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Origins of Armenia's Foreign Policy and its Foreign Policy towards Iran

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IN THE NAME OF GOD

To: My Sisters F. Kaykhosro Dolatyari and S. Hekmat

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Abstract

Foreign policy takes root from complicated matters. However, this issue may be more truth about Armenia. Although the new government of Armenia is less than 20 Years, people of this territory are the first ones who officially accepted Christianity. In very past times, these people were a part of great Emperors like Iran, Rome, and Byzantium. Armenia regarded as a nation with a privileged history and a unique identity. Being as a state, it regarded as a small government that is not even able to provide its own security. They have some distinctive characters that it could be truly said, "They are neither an eastern nation nor western. This thesis talks about political and environmental compulsions of Armenia, religious isolation among Muslims and its entanglement in geographical region. The main subject in this research is to find out which of these foundations influenced on foreign policy of Armenia .Of course, we had to deal it with the different presidential term (Petrosian, Kocharian, Sargsyan). Discussion regarding the methods of the mentioned foundations' effectiveness due to Armenia's tendency towards Turkey is an important problem as well which needed scrutiny. Although the mechanism of foreign policy of Iran emphasized on the identity and religion but Iran has never regarded Christian country of Armenia as, enemy, which from Armenian's point of view holds high significance. Whereas, from Turks and Azeri's' point of view the Armenians always been regarded as, enemy Armenian strategic approach toward Iran is less about history but more of practical necessity. Armenia's relations with Iran have driven by the need for an outlet from the East-West blockade of Armenia.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Karabakh Conflict, Diaspora, Genocide, Iran

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Chapter I:

Introduction

Description of the Problem

Foreign policy takes root from complicated matters. However, this issue may be more truth about Armenia. Although the new government of Armenia is less than 20 Years, people of this territory are the first ones who officially accepted Christianity. In very past times, these people were a part of great Emperors like Iran, Rome, and Byzantium. Armenia regarded as a nation with a privileged history and a unique identity. Being as a state, it regarded as a small government that is not even able to provide its own security. They have some distinctive characters that it could be truly said, they are neither an eastern nation nor western, but they share some commonalties with them.

Armenians are minorities of benevolence people who were repressed by the leadership of Tezarians for many years because of their national desire –, independence. Early on 20th century, Ottoman's Turks prejudiced them severely and later they became mixed with the communalistic pervasive system. At the time of independency, foreign policy's decision-makers tried to take lessons from the historical experiences. Armenians were a Diaspora state, and the subject of, karabakh, was the first issue attracted their attention in foreign policy. The next important issue for them was the effort for the recognition of Armenian's Massacre into the consideration of the international communities, which led to strained relation with Turkey. From the very beginning of Armenia independence, the subjects of Diaspora, karabakh conflict and Armenian massacre in 1915 were those serious problems for observation and remembrance in the mechanism of foreign policy. Whether karabakh's conflict is an identical dispute or is a dispute over the territory, which is one of existing enigmas. A part of foundations of Armenia's foreign policy is formed based on objective and environmental compulsion. The main problem of Armenia's Foreign policy is that despite of the importance of objective and subjective issues, which were influential in decision making in

Armenia, why did Armenia's three presidents follow different policies towards their neighboring countries?

This theses talk about political and environmental compulsions of Armenia, religious isolation among Muslims and its entanglement in geographical region. The main subject in this research is to find out which of these foundations influenced on foreign policy of Armenia. Of course, we had to deal it with the different presidential term (Petrosian, Kocharian, Sargsyan. Discussion regarding the methods of the mentioned foundations' effectiveness due to Armenia's tendency towards Turkey is an important problem as well which needed scrutiny. The Foundations' effectiveness over the mechanism of Armenia's foreign policy and ways of connecting these foundations and Armenia's foreign policy towards Iran are an important issue, which will be verified in this thesis. Although Armenia is considered small country, but it is regarded as a unique nation that has main lobbies at America and France. The study of Armenia's foundations of foreign policy is important from the aspect that we get familiarize about the union and reconciliation of the historical hopes of a nation with its environmental compulsions.

Hereon, the job performed by Petrosian and kocharian was important from the view that, they considered the, Environmental compulsion, (isolation and landlocked as well they considered the chauvinism and historical experiences (internationally recognition of Armenia Massacre in their periods.

Key Question:

- What are the origins of the Armenia's foreign policy and on which principle it is based Armenia foreign policy towards Iran?

Hypotheses:

- Armenians geopolitical condition and its historical experience have had a deterring impact on the character of its foreign policy.
- Iran is an alternative for Armenia for escape from isolation.
- Iran is a strategic partner for Armenia.

The Importance of This Research

Recognition of the influential foundations of Armenia's foreign policy could assist Iranian policy makers into taking decision. Recognition the influential foundations of its foreign policy are important for Iran due to the following approach:

1. Sphere of influence of Iran in Caucasus.
2. A Link between Iran and Christian world.
3. Promoting the Iran regionalism discourse.
4. Taking advantage of it as a pattern of bilateral relations.
5. More consideration concerning to Armenian minority in Iran. (This was a matter that was considered by some researchers a gesture of Iran's human right.

Recognizing the foundations of the Armenia foreign policy, would lead Iran to promote its relation with Armenia. The Realization and recognition of the environmental compulsions of Armenia could acquaint Iran to this matter that inclined Armenia suddenly towards Turkey or may lead to expand its relations with Georgia. While recognizing the foundations; Iran is required to support Armenia with the intention of solving them.

Literature of review

With regard to the foreign policy of Armenia, there were not much comprehensive resources available. Long time has not passed away since its independency, due to which there been recorded not much important resources.

Thereon, it seems necessary to refer to the only vestige that holds high theoretical value of the foreign policy of Armenia, which I consider and explained.

The P.H.D. thesis of Allamizoziyan with the title of "*Armenia's Foreign Policy, 1991-2004: Between History and Geopolitics*" referred to the historical roots of Armenia foreign policy and compared that with the modern foreign policy of Armenia. I made the benefit from his statements about Armenia's foreign policy towards Iran, Russia and Turkey. In addition, the last section is the remnant of Mr. Miroziyan regarding to Armenia's relations with Europe.

Methodology

The overall effect is descriptive. However, I have tried to take casual look over my work. It is necessary to said that reviewing the foreign policy of Armenia needs general and logical view regarding to its governmental and political progress. Here I have choose only one of the theories and tried to establish a good relations between the different presidents policies of this country with its original territory's specifications and history. Among different discussion, I have tried not to ignore my views of some hidden matters. In this study, I consider, Identity crisis, as a reason for the conflict of karabakh.

In this study, two main foundations have been named in the foreign policy of Armenia and one median compiler.

Armenia's Massacre =Mental Factor.

Geographical Constraint= Objective Factor

Nagorno-Karabakh as a territorial Crisis = objective Factor

Nagorno-Karabakh as Identity Crisis = Mental Facto

In later stage, as for the presidential terms of Armenia we tried to demonstrate the importance of this matter in the discourses ruling the mechanism of the foreign

policy of Armenia. Whenever environmental constraint was in focuses that lead to normalization of relations in foreign policy. Whenever historical and mental matters were in focuses, then we will be witnessing stressful foreign relations. In the next stage, we tried to demonstrate the good relation of these bases towards Iran.

Sources

In this research, from different English articles present at the libraries, the sources was taken and compiled, but the only Persian book which been used was the, Green Book of Armenia, written by jalil Roshandel. Unfortunately, there is a severe shortage of books with regard to the foreign policy of Armenia but this matter is more serious in a case of Iran. With regard to Armenia, there exist only a few old books in the library of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, even in the National Library; there are not much rich theoretical books. The most existed books are about the history of Armenia and there exists no books and articles concerning to the modern foreign policy of Armenia towards Iran. Thereon, in this thesis most of the sources taken from the internet.

Chapter II: Origins of Armenia foreign policy

Chapter II: *Origins of Armenia foreign policy*

Introduction: *Armenia, people and identity*

The marginal state of the Armenian nation at the crossroads of several civilizations, the absence of a unified state throughout a thousand years, the vulnerability of all of its social institutions against the outside hostile influences developed an unusual national character...Armenians are not an European nation; Armenians are not an Eastern nation.¹

The Republic of Armenia is located in Southern Transcaucasia, on a joint of Caucasus with Forward Asia and occupies a small part of the extensive Armenian plateau .On the North and East Armenia borders with Georgia and Azerbaijan, on the West and Southeast with Turkey and Iran accordingly. The Republic does not have access to sea. The Republic of Armenia has an area of 29800 km, which is approximately equal to the territory of Belgium and Albania. The greatest extent from North-West to Southeast is 360 km, and from West to East - 200km. The capital of the country is Yerevan.²

Armenians have deep and ancient roots as a people, but lacked a state of their own from 1375 to 1918. They were a Diaspora nation, with nearly half their number living outside their traditional homeland, scattered across the Middle East and beyond, with an identity not tied exclusively to territory. They learned how to survive and flourish within multiethnic states, such as the Ottoman, Persian, Russian and Soviet empires. As a result of their history of oppression by neighboring powers, most of the lands regarded as traditional Armenian territory, such as Eastern Anatolia or Nagorno Karabakh, lie beyond the boundaries of the current Armenian republic, which occupies less than one-sixth

¹- Mirozoyan, alla "**Armenia's Foreign Policy, 1991-2004:Between History and Geopolitics**", Florida International University, 2007, p.228

²- FIRST NATIONAL COMMUNICATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA "**UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**", 1998, p.18
unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/armnc1e.pdf

of the territory historically inhabited by Armenians. Their life in Diaspora meant that despite their strong communal identity it was only relatively recently-at the turn of this century-that Armenians faced the challenge of creating a separate Armenian nation-state of their own³

Armenians converted to Christianity in the early 4th century, and some scholars believe that they were the first in the world to adopt Christianity as a state religion. During periods of foreign control when Armenians did not have a state of their own the Armenian Church offered a sense of collective identity. The catholicos, the head of the church, were considered the most important representative of the Armenian people when they were part of the Russian Empire. Because of this sense of identity it offered, the church gradually became a strong symbol of the Armenian nation. Even during the Soviet period, the Armenian Church was allowed to continue as the national church even though the Communists were officially atheistic. Clergy who supported nationalist groups were not allowed to hold power within the church; however, Christianity remains the country's predominant religion with 94 percent of the population belonging to the Armenian Apostolic or Orthodox Church. Among the ethnic minorities in Armenia, there are Russian Orthodox Christians, Protestants, and Muslims. Armenia declared independence on September 23, 1991, and became an independent state when the USSR disbanded in December 1991. Fighting between mostly Christian Armenia and mostly Muslim Azerbaijan over an enclave in Azerbaijan, called Nagorno-Karabakh that has a majority population of ethnic Armenians, escalated in 1992 and continued through 1993.

³- Rutland, Pete "**Democracy and Nationalism in Armenia**", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 5, 1994, p.840

Today, the Armenian Apostolic Church is centered in the Republic of Armenia, which declared its independence from the Soviet Union on September 23, 1991. The Holy city of Etchmiadzin, the ancient residence of the Armenian Catholics, is near Yerevan, the capital. The collapse of communism has provided conditions for a renaissance of this ancient church in its homeland. New dioceses, parishes and seminaries have been opened; many new priests have been ordained, new organizations founded, religious periodicals published, and religious instruction introduced in the schools. However, the church still does not have sufficient clergy, and feels threatened by the activity of other religious groups that are now free to function in the country. The 2005 Armenian constitution provides for freedom of religion and “the exclusive mission of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church as a national church in the spiritual life, development of the national culture and preservation of the national identity of the people of Armenia.” The Law on Freedom of Conscience, most recently amended in 2001, establishes the separation of church and state but grants the Armenian Apostolic Church official status as the national church. Armenian law places some restrictions on the activity of other religious groups. There are no official census statistics on religious affiliation in Armenia, but it is generally assumed that about 90% of the population nominally belongs to the Armenian Apostolic Church. Out of a total population of three million, in 2006 the Catholics (Latin and Armenian rite) claimed 120,000 members, charismatic groups 10,000, Jehovah’s Witnesses 8,750, and Armenian Evangelicals 8,000.⁴

The formation of religion and nationalism is “Pan Armenian” ideology that really has strong influence on Armenian foreign policy. Considering the history, the Church has perceived Armenian nationalism as only way of it

⁴- <http://www.cnewa.org/ecc-bodypg-us.aspx?eccpageID=5>

existence, and comparing with other factors religious contributions are much stronger in Armenian nationalism. Here some factors as the difference of Armenian churches from other Christian churches, as well as the worldly isolation from Christianity have significant role Gregorian branches Christianity belong to only Armenians and related with the single nation. Today Armenian Church continues to have power on social life and government bodies. The reason of this can be seen, approximately in all kinds of meetings and assemblages of the Gregorian monks and their significance to these meetings.⁵

Armenian national identity has all the traditional components of European nations

- A common history, dominated by the struggle with their Turkish overlords, Culminating in the massacre of 1915
- A shared language, and the literary tradition it bears
- A common religion, the Armenian Apostolic church⁶

In the Soviet Union period in January 1989 the population of the Armenian SSR was 3, 283,000, of which 1, 200, 000 lived in the capital, Erevan. Only 67% of Soviet Armenians lived inside Armenia-and this was after an influx of 400, 000 Armenians from other parts of the USSR over the previous 20 years. As many as 93.3% of the republic's inhabitants were Armenian, 2.6% Azerbaijanis, 1.6% Kurds and 1.6% Russians. Thus Armenia is the most ethnically homogeneous republic of the former Soviet, and is largely free of the internal ethnic divisions which have bedeviled neighboring Georgia. Armenia's problem was just the opposite: fellow Armenians formed a 400 000 strong minority inside neighboring Azerbaijan. There are also an estimated 1.4 million Armenians living

⁵- YILMAZ, Reha "**ARMENIAN FOREIGN POLICY DURING LEVON TER-PETROSSIAN AND ROBERT KOCHARIAN PERIOD**", Qafqaz University Baku / AZERBAIJAN, 2009, p13.14

⁶- Rutland, p.840

outside the USSR (with at least 450,000 in the USA), This was the largest Diaspora of all the Soviet republics.⁷

The most important identical factors, which shape the foreign policy of this country, can be illustrated as follow:

- From ethnic point of view, Armenian considered as minority among in the Caucasus region.
- From religious point of view, Armenians are Christians and among Muslim countries, they are minority.

⁷- Ibid, p.841

Chapter II: *Origins of Armenia foreign policy*

Part I: *General aim of Armenia's foreign policy*

The foreign policy of Armenia is in close touch with the political structure exists inside the country. For as much as Armenia cannot secure stability up until now. In addition to the economic and social annoyance, Karabakh war and the excessive influence of the currents on government has aggravated independence even greater.⁸

With regard to Armenia's foreign policy, the territorial integrity and security are the main aims of this country's foreign policy, also strengthening the economic condition and promoting the prosperity of Armenians nation are other priorities of Armenia's foreign policy. Later there we will discuss country's effort in creating and providing stability and peace. To achieve the above-mentioned goals, the mechanism of Armenia's foreign policy is to maintain good political and economic relations with neighboring countries.

- Necessity of security for preservation of territorial integrity

To realize the above-mentioned objectives, the mechanism of Armenia's foreign policy is trying to consider seriously the geopolitical matters, regional relations with neighboring countries and maintenance of good relation with powers. With regard to Armenia's security policy, there are some main points, which need to be mentioned.

Russia -At the beginning of independency, Armenia tried to maintain balanced and relatively good relations with Russia, due to influence of Russia in the region of Caucasus. Issues like; karabakh's conflict, and Turkey's support for Azerbaijan, has led Armenia to seek Russia's support.

⁸- YILMAZ, p.13

Iran -Iran is a southern neighbor of Armenia, and has an Armenian minority. Iran is playing a vital role in satisfying Armenia's energy security and territorial integrity.

Turkey- relations between Armenia and Turkey has always remained a tense. By maintaining a peaceful relation with Turkey (spatially in sergsyan period, Armenia's security conditions could be supported in two ways:

a. Considerable portions of Armenia's foreign borders are located on a territory of Turkey; therefore, negative impression, which Armenia is having towards Turkey, could be entirely a threat for its territorial integrality. If the two countries have ever happened to establish a peaceful relation with each other, the borders could be remained secure.

b. Karabakh conflict: the importance of Turkey in the region, and its influence on Azerbaijan can help to solve the karabakh conflict.

Azerbaijan-One of the main security and border threat, which has worried the entire territory, is relevant to Azerbaijan. Therefore, in order to encounter with this problems, Armenia requires taking international suggestions. Insecurity and vulnerable relation with Azerbaijan have caused a negative impact over the economic and geopolitical conditions of Armenia.

Europe -Due to existence of NATO, Europe is important for Armenia's security. NATO plays a sensitive role in Caucasus. , Tendency of Armenia in joining NATO, would lead a problematic issue for Armenia, for instance, tendency of Armenia towards NATO, would provoke sensibility of Russia and will make Iran painful. Initiative of Armenia about security possibly is its ability in creating and maintaining balance between regional tendencies, which are regarded as regional requirements of Russia and Iran, and joining of NATO. ,Armenia joined the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization's Partnership for Peace (PfP program in October 1994 and became a founding member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC in 1997. In 1997, the mission of Armenia to NATO was also established. Armenia's cooperation with NATO through the Partnership for Peace program and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council has remained among Armenia's top foreign policy priorities. Cooperation between Armenia and NATO has evolved around the following: defense policy and strategy, civil emergency planning, national defense research, language training, peacekeeping, military education, and military exercises⁹

-For maintenance of stable development and Economic growth, the cooperation with others should to be strengthened.

One of a main objective of foreign policy is the, preservation and promotion of prosperity. Prerequisite for this issue is to maintain amity relationships with foreign countries. Thus, Armenia is trying to maintain bilateral economic conditions with regional countries also it is trying to play a positive role in regional alliance.

- Implementing continual reformative Democratic.
- Maintaining relations with neighboring countries, and fulfilling necessary requirements for strengthening economic relations.
- Creating a mechanism, for maintaining relations and collaboration on the basis of regional contracts.
- Reaching to the peace, through thrashing out the issue of NagornoKarabakh.

The above mentioned issues have had significant factor in Armenia foreign policy; due to existence of the said disasters, Armenia's investment opportunities have encounter with lack of security, also with regard to its economics and energy transportation, this country has faced with some problems.

⁹- Petros, p.13

- Expanding its participation in order to get more involved in the, International Political and Economical spheres.

In order to enhance a constant economical condition and for developing its economic to the standardization level, Armenia is trying to concentrate more on its economics. Through Diaspora, on universally basis, for the sake of its economical condition, Armenia by joining, Economical Organizations is in attempt to provide itself with supporters and for its economical condition expand lobbies.

- Endeavor to make relation between different Armenians in all over the world, and effort to support their identities.
- Internationally pursuit the recognition of Armenia's Massacre.
- Centralizing its foreign policy over promoting economical condition, which could be considered as under?

Maintenance of energy security: effort for diversifying of energy resources consumption. With regard to this issue, Armenia intends to lessen its dependency to one of energy resources. Large portion of this country's energy resources is depending on foreign resources; therefore, Armenia is trying to lessen its dependency by diversifying.

- Developing Energy transportation lines.
- Investigating to explore new energy resources.
- Investigating to explore new resources for exportation of its energy resources.
- Creating beneficial bilateral economical agreements and acquainting with new patterns.
- Encouraging internal investments.