials against Ter-Petrosyan on such an important moral issue and this played a major role in the latter's resignation.

Diaspora organizations supported Ter-Petrosyan's resignation. When Kocharyan was elected president, he strengthened ties with the diaspora, thinking it was important to gain the economic and political support of diaspora groups. According to Kocharyan, the diaspora is a resource that Armenia has not used wisely by the previous government. If the potential of the diaspora was used well, Armenians could only benefit from it (Derderian, D., 2010, p.7). Diaspora-Armenia conferences began to be held during the Kocharyan administration. The first such conference was held in 1999.

Kocharyan's other important step toward rapprochement with the diaspora is the lifting of a ban on the local ARF organization in 1998. As a result, he gained the sympathy of the ARF, which is an important part of the Armenian diaspora. The ARF, in turn, abandoned the radical direction as before and began to pursue a policy that was largely in line with the government (Melkonian, E., 2011, p.87).

Kocharyan took a more pragmatic, nationalist approach to foreign policy. His anti-Turks policy has also worsened relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Another important step in foreign policy is to raise the issue of genocide recognition more actively. This further expanded the support it received from the Diaspora, especially the ARF. In general, until 2008, the Diaspora had few complaints against the Armenian government.

Unlike the predecessor, Kocharyan tried to pursue a more ambitious and balanced foreign policy when he came to power. The rapprochement with Western structures took place at the insistence of the Western diaspora, and the main goal was to strengthen democratic reforms in the country, as well as to gain some room for maneuver in pro-Russian foreign policy.

However, despite the fact that diaspora organizations in many Western countries, especially in the United States, want Armenia's integration into the West and the reduction of political dependence on Russia, the Russian factor has become more influential than the Diaspora. As a result, the Diaspora realized that the possibility of influencing Armenia's foreign policy is quite limited when it comes to Russia. Thus, due to the "lack of choice" I mentioned, the main foreign policy priorities did not change much during the Kocharyan administration. Kocharyan considered the alliance with Russia to be the number one issue for the security of Armenia and invaded Karabakh. The Russian-centered Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), including Armenia, was established in 2002 on the basis of the Collective Security Treaty signed in 1992.

There were no serious changes in the political and economic structure of Armenia during Kocharyan's rule. The Diaspora hoped that the change of government would expand democratic reforms in Armenia, accelerate economic development and reduce corruption, which is one of the biggest problems, but it did not happen. In general, most of the problems criticized by the Kocharyan administration during Ter-Petrosyan's tenure, sustained throughout Kocharyan's presidency.

However, very few members of the Armenian diaspora protested against internal political, economic, social problems and democratic deficits during Kocharyan's rule. Traditional diaspora organizations have also largely sided with the government. Because at



that time there was such a perception that even if the government is authoritarian, protest against the government only serves the interests of the opponents. Therefore, stability and integrity must be more important for Armenia than democracy and human rights. It is clear that this was artificially created by the Kocharyan administration. Because during Ter-Petrosyan's tenure, despite mass protests against the government, especially from the ARF, no one called the ARF unpatriotic or treacherous.

There are certain differences in the foreign policy priorities of the Armenian diaspora and Armenia. This has been evident throughout Armenia's independence. The main priority of the Diaspora is, of course, alleged Genocide recognition, which is perhaps the main reason for its current strength and unity. Although the Diaspora is interested in other Armenian issues, it always attaches more importance to Genocide recognition. This is a moral issue for them. The Diaspora also demands that the Armenian government pay due attention to the Genocide issue. Karabakh issue has always been less important for the Diaspora than Genocide recognition. Because the Karabakh problem arose outside the will of the Diaspora and has reached this point. Moreover, the Diaspora agreed to a large extent on the recognition of the Genocide by Turkey and the world community, and then establishing a relationship with it. However, such solidarity has never been observed around the Karabakh issue. Although the forces supporting Karabakh's supposed self-determination prevail, some diaspora groups also understand that compromise is the only successful prospect. On the other hand, the recognition of the so-called republic was met with serious efforts by the diaspora, but the Armenian authorities always tried to approach this issue rationally. Because they clearly understood that the recognition of the so-called regime's autonomy could lead to a new conflict. For this reason, even Armenia itself did not recognize Nagorno-Karabakh.

To date, the Armenian government has always considered the Karabakh issue as a key direction of its foreign policy. The issue of genocide is left to the Diaspora. So, the intervention of the Diaspora in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was limited by the Armenian government and became possible only with its permission. The government feared that any intervention would lead to breaking the alliance with Russia and eventually ending the occupation. But dealing with the Karabakh issue in Armenia is not only the monopoly of the head of state and the Security Council. Until the war of 2020, high-ranking officers who participated in the First Karabakh War, persons belonging to the Karabakh clan (including the Sargsyan, Kocharyan and Ohanyan trio) and rich Armenian businessmen who looted the wealth of Karabakh for nearly 30 years had a grip to dictate on the settlement process (Papazian, T., 2006, p.243-248).

### *The events of 2008*

Although Armenia's domestic and foreign policy situation, as well as relations with the diaspora, were relatively stable until 2008, the 2008 presidential election had a significant impact on Armenia's domestic political life, as well as relations with the diaspora.

In the election, Serzh Sargsyan represented the pro-government Republican Party and was backed by President Kocharian. Former President Levon Ter-Petrosyan ran as an independent candidate. The opposition was represented by Artur Baghdasaryan (Rule of Law party). In the elections, Sargsyan received about 53% of the vote. Ter-Petrosyan received only 21% of the vote. However, large-scale rallies began in the country in connection with the election fraud. Hundreds of thousands of people attended the rallies. Ter-Petrosyan began to lead the opposition protesting the elections. The rallies continued for 10 days in several Armenian cities, including Yerevan. The protests were dissolved only after police and army forces entered the streets and squares. The army brutally attacked the protesters. Nearly 1,000 protesters were beaten in clashes with police and army forces. At least eight protesters were killed during the riots. Hundreds of protesters, including Ter-Petrosyan, were arrested. Finally, on March 1, the rallies were violently broken up.

Diaspora Armenians held rallies in various cities around the world (Moscow, Los Angeles, Washington, etc.) to demonstrate their support for the protesters. Diaspora organizations were also expected to support the Armenian people and sharply criticize the government. However, the joint statement of traditional Armenian diaspora organizations and some other organizations (ANCA, AAA, AGBU, etc.) was met with fury in Armenia. Many Armenians stressed that the joint statement served the interests of the authorities, as the 1988 communiqué. Although the statement stressed the importance of ensuring human rights, fair elections, freedom of expression and free media in general, it did not specifically mention the violent actions of government forces or the brutal interference in protesters (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, p.16).

Some Armenians living in Armenia assessed the statement as a treason. After that, diaspora organizations tried to approach the issue more objectively. But here, too, the division between diaspora organizations showed itself. Some organizations sharply criticized the violence of government forces and human rights violations. There were even those who openly supported Ter-Petrosyan and did not recognize the election results (Armenian Democratic Liberal Party - Ramkavar, The Hnchak party). However, these parties, as well as diaspora leaders, soon congratulated Sargsyan on his election as president. Radical ARF

supported Sargsyan from the beginning (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, pp.16-17). All this once again demonstrated the lack of solidarity between the Diaspora and the Armenian people, as well as within the diaspora itself.

As for the position of the Armenian Church, in the events of 2008, the church fully supported the ruling forces. Both the Western and Eastern Dioceses of the Armenian Church (Etchmiadzin Church) in the United States, as well as the Prelacy of the Armenian Church (Antelias Church), were among the main signatories in the 2008 joint statement of diaspora organizations. Also, after the scandalous 2008 presidential elections, the Eastern and Western Apostolic Church and the Antelias Church issued a joint letter to members of the diaspora. This letter was also written in general as a joint statement of the Diaspora and did not specifically criticize the Armenian government, but called on the representatives of the diaspora to unite closely around the Armenian government. Before the elections, the Armenian Church expressed its support for Sargsyan, and even the Catholicos of the Church took part in his election campaigns (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, p.54;57).

### ***Diaspora's position on Turkish-Armenian protocols***

Like Kocharyan, his predecessor Sargsyan attached great importance to the development of relations with the diaspora. The Diaspora could be one of the important elements in the revival of Armenia.

The sharpest change in foreign policy in the first years of Sargsyan's rule was the sudden emergence of hopes for normalization of relations with Turkey. Armenia also had a deep need for this. Thus, after the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008, the only land route with Russia was lost (with the closure of the Russian-Georgian border). Therefore, Armenia needed large markets, especially for the export of agricultural products. If relations with Turkey improved, Armenia would benefit in every way, and could even strengthen ties with Europe through Turkey.

In 2008, Abdullah Gul's visit to Yerevan during the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers match between Armenia and Turkey, followed by Serzh Sargsyan's visit to Turkey (called "football diplomacy"), led to a partial warming of Turkish-Armenian relations. In October 2009, the parties met in Zurich. The meeting, which was also attended by officials from Russia, the United States, France and the EU, led to the signing of the Zurich Protocols (never ratified). The protocols provided for the opening of borders and the establishment of

diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey in the future. The Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, later stated that the signing of the protocols did not mean that Armenian-Turkish relations would return to normal immediately. According to him, the Turkish-Armenian border could be opened only if the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is resolved (BBC news, 2009).

A week before the signing of the protocols with Turkey, Sargsyan visited the United States and Europe. He met with prominent representatives and leaders of the diaspora, as well as the Dioceses of the Western Echmiadzin Church (Asbarez, 2009). Only then he left for Zurich. Of course, this visit was made to get the consent of the Diaspora to improve relations with Turkey. This shows once again that some issues of Armenia's foreign policy are really under the direct influence of the Diaspora. Instead of successfully representing Armenia in the international arena, Armenia must sacrifice its foreign policy sovereignty. Especially in relations with Turkey, a step taken against the will of the Diaspora would deprive Armenia of all the support of the Diaspora.

Shortly before the signing of the Armenian-Turkish protocols in October 2009, the Dioceses of Eastern and Western Apostolic Church issued a joint statement with some humanitarian organizations expressing their support for the protocols to be signed with Turkey. Even the Armenian Church sent off Sargsyan and blessed him on this trip. In a statement, the Eastern and Western Apostolic Church said that opposing the protocols and criticizing the government did not serve the interests of the Armenian nation (Policy Forum Armenia, 2010, p.58).

The ARF, as well as the Antelias Church did not join the joint declaration. The ARF was not happy with the improvement of relations with Turkey. Because ARF is built and operates on the basis of anti-Turkish ideology. The ARF launched the "Stop the Protocols" campaign on the eve of the signing of the Turkish-Armenian protocols, and when the protocols were signed, they held a protest in front of the Swiss consulate in the United States together with some affiliate diaspora groups (Asbarez, 2009). As for the church, the Apostolic Church, although divided into two, is under the serious influence of the Armenian government. On the contrary, the Armenian government uses it to influence the Diaspora. The Antelias Church, though sometimes in the same position as the government, sometimes harshly criticizes it. This church operates outside the will of the Armenian government, under the control of the ARF and its affiliates.

In some respects, the Diaspora poses more obstacles to Armenia's foreign policy than benefits. Turkish-Armenian relations is one of the relevant issues that show that the Armenian

diaspora has some detrimental effects on Armenia. The ideological struggle against Turkey, the recognition of the so-called Armenian genocide, is a very important element of the existence and unity of the diaspora. However, it is clear that if relations with Turkey normalize, it could have very serious benefits for Armenia. As a result, Armenia will have access to better transport corridors, as well as a shorter route in relations with European countries, which will further diversify exports of Armenia, and Turkish products will significantly reduce dependence on Russia in the domestic market. Thus, with the opening of borders with Turkey, it would be very easy to resolve some issues that Diaspora cannot resolve, but the bias of the Diaspora will always be one of the obstacles to building relations with Turkey, unless they understand the futility of continuing this position.

There are a few prospects of convergence nowadays, albeit, the previous problems still persist. I will elaborate this in the 3rd section.

### ***Diaspora's position on Sargsyan's pro-Russian foreign policy***

Sargsyan also remained loyal to his predecessors' "Russia-first" policy. During his time, Russia's political and economic dominance over Armenia reached its peak. However, another important point in Sargsyan's foreign policy was to integrate into European structures at a level that would not bother Russia, at least. Armenian authors call Sargsyan's multi-vector policy "complementarity". Diaspora groups outside the post-Soviet countries were also strong upholders of dialogue and cooperation with the EU and NATO. As a result, democracy could be revived in Armenia, corruption, poverty and, most importantly, Russia's influence could be reduced to some extent. It was not only the Armenian diaspora in the West that supported European integration. Most political parties in Armenia, including local traditional diaspora parties, opposition groups, and L.Ter-Petrosyan, supported the expansion of cooperation with the EU. Opposition groups and members of the diaspora thought that pro-Western policy would lead the development of democratic institutions and to prevent the authoritarianism of the government in Armenia (Terzyan, A., 2016, pp.156-157).

In 2009, the EU included Armenia and five more countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus) to the Eastern Partnership (EaP).<sup>4</sup> Armenia began negotiations with the EU in 2010 to sign the EaP Association Agreement (which ultimately provided for the establishment of a deep free trade zone). The negotiation process was very

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<sup>4</sup> EaP envisages the formation and application of shared values in the field of democracy, security and development, to reduce barriers to the free flow of people, products and services and capital, as well as as well as the creation of a dialogue forum to benefit from the experience of other countries in these issues.

fast, and even in 2012, the European Commission announced that by the end of 2013, negotiations with three countries - Georgia, Moldova, Armenia (negotiations with Ukraine were nearing completion) could be completed. It would then be possible to start signing Association Agreements with these countries, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas.

The Western Diaspora was also satisfied with the success of the talks. The Association Agreement could significantly reduce economic dependence on Russia and make Armenia looser and more democratic under the influence of the Diaspora. In 2013, at a time when everyone was waiting for Armenia to sign an Association Agreement with the EU, the Russian factor reappeared.

Russia, of course, could not reconcile with this agreement. The countries participating in the EaP program were economically heavily dependent on Russia. The signing of the Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area meant that this economic dependence was largely out of its hands. Moreover, Russia could not allow a country that is politically dependent on it, such as Armenia, to be deeply integrated into the EU. In general, from the very beginning, Russia did not hesitate to say that the EaP program contradicts Russia's interests (Emerson M. & Kostanyan H., 2013). Ultimately, Serzh Sargsyan, who was visiting Russia in September 2013, suddenly announced Armenia's intention to join the Russian-led Customs Union. This meant drawing a line over the negotiations with the EU. Of course, there was a deep reason behind this decision, or rather, serious pressure from Russia.

Concerned about the success of the Association Agreement, Russia increased the price of gas it sold to Armenia by 50% in April 2013. This created a shock effect and protests in Armenia. This was an unacceptable decision for Armenia, which is heavily dependent on Russia for energy and does not have sufficient financial resources. On the other hand, Russia expanded its military cooperation with Azerbaijan. In 2013, Russia signed an agreement with Azerbaijan to sell \$4 billion worth of military equipment (Terzyan, A., 2016, pp.158-159). This posed a serious threat to Armenia. According to some Armenian politicians in the future, even Russia was likely to ignite a new Karabakh war. Russian officials did not refrain from making open statements against Armenia and the EU. Alexander Vasilyev, First Secretary of the Russian Embassy in Armenia, stressed the importance of suspending the Association Agreement, threatening Armenia with a new wave of protests in the country (Grigoryan, A., 2013).

When it is said the Armenian diaspora, the first that comes to mind is Armenians living outside the post-Soviet space, especially in the United States and Europe. However, the largest Armenian diaspora in the world - about 2.5 million - lives in Russia. The Armenian population in Russia is of great importance to Armenia. In general, 70% of remittances sent to Armenia come from Russia. In addition to permanent and long-term migration, the Armenian population migrates seasonally to Russia (approximately 200,000 per year). As the economic situation of the population of Armenia does not improve much over time, or even worsens, the emigration figures are increasing year by year. Only, In recent years, Russia's share in the emigration index has been decreasing regarding on Russian-Ukrainian war, has dropped to the lowest level since the independence of Armenia.

Russia is also pleased with these immigration figures. Because the Russian population is also declining, there is a serious need for migrants. Most importantly, the more the Armenian population grows in Russia, the greater the opportunities for influence and control over Armenia. In general, the Russian government uses migrants living in the country more than other regional powers as a means of influencing the country to which the migrant belongs. When interests intersect with this country and a conflict situation arises, it first increases persecution and pressure on the people of that country living in Russia. This automatically creates internal dissatisfaction in that country of origin. For comparison, the United States uses more acceptable means of pressure (such as economic and diplomatic sanctions). The use of immigrants in the United States as a means of coercion is strongly opposed by democratic institutions. In Russia, the limited number of such institutions is a source of concern for migrants and, indirectly, for the home country.

The Armenian diaspora in Russia is concerned that if Armenia chooses a foreign policy contrary to Russia, they will face pressure from the Russian government. For this reason, they are putting pressure on Armenia to form a pro-Russian foreign policy. This is especially true of rich Armenian businessmen and billionaires in Russia. These rich people, who make up a significant portion of Armenia's GDP, fear that if Armenia chooses to integrate into Europe, the Russian government will create an obstacle or deprive them of opportunities for comfortable business. Armenia, which is heavily financially dependent on Armenian businessmen in Russia, cannot ignore them in its foreign policy choices. But, of course, other ordinary Armenians in Russia should not be overlooked. Pressure, deprivation or deportation of migrants pose a risk of migrants returning to Armenia. Armenia, which is not in a good economic situation, cannot withstand this influx of immigration.

The concern of the Armenian diaspora in Russia is not unfounded. The Diaspora probably seems to have learned from the “Georgian lesson”. Georgia's rapid expansion of relations with the EU since 2006 has also led to a cooling of Russian-Georgian relations. At the same time, along with economic embargoes, sanctions, boycotts and provocations, Russia began to oppress the Georgian population in Russia. Georgians who migrated illegally to Russia were immediately deported. In the second half of 2006 alone, about 2,400 Georgian migrants were deported to Georgia. Many of them even had migrated legally. Most of Georgians spent weeks in prison. 2 Georgian migrants died as a result of beating by Russian officers (Human Rights Watch, 2007, p.30). The Georgian population was portrayed as a criminal, a mobster, a disturber by the Russian propaganda machine, and an artificial conflict was created between the Russian population and the Georgians. Georgians were treated as strangers by Russian officials throughout Russia. The Georgian Church and the Georgian embassy were closely monitored by Russian police. Georgian businessmen and workers were severely hampered, the accounts of rich people were frozen, and their wealth was confiscated. The Georgian-Russian conflict and the processes that took place on that eve also play a role in Armenia's decision to integrate in 2013 (Terzyan A., 2019, pp.133-135)

Thus, under the pressure of the Armenian population in Russia, taking into account Russia's pressure such as arms supplies to Azerbaijan and gas price, as well as example of Georgia, Armenia had to turn away from Europe. Armenia joined the Russian-led Customs Union in 2013. In 2015, it became the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Thus, although Armenia's customs barriers with Russia and other members of the union have been reduced, this has also resulted in a significant loss of economic independence.

The decision of 2013, on the one hand, showed the strong influence of the Armenian diaspora in Russia on Armenia's foreign policy. On the other hand, these events have shown that the role of the "traditional external diaspora" in shaping of foreign policy is not very strong in some issues. These developments also revealed the contradictory structure of the Armenian diaspora. Although Armenians in the Western countries are enthusiastic about European integration, Armenians in Russia, on the other hand, supports pro-Russian policies. These events have shown once again that the influence of the Western diaspora - Armenians living in Europe and the United States- on Armenia's foreign policy is finite. In fact, it cannot overcome to Russia's interests. The influence of the "internal diaspora" (in Russia) on Armenia is undeniable, and these influences, on the contrary, push Armenia to lean towards Russia. As a result of its large numbers and much greater financial dependence on the Russian



diaspora, Armenia became a member of the Russian-led organization, although it did not satisfy the Armenian diaspora in the West.

### *The 2018 Velvet Revolution and Pashinyan's foreign policy course*

Russia has always been concerned about "color revolutions" in post-Soviet countries, and is ready to use all means of pressure to protect what is left after the coups in Georgia and Ukraine. In this regard, Russia has tried to weaken democratic institutions in post-Soviet countries. If we pay attention to the revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, we will see that non-governmental institutions (NGOs) play an active role in both. For this reason, Russia first tried to prevent a possible coup in Armenia by restricting the activities of NGOs. About 350 NGOs have been participating in anti-Russian protests in Armenia since 2013 (Grigoryan, M., 2015). For this reason, as a result of the activities of pressure groups, Russia managed to pass an anti-NGO bill in parliament in Armenia in 2015. The bill provided for strict state control over the establishment and activities of NGOs (Terzyan A., 2019, pp.129-130).

On the other hand, Russia has expanded its economic and military involvement in Armenia, as well as in other members of the CSTO. Gazprom has seized control of Armenia's energy infrastructure in exchange for erasing the debts of Armenia. 90% of all power plants in Armenia, including the Metsamor nuclear power plant, are controlled by Russian companies. According to 2017 data, 1,400 enterprises were established in Armenia with Russian investment, and this figure is ¼ of all enterprises (President.am, 2017).

These preventive measures provoked backlash against Russia. In addition, "Gyumri massacre" in 2015 flared anti-Russian statements and prompted mass protests in Armenia. These protests gradually led to a revolutionary situation in the country. First, there were protests in 2015 over rising electricity prices and the monopoly of Russian companies in this area. The Western Diaspora was watching the process closely and wanted a leader who would pursue a more democratic and balanced policy in Armenia to come to power. The next wave of protests began after the April 2016 war. The Armenian "external Diaspora", through local organizations, allegedly carried out false propaganda that the April war was in fact a warning from Russia to Armenia. With the April War, Russia declared that it was no longer a guarantor of Nagorno-Karabakh's "security". Russia's support in a new war could no longer be relied upon. Therefore, it was more correct to ensure the "security of Karabakh" through integration with the West. However, it is clear that the one of the main reason Armenia did not lose any more territories in the April War was Russia's political prestige.

According to Russia, the protests in Armenia were led by Western countries and the Armenian diaspora there. Russian officials said the US embassy in Armenia was directly involved in the protests (Terzyan A., 2019, p.135). After Georgia and Ukraine, there were attempts to "destabilize" Armenia. However, Russia's attempts to gain some control over Armenia faced serious counteraction and were not enough to prevent the Velvet Revolution in 2018.

In 2017, a new bill introduced by the pro-Western "Yelk" faction, led by deputy Nikol Pashinyan, was not adopted, but received strong support in the Armenian parliament. The bill called for Armenia's withdrawal from the EEU (Stepanian, R., 2017). The growing anti-government and to some extent anti-Russian protests led by Pashinyan ended successfully in April 2018 and resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan. Russia did not react seriously to the Velvet revolution. After coming to power, Pashinyan stopped his anti-Russian claims and announced that Armenia would remain in the EEU and the CSTO (Primeminister.am, 2018).

Thus, even if the government changed in Armenia and an "anti-Russian" person came to power, he could not go beyond that and had to choose to remain loyal to Russia. Pashinyan simply used anti-Russian rhetoric to come to power, and in order to protect his chair he had to stop this discourse. The former Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanian said during his visit to Russia that the 2018 revolution in Armenia was a matter of internal affairs and had nothing to do with Russia and allied relations with it (Atanesian G., 2018).

Thus, when considering the influence of the Diaspora on Armenia's foreign policy since the independence of Armenia, we must first note that the division of the diaspora limits this effect. In other words, while the Armenian diaspora in Russia demands adherence to a pro-Russian foreign policy, the Armenians in Europe and the United States are in favor of Western integration for a more democratic and free Armenia. This split puts the Armenian government in a dilemma. Although the Western Diaspora is better organized and has done much to protect Armenia's interests in Western countries, the diaspora living in Russia is also one of the economic foundations of Armenia. The interests of the large diaspora in Russia often prevail in this matter and Russian-oriented policies are maintained.

### **§2.3. Diaspora's view of current issues in the South Caucasus**

It was the Second Karabakh War and a number of processes that followed it that caused serious shift in the alignment of political and military powers in the South Caucasus, in Armenian foreign policy, as well as in the relations between the Armenian authorities and the Diaspora. In this section I will try to clarify these issues.

In 2020, the conflict situation in Nagorno-Karabakh aggravated. This was triggered by provocations of the Armenian side. Thus, on July 12, the Armenian army, which was trying to attack from the direction of the Tovuz district of Azerbaijan, was successfully prevented by the Azerbaijani army. The location of Tovuz outside the conflict zone indicated that Armenia was clearly trying to expand the scale of the conflict. Finally, on September 27, after another Armenian provocation, the Azerbaijani army counterattacked. As a result, rising tensions led to a new war, called the Second Karabakh War, which lasted 44 days. Throughout the war, the Azerbaijani army continued to advance and liberate its lands one by one. The Armenian side, which lost one lands after another, suffered serious soldiers and material losses, was forced to sign a statement with Azerbaijan on November 10 with the mediation of Russia. As a result, Azerbaijan, as a victorious state, forcibly restored its territorial integrity.

### *The efficiency of the Diaspora during the Second Karabakh war*

The Armenian diaspora became somewhat active during the war. Part of the Diaspora's activities was to provide Armenia with economic and financial assistance, as well as military equipment and to encourage other countries to provide such assistance. In total, only \$150 million was donated to Armenia during the war. This is a very small number while taking into account 10 million Armenians worldwide. In addition, this amount includes funds transferred by dozens of billionaire and millionaire Armenian oligarchs. 45% of this amount was transferred by Armenians living in the United States. The Armenian diaspora in Russia was very passive in the aid process (slightly more than 10%) (Sosial Tədqiqatlar Mərkəzi, 2020). This difference is understandable, given that the United States has a higher rate middle-class Armenian population than Russia. But in any case, the assistance provided to Armenia by the Armenian diaspora is not proportional to its prestige and power.

In addition, the Diaspora was skeptical about how the government would spend the money raised. It is no secret that the level of corruption in Armenia is high. In this case, it is difficult to believe how donations will be spent correctly and transparently. The incoming aid was mostly transferred to the All Armenia Fund. This fund is notorious for money laundering and embezzlement (Вестник Кавказа, 2022).

The Diaspora helped to send Armenian volunteers abroad, as well as mercenaries of other nationalities, to the Karabakh zone. Since the beginning of the war, Azerbaijani and Turkish officials have claimed that mercenary militants from Syria were involved in the war from Armenian side. Many of them were former members of ASALA or other terrorist forces involved in the Syrian civil war (Report, 2020).

Another part of the Diaspora's activities during the Second Karabakh War was the imposition of sanctions on Azerbaijan by other states, the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh's autonomy and, at least in this way, intervention of foreign countries in the conflict. During the war and after the signing of the tripartite statement, a number of biased recommendations were adopted in the Parliaments of France, Holland and Belgium with the pressure of the Armenian lobby and the close participation of pro-Armenian deputies. In these resolutions, it is alleged that the life of the Armenian population in Karabakh is in danger and therefore international intervention is required, as well as Azerbaijan and even Turkey are described as aggressor countries and sanctions against them were proposed (Beynəlxalq Münasibətlərin Təhlili Mərkəzi, 2021).

Especially France has been one of Armenia's closest supporters during and after the Second Karabakh War. During the war, the French government repeatedly sent "humanitarian aid" to Armenia. French officials, including Foreign Minister Eric Chevalier, visited Armenia.

Apparently, despite all the activities of the Armenian diaspora during the 44-day war, no state took any official action for Armenia, nor it was likely to do so. Because Nagorno-Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan and it has been accepted by the whole world community.

In the information war on social networks, despite the wide network and contacts of the Armenian diaspora, it was not possible to provide serious support to Armenia by the world community too. Unlike the First Karabakh War, the Armenian diaspora faced a new obstacle during the Second Karabakh War. It was the growing Azerbaijani diaspora. In general, the Azerbaijani diaspora has responded to every provocation committed by the Armenian diaspora since the Tovuz battles. Members of the Armenian diaspora saw a helpless way out by attacking and beating a small number of Azerbaijanis. Such cases were encountered in Los Angeles (Seven Azerbaijanis injured in Armenian attack in Los-Angeles, 2020), Brussels (Azerbaijani in Belgium, 2020), and other cities where Armenians heavily populated. The Azerbaijani diaspora also held retaliatory rallies abroad. A strong Turkish diaspora was closely involved in these actions.

### *Diaspora's stance on the tripartite statement of 10 November*

The attitude of the Armenian diaspora towards the tripartite statement of November 10, 2020 and the current government showed disunity. The ARF was the only one to object to the statement from the beginning. Several diaspora organizations started protesting against the Armenian government and statement only after the wave of protests in Armenia. Following the statement, the ARF and about 50 other diaspora organizations called on Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to resign immediately and suspend the implementation of the statement (ARF: More than 50 diaspora organizations demand Armenia PM Pashinyan's resignation, 2020). The Union of Russian Armenians also joined this call. Armenians living abroad held rallies in support of the protests in Armenia. Protests in Armenia intensified on the eve of the January 11 meeting of Ilham Aliyev, Vladimir Putin and Nikol Pashinyan in Moscow. Chairman of the Union of Armenians of Russia Ara Abramyan wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of Armenia, demanding that he not come to the meeting in Moscow and resign immediately because he signed a statement that is not in the interests of the Armenian people (Beynəlxalq Mənasibətlərin Təhlili Mərkəzi, 2021). On January 11, Russian Armenians protested in front of the Armenian embassy in Russia, demanding the resignation of "traitor" Nikol Pashinyan and the complete suspension of the statement. The Dashnaks also participated widely in the protests in Russia. However, it should be noted that Abramyan's protests stemmed not only from national feelings but also from political goals. Thus, Abrahamyan, who participated in the 2021 extraordinary parliamentary elections in Armenia, was trying to gain support with such a political campaign. But in the end, he managed to collect only 0.95% of votes in the coalition with Tigran Urikhyan. (Bayramlı, R. & Mammadov, N., 2022, p.7). Despite mass protests, Nikol Pashinyan managed to win the 2021 elections due to the lack of a more reputable candidate.

From April 2022, a new wave of anti-government rallies, called the "Resistance movement", organized by the opposition (led by former President, pro-Russian Robert Kocharyan and former Defence Minister Seyran Ohanyan) and nationalist diaspora organizations began in Armenia.<sup>5</sup> The protesters oppose the normalization of relations between Pashinyan's government and Azerbaijan and Turkey. They demanded Pashinyan's resignation because he betrayed Armenian national interests. The ARF, the CCAF, the Union of Armenians of Russia backed these protests and organized large solidarity demonstrations in USA, France, Russia. High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan called

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<sup>5</sup> First it started as a protest against the meeting of Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to be held in Brussels on April 6

Dashnak leaders' harsh attitude towards Pashinyan's government as treason, fueled the ARF-Armenian government conflict. Sinanyan faced stiff resistance from the ARF during his visit to Los Angeles (Horizonweekly, 2022).

Due to the protests of the Dashnaks in Russia, the prime minister had to postpone his meeting with some representatives of the diaspora during his visit to Moscow. In addition, the fact that Pashinyan's government barred some influential members of the diaspora from entering the country by declaring them persona non grata shows that the Armenian authorities are not looking for compromise at all (Asbarez, 2022); (Armenianweekly, 2023).

However, despite this, some diaspora organizations lined up with the government. The Social Democrat Hunchakian Party criticized the opposition and the diaspora groups regarding the protests in its statement, and emphasized that it is wrong for the diaspora groups to get involved in such political intrigues. Hunchakian Party pointed out that the organization as well as the majority of the Armenian population do not support these protests (Hunchakian Party, 2022 - Statement). So, in the summer of 2022, the opposition had to stop the rallies due to the limitation of its social base.

On the other hand, the protests against Pashinyan are not stronger than during the time of Levon Ter-Petrosyan. Because currently there are diaspora groups who think that Pashinyan's rule is the most democratic development path possible for Armenia. Thus, although Pashinyan is in conflict with the radical diaspora regarding the loss of Karabakh and the peace process, on the other hand, he is gaining the support of many independent diaspora members in the West with his reform-oriented policy.

### ***The impact of the 2020 war on subsequent Armenia-diaspora relations***

Let's talk about how the 44-day war affected the Armenia-Diaspora relations, as well as solidarity within the diaspora. First of all, it should be noted that the Armenian-Diaspora relations are developing on the basis of the interests of a group of oligarchs and the Armenian political elite. The war also showed that these rich people have no intention to share the problems of the Armenian population. Their main interests are the business interests they have in Armenia or under the Armenian name. Most of the assistance was provided for this purpose.

True face of the "Diaspora-Armenia unity" was revealed during the Second Karabakh War. The main burden of the war fell on the Armenians living in Karabakh, and partly on the Armenians in Armenia. For the diaspora Armenians living thousands of kilometers away from

the war, it was impossible to understand the horrors of war. The Diaspora is not interested in the welfare of Armenians living in Armenia, but in their economic and business interests.

The war also played a role in deepening the problems that dissatisfied Armenia with the Diaspora. During the entire activity of the Armenian diaspora during and after the war, no state has openly adopted a statement in support of Armenia. Several adopted documents were of advisory nature. Therefore, Armenia is already convinced that the Diaspora does not have as much influence as they think. Thus, the 44-day war also contributed to the testing of the strength and real potential of the Diaspora.

It also became clear after the 44-day war that solidarity within the diaspora was not so strong. The attitude of the Armenian diaspora to the Armenian government is divided into two completely different directions. It is true that on the one hand, most diaspora groups support the anti-governmental protests in Armenia and demand the resignation of the Prime Minister and the Government. According to them, the reason for the current political and economic crisis in Armenia is Nikol Pashinyan and his populist foreign policy. But on the other hand, there are some forces that support the government. They think that the reason for the difficult situation in Armenia was set by the persons in power before Nikol Pashinyan. It is the conflict founded and continued by them that has always prevented Armenia from pursuing an active foreign policy.

### ***Pashinyan's Western-leaning foreign policy and diaspora factor***

Three main trends can be observed in the Armenia's foreign policy line after the Second Karabakh War. Firstly, the stagnation and some contradictions in the relations with Russia, in turn, the developing relations with the Western countries (primarily France); secondly, after the defeat in 2020, due to the return of Karabakh to the control of Azerbaijan, Armenia lost its rights related to negotiations on this issue and narrowed his claims from the Karabakh region to the "security of Karabakh Armenians"; and finally the hopes of rapprochement emerging in relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

After the war, the foreign policy of the Pashinyan administration can be considered relatively more well-rounded than former Armenian authorities. However, despite the harsh anti-Russian rhetoric used by Pashinyan to come to power, his relations with the West are not wide enough. The point is that this "equilibrium" emerged as a result of Russia-Armenia cooling rather than West-Armenia rapprochement. In other words, it is hard to say that the West filled the place of the weakened relations with Russia during the Pashinyan tenure.

The traditional pro-Russian foreign policy of the Armenian authorities before the war was replaced by a relatively balanced discourse that was even capable of criticizing Russia at times. There are two main reasons for the emergence of such rhetoric of the Armenian authorities against Russia: The first, questioning the guarantor role of Russia in the security of Armenia and the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Republic after Armenia's crushing defeat in the Second Karabakh War. Pashinyan's government also emphasizes this openly.<sup>6</sup>

The second is that Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began in February 2022, has a significant negative impact on its soft power and partially keeps it out of regional affairs. Russia's weakening position in the region is also evident in the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Thus, the traditional Russian mediation on the settlement of the conflict has broken. On the contrary, the contributions of the United States and the European Union (later the mediation of the EU was somewhat unsuccessful due to France's apparent biased approach favoring Armenia) in the settlement of the conflict are increasing.

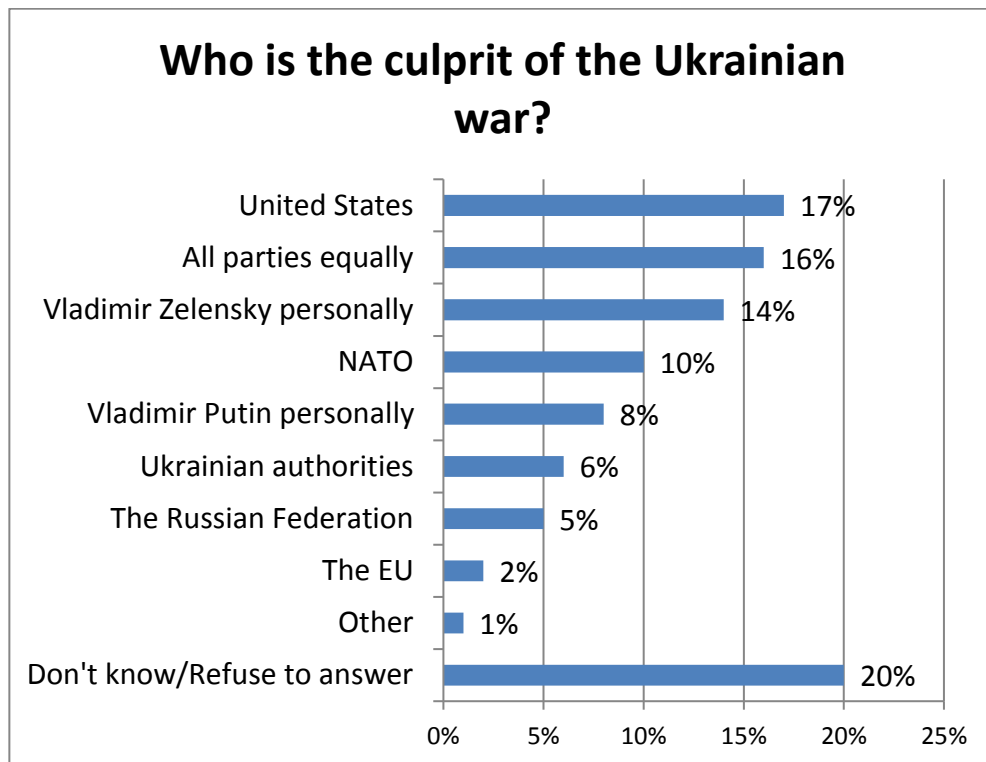
Despite this, it cannot be said that the Armenian people support Pashinyan's cooling of relations with Russia. The following survey conducted in Armenia shows that Russia has a foothold in Armenia that is very difficult to shake, no matter what happens. Thus, a large part of the population sees Western structures or Ukraine itself as the cause of the Russia-Ukraine war (Table 2.) (Public Opinion Survey, 2022, p.42). Although integration with the West is mainly supported by the younger generation, the intelligentsia realizes that turning one's back on Russia suddenly can be disastrous.

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<sup>6</sup> Although the disagreements between Armenia and Russia aggravated after the 2020 war, they started to be voiced by Pashinyan's cabinet only from the end of 2022. Because Russia has somewhat reduced its sharply unequal stance between Azerbaijan and Armenia. On the other hand, in December 2022, Armenia's request to the EU to send a fact-finding mission to the border with Azerbaijan caused a sharp reaction of Russia to Armenia. (the decision to send the mission was announced on January 23). In his first press briefing on January 10, 2023, Nikol Pashinyan hinted that the mission of Russian peacekeepers in Karabakh was a failure, and even went further and declared that the Russian peacekeepers themselves exacerbated the situation in Karabakh. - <https://jam-news.net/pashinyan-press-conference/>



**Table 2.**



As for the diaspora, pro-European policy is apposite for many Western Diaspora organizations. Especially the strong diaspora bodies in France are one of the influential forces shaping Pashinyan's Western-leaning foreign policy. Taking advantage of the stagnation in Armenian-Russian relations, the CCAF and some important diaspora organizations are strengthening their influence on Armenian politics under the pretext of democratization. However, the present policy of deviation from Russia is against the interests of diaspora groups in Russia. The Union of Armenians of Russia has always denounced the EU's enlargement in the region as a danger. They organize protests during the visit of almost every Armenian official to Russia. According to them, Armenia's ongoing crisis is linked to its anti-Russian stance (Bayramlı, R. & Mammadov, N., 2022, pp.15-16). Since the Armenian community in Russia is one of the economic foundations of the country, Pashinyan cannot ignore them. Hence, Pashinyan cannot go very far in his speeches targeting Russia, and it comprehends more like resentment rather than dissatisfaction. For example, Pashinyan, drawing attention to the inactivity of Russian peacekeepers in Karabakh, mentioned the possibility of sending UN peacekeepers to the Karabakh region, but emphasized that this depends on the consent of Russia, However this issue firstly should be consulted with Azerbaijan, conflict party (Turan News, 2023). At the press conference held on March 14,

Pashinyan apparently retracted his anti-Russian views from the first briefing and declared that there is no serious tension between Armenia and Russia and that Armenia will remain in the CSTO (Nikol Pashinyan press conference, 15.03.2023). Recently, even some Western sources claim that Armenia is helping Russia circumvent Western sanctions (Swanson A. & Stevis-Gridneff M., 2023).

On the other hand, Diaspora groups both in the West and in the post-Soviet space understand well that, despite everything, Russia's multi-faceted influence on Armenia is still very large, and it is not an easy matter to change it. Armenia, which is almost 70% dependent on Russia for grain (Hess M., 2022) and 80% for energy products (International Energy Agency - Armenia energy profile, 2023), is already feeling the side effects of the sanctions imposed on Russia (due to Russia's export restrictions). On the other hand, Russian peacekeepers are the only way out for Armenia to maintain contacts (including illegal manners) with Karabakh. For this reason, this issue is not as controversial as the other two foreign policy issues.

### ***The Karabakh issue and the peace process with Azerbaijan***

One of the obvious shift in the foreign policy strategy of the Armenian government in recent times is its approach to the Karabakh conflict. After independence, the Karabakh problem has been the most important political priority of Armenia. Although this has not changed, goals and expectations have undergone serious degradation after the defeat in the Second Karabakh War. This can be easily understood from Pashinyan's rhetoric. In 2019, the transition from unrealistic expressions such as "Karabakh is Armenia" or "ми переможемо"(we will win) to admittances such as "The international community recognizes Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan" or "We have not taken any rational step by ignoring the resolutions of the UN Security Council on Karabakh" (Mejlumyan, A., 2022).

Today, although Armenia admits its defeat, provocative actions still waging in Karabakh. Although the Pashinyan administration has no right to make any claims regarding Karabakh, Azerbaijan still tolerates the activities of illegal Armenian gangs in Karabakh for the sake of peace. But Pashinyan understands that this is temporary. Approaching the peace talks with the hope of achieving something, Armenia is trying to act as sovereignly as possible around the Karabakh issue. Even the puppet leaders of the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh republic are seriously requested to be careful in their statements and not to indulge in havoc (News.am, 2023). It is for this reason that the Armenian authorities dismissed Ruben

Vardanyan, a former Russian citizen and millionaire, from State Minister of fake republic, in order to maintain relations with the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh. Of course, it is understandable that Pashinyan's government, whose claims on the Karabakh region are already in vain, removed the person acting under the dictates of Russia in order not to lose the momentum completely. Armenia does not want to further restrict its shrinking interests in Karabakh for the benefit of Russia (or any other actor). However, another reason for Vardanyan's dismissal is his nationalist statements that would aggravate relations with Baku.

On the other side, the Pashinyan's government is trying to ramp up its influence over France rather than the United States (because the latter is more complex and has limited effect). Armenian lobby groups and diaspora organizations in France are actively working to shaping the formation of biased policies of the current Macron government. But, of course, France playing a mediating role in this way is unacceptable for Azerbaijan. Hence, after the 2022 Prague summit, President Ilham Aliyev declared that Azerbaijan will not participate in the settlement of the conflict with the role of France as a mediator (Apa.az, 2022). France has to be content with only making scandalous statements that perpetuate the conflict. Due to the weakening of Russia's influence in the region (due to the war) and the unilateral position of France, the initiatives of the United States in mediation are gaining strength.<sup>7</sup>

As for the position of the diaspora, I mentioned above that the Armenian government does not admit negative opinions about Armenia's position on Karabakh. Again, in this matter, the Dashnaktsutyun stands out in its stance. In 2022, the ARF took an active part in the Resistance movement rallies in Armenia which held against the "defeated" approach of the Armenian authorities regarding Karabakh and organized such actions in France and the United States. For this reason, the relations between the ARF and the Armenian government can be considered extremely tense. The authorities calls the ARF traitor for violating Armenian unity, and ARF accuses of government for betraying national interests (Mejlumyan, A., 2022). Pashinyan seems to be the most unacceptable leader for ARF. However, it seems that Pashinyan still remains in power due to the absence of a more suitable candidate for the people than Pashinyan.

It is clear that neither the diaspora nor countries like France can help Armenia in the Karabakh issue if they do not intend to promote peace. Diaspora's mechanisms of direct influence on the Karabakh issue are limited. Although the Pashinyan government tries to suppress the voices of the Diaspora regarding Armenia's approach to the Karabakh issue, he believes that the Diaspora can and is being used in some issues in relations with Azerbaijan.

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<sup>7</sup> The parties to the conflict and the US Foreign Ministers met in Washington on 07.11.2022, and in February of this year, the heads of state met in Munich with the mediation of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

For example, the Zangezur corridor, which is planned to be established between the South-West of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Armenia is trying to delay the opening of the corridor envisaged in the tripartite agreement, and perhaps to obtain a compromise from Azerbaijan. Therefore, trying to divert attention, the action carried out by Azerbaijani ecoactivists on the Shusha section of the Khankendi-Lachin road, which began on December 12, 2022, is portrayed as a blockade.<sup>8</sup> Diaspora is also managing to spread this lie of Armenia to the world. However, it is clear that the passage is being used for humanitarian purposes, and there is no question of violating the life security of the Armenian population living in Eastern Zangezur. Disinformation is spread by Armenia just to take a certain position in the peace negotiations with Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, although Pashinyan commits loyal to the policy of the Armenian authorities before him to obtain supremacy over the Karabakh issue, he currently has much less material and authority regarding Karabakh than his predecessors. However, Pashinyan's government is willing to exclude the diaspora and even Russia from the game in hopes of playing an active role in the Karabakh conflict (leaning on Vardanyan's removal). Although the radical diaspora wing protested Pashinyan's policy regarding Karabakh, this actually stems from his attempts to normalize relations with his neighbors - Turkey and Azerbaijan, rather than the loss of Karabakh.

### ***Relations with Turkey***

A third prospect in foreign policy priorities is the hopes for the normalization of relations with Turkey. This issue is one of the important issues of regional relations after the Second Karabakh War. The parties agreed to appoint a special envoy for the normalization of relations in December 2021 (Vice President of the Parliament Rubin Rubinyan from the Armenian side, Serdar Kılıç, the former ambassador to the United States from the Turkish side). After that, the parties met several times, including twice at the level of foreign ministers, as a result, the air and internet connection between the parties was restored, and the visa procedure (via internet) facilitated. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met on October 6, 2022 in Prague, Czech Republic within the framework of the First Summit of the European Political Union. Another issue affecting the warming of relations was the opening of the Armenia-Turkey border for the first time in 30 years due to the sending of humanitarian aid by Armenia after the devastating

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<sup>8</sup> Azerbaijani eco-activists and volunteers are trying to stop the illegal exploitation of natural resources by Armenia and to monitor mineral deposits in peacekeepers-liable area.

earthquake that occurred in Turkey on February 6, 2023. After that, Foreign Ministers Movlut Çavuşoğlu and Ararat Mirzoyan met in Ankara, which created some hopes regarding the opening of borders between the parties.

But, of course, the thaw in bilateral relations is not being carried out without obstacles, and it is questionable whether it will be successful. First of all, it should be said that Turkey has always put forward the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the signing of a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia as a prerequisite for opening the borders with Armenia and establishing diplomatic relations. Today, although some success has been achieved in resolving the conflict, the peace agreement has not yet been signed. For this reason, in my opinion, the full normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey will wait until peace is established in the South Caucasus. The Armenian government hopes that if the Turkish opposition wins the Turkish general elections on May 14, 2023, the precondition for the normalization of relations with Turkey can be removed. But this seems far from reality. Because whether the current government wins or the opposition, it is not credible that Turkey will trample on all cooperation documents signed with Azerbaijan. Pashinyan seems to have understood this, as recently he has been making statements willing to sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan rather than the normalization of relations with Turkey, and pretends that he is willing to do so (Intellinews, 2023).

Another issue that will seriously affect the normalization of relations with Turkey is the will of the Armenian people and the Armenian diaspora. First of all, it should be noted that even within Armenia, rapprochement with Turkey is not welcomed so much. So, according to the public opinion survey conducted in Armenia in 2022, 59% of the respondents have a negative attitude towards the normalization of relations with Turkey, and only 34% think that the opening of Armenia's borders with Turkey is necessary for the economy (Public Opinion Survey, 2022, p.34). Of course, the anti-Turkish propaganda carried out for many years with the influence of diaspora groups made these results appear.

The diaspora's attitude on this matter is sharper. This does not cause dissatisfaction for ordinary people of Armenian origin living outside the country. However, those who have an influence on Armenia are large diaspora groups and organizations, whose position on the issue is the same as before. Radical diaspora groups are against the normalization of relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey as before. In particular, diaspora groups in the Middle East, France, and the United States, led by the ARF, have been hostile to the normalization process since its inception. In 2022, Dashnaksutyun supported the resistance movement rallies organized by the opposition (including the local ARF) against the peace process of

Pashinyan's normalization of relations with Turkey and the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Armenia, and similarly held several protests in the United States and France. The protesters demanded the resignation of Pashinyan's government and the coming to power of people loyal to Armenian national principles. ANCA, the largest Armenian lobby organization in the United States, opposed the foreign policy of the Pashinyan administration. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also noted that these actions of the diaspora undermine the negotiation process. According to the President of Turkey, only the Armenian government can prevent the diaspora from these actions (Dailysabah, 2022).

The great economic importance of normalized relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan for Armenia cannot be overlooked. That is why, despite the protests of diaspora organizations, the Pashinyan administration is trying to continue the negotiations. However, Pashinyan, who should take into account the power of the diaspora in any case, conducts it more unconvincingly.

The future development of events seems complicated. The point is that, although Pashinyan was severely criticized by diaspora organizations for his efforts to normalize relations with Turkey and his defeatist position on the Karabakh issue, the most rational way for Armenia at the moment is to normalize relations with its neighbors. Because Russia, weakened by the war in Ukraine, although it still continues to be a regional dominant power for Armenia, it is certain that it does not promise anything for the future of Armenia. Moreover, peace with Azerbaijan and Turkey is important for Armenia, which is trying to integrate into Europe. Only with this, Armenia can participate in regional projects and expand its relations with Europe. As for the diaspora, first of all, the diaspora should stop its anti-Turkish position. Over time, the gains from opening borders will reduce dissent. The diaspora will have to end the senseless anti-Turkish policy.

Another way is the more illogical option of solidarity with the diaspora. In fact, it is difficult to say exactly in which direction Pashinyan is moving today. The frequent contradictions and provocations in negotiations with Azerbaijan are probably caused by the influence of the diaspora and the Karabakh clan on Pashinyan's rule. By neutralizing Turkey as much as possible, he wants to eliminate the influence of the Azerbaijan-Armenia relations issue on Turkish-Armenian thaw. However, it is clear that Turkey will not go for it. Of course, this undermines the spirit of the negotiations. Listening to the diaspora and continuing the historical enmity is of no benefit to the region and Armenia.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the relations between the Armenian state and the diaspora showed that, although the Armenian national identity is one of the important elements of the diaspora, this does not mean that they will always take the same position in line with Armenia. The Diaspora-Armenia unity, which Armenian authors have been talking about with great pride since the middle of the last century, is just a myth. The Diaspora-Armenia confrontation disclosed during the First Karabakh War, in the 2008 presidential elections in Armenia, during the 2009 Zurich Protocols, in 2013 when Armenia decided to join the Eurasian Customs Union. Finally, manifested itself sharply during the Second Karabakh War, against the tripartite statements of November 10 and January 11, as well as the desire of the Armenian authorities to normalize relations with its neighbors. It is true that the Armenian government has always taken a pragmatic and moderate stance in the Diaspora-Armenia confrontation in order not to be deprived of the support of the Diaspora. However, in return, Armenia's foreign and domestic policy sovereignty has further been limited. Even Armenia sacrifices its well-being in order not to damage relations with the Diaspora. For example, in the case of avoiding the normalization of relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

I have listed two main factors significantly impede the functions of the Diaspora: the Russian factor and the Karabakh issue. Today, despite all the efforts of Armenian diaspora organizations in Western countries and Pashinyan's Russian-targeted claims, Armenia cannot abandon its pro-Russian foreign policy. Because Russia is much more important to Armenia for the economic and political security of Armenia than the Diaspora. Meanwhile, Armenia has to take into account Russian Armenians. Although the Armenian regime, which takes advantage of Russia's involvement in Ukraine in foreign policy, initially tried to pursue a Western-oriented foreign policy as much as possible, but it seems that recently it has come to the conclusion that such a foreign policy course can do more harm than good. For this reason, Pashinyan government is again trying to adhere to the traditional Armenian foreign policy. Thus, in their latest statements, Armenian authorities try to emphasize that there is no serious tension in the alliance relations with Russia. Although the Armenian people and the diaspora have lost their confidence in Russia after the Second Karabakh War, they still do not massively support the elusion of Armenia from Russian hegemony.

As the Karabakh issue is the most important priority of Armenia's foreign policy, the Armenian government had always tried to maintain maximum sovereignty in this matter. Because they were constantly afraid that any activity would undermine the retaining of Karabakh (this includes activities that may displease Russia). That's why the intervention of

the Diaspora in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was restricted by the Armenian government. On the other hand, the Diaspora does not pay as much attention to the Karabakh issue as the Armenian government. The main priority of the Diaspora, of course, is the recognition of Genocide, which is perhaps its current strength and the main reason for its unity. Although the Diaspora is interested in other Armenian issues, it always attaches more importance to Genocide recognition. On the other hand, the position of the diaspora around the Karabakh issue has never been as coherent as the recognition of the alleged Genocide. Even today, the accusations of the Karabakh clan against Armenia's current approach to Karabakh are no longer seriously backed either by a part of the diaspora or by the people.

After the loss of Karabakh, Armenia itself is deprived of the right to make any claims related to Karabakh. This is why the authorities in their latest speeches admit that they have been conducting a wrong foreign policy regarding Karabakh for many years by avoiding negotiations.

As for the influence of the Diaspora on foreign policy, it should be noted that there are foreign policy priorities that are seriously influenced by the Diaspora. The most obvious example of this is Turkish-Armenian relations. It is true that not all members of the Armenian diaspora oppose the normalization of relations with Turkey. In particular, wealthy members of the Armenian diaspora are eager opening Armenia's borders with Turkey in order to expand their business. However, most of the Diaspora, traditional organizations, especially the ARF, resists the normalization of relations by highlighting historical hostility to Turkey. Both in 2009 and now, the normalization attempts are lagging with mutual preconditions such as Turkey's recognition of the fabricated genocide by the diaspora, and the establishment of long-standing peace in the South Caucasus by Turkey.

However, the Armenian government knows that no matter how much the diaspora is against the improvement of relations with its neighbors, not doing so will worsen the socio-economic situation in Armenia. Because Russia under sanctions has limited opportunities. The relations with the West have not yet developed very deeply (in comparison with its neighbor Georgia). A worsening socio-economic situation can lead to larger internal protests, which can be much more violent than the forced organized protests of the diaspora or the opposition.

So, it is clear that Russia does not promise any opportunities for the future development of Armenia. However, it is difficult for Armenia to suddenly overcome the economic and political hegemony of Russia. But there is an obvious way to mitigate this. It is to create economic and diplomatic relations with neighbors. However, for this, it is necessary to avoid



provocative actions and encourage the diaspora to do the same, and forget the claim of special rights for Karabakh Armenians.

Thus, the results obtained in the research work can be listed as follows:

1. The historical formation of the Armenian diaspora is noticeable in its structure and intra-diaspora relations. Radical nationalist groups, led by Dasnaktsutyun, are more prominent in this hierarchical structure.

2. Armenia is seriously dependent on the support of the Diaspora both in the socio-economic and political fields. But here too a division emerges. So, if diaspora organizations in Western countries are important for political support to Armenia, Armenians in post-Soviet countries are more important for economic support.

3. The direction of Armenia's foreign policy between the West and Russia is one of the main issues of diaspora conflicts. Today's Armenian government is strongly supported by the West as a reformist government. Even many diaspora groups trust Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to be the most democratic leader possible for Armenia. However, despite this, Armenia still cannot completely distance itself from Russia-centric politics. But here, of course, the factor of Russian Armenians should also be mentioned.

4. Today, important directions of Armenian foreign policy are under the influence of the diaspora (primarily in the USA and Europe). For example, the diaspora has a very big role in deepening relations with countries like France and the United States. Today, one of the primary reasons for France's biased position in the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process is the influence of the diaspora.

5. Radical and historical diaspora groups have more influence on relations with Turkey. And they refuse rapprochement, mainly emphasizing historical enmity.

6. The Armenian government considers the Karabakh issue, and the Diaspora considers the issue of Genocide allegations the number one priority. In particular, the Armenian government's attempt to cover up the Genocide claims in the current normalization process with Turkey adds certain grounds to the anti-government speeches of the radical diaspora.

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