

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

ARMENIA-NATO: A STUDY OF STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP AND ITS POSSIBLE
REPERCUSSIONS (CONSEQUENCES)

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List of Abbreviations

BP	British Petroleum
CBE	Cooperative Best Effort
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CoE	Council of Europe
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EU	European Union
IPAP	Individual Partnership Action Plans
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NA	National Assembly
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	Nitro Bio Chemical
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SoFA	Status of Forces Agreement
US, USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

Abstract

Since regaining of the independence in 1991, Armenia faced with the challenging task of formulating its own foreign policy and military doctrine that will correspond to its national security interests. Given the importance of the South Caucasus, Armenia became competing arena of great and regional powers. In order to guarantee its national security, Armenia has to seek for foreign patronage. In this regard, South Caucasus region is represented by two strategically important organizations that are CSTO and NATO. Since the independence Armenian national security was guaranteed by CSTO, but the recent geopolitical trends brought a more active cooperation with NATO. The process of strengthening relations between NATO and Armenia is progressing. Hence, Armenia faces the dilemma of choosing of its best national security provider.

The purpose of the present Policy Internship Project is to examine the process of Armenia-NATO cooperation, and try to foresee the possible repercussions of Armenia-NATO cooperation on Armenia's relations with great and regional powers and national security system.

Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union new realities have emerged on the post Soviet space. South Caucasus found itself in a security situation facing internal and external regional threats. Internal regional threats are mainly due to the instability and existence of unresolved ethnic conflicts (such as: Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts). Being at the crossroad of great and regional powers' interests, today the South Caucasus continues to bear the impact of competition among these interests. The above-mentioned factors bring about extra incentive for diverse international security systems to intensify the leverages on regional states' defense and security systems. Since the emergence of Armenian independence in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has largely been seen as the main determinant of Armenian security and foreign policy.

On October 7, 2005, Mr. Serj Sargsyan, Armenian Defense Minister, during his speech on the topic "Defense reforms in South Caucasus" states "... security systems and military structures of South Caucasian states... were established during armed conflicts in all three states. Armed Forces being organized under such conditions did not set the goal of being led by international standards, which is a complex and time consuming process. They were seeking to apply traditional and non-traditional methods to settle interethnic problems through military means. It is understandable that all the resources – economic potential, traditions, armaments, tactics and goals bore the imprint of the Soviet Union..." (quoted in 61st Rose Roth Seminar, 2005).

As a consequence of these new sets of events in this region Armenia faced challenges on the way of building full-fledged state, typical for newly independent countries. Modern trends of

geopolitics make Armenia to seriously consider such challenges as improvement of democratic institutions and security arrangements. Thus, for better understanding of modern geopolitical trends it will be useful to discuss and analyze the current geostrategic interests of great and regional powers, and then to analyze possible prospects of developing Armenia's foreign relations and security arrangements with great and regional powers.

The political balance within and between the three Caucasian states and societies is already fragile; however, the weakness of these states has required them to seek foreign patronage and support, while the attractiveness of the region has itself led to a high level of great power interest. The interests of and relationships with foreign powers therefore typically affect political processes within the three states. Political forces and leaders in the Caucasus remain watchful of their relations with Moscow, Washington, Brussels, Tehran, or Ankara, in the hope that such relations would give them an advantage in domestic political struggles. Combined with the changing policies and uncertain commitment to the region on the part of the great powers, this increases the instability and unpredictability of South Caucasian political processes (Cornel et al, 2004).

Trying to balance and maneuver between major powers' interests Armenia is actively getting involved in different security systems. Today Armenia cooperates with NATO and CSTO, which contributes to the establishment of Armenian Armed Forces interoperability capabilities by different international standards. Therefore, both Armenian-Russian military alliance within bilateral and CSTO frameworks and enhancement of cooperation with NATO organizations and USA are the guarantees providing Armenia's security. In the recent cooperation with NATO, Armenia implements defense reforms within the frameworks of PARP,

PfP and IPAP programs, the essence and the process of Armenian participation in the framework of these programs will be discussed later in this Policy Internship Project.

The nature of defense reforms in recent two years has become more institutionalized engulfing real and specific goals. Thus, the process of strengthening relations between NATO and Armenia is progressing. The corner stone of this project is to analyze the process of progressing Armenia-NATO relations and try to foresee the possible repercussions on relations of Republic of Armenia with great and regional powers.

Numerous occasional papers, essays monographs, official documents, field experts papers were analyzed. All these sources are covering the process of NATO enlargement, interests of great and regional powers to the South Caucasus region and particularly to Armenia. But there isn't any analysis, papers or other studies that analyze the possible repercussions and geopolitical shifts that may occur during the process of deepening Armenia-NATO relations. So the present Internship Project mission is an attempt to fulfill this gap.

The project's assumption is that "the process of strengthening relations with NATO will have crucial impact on Armenian foreign policy with potentially important repercussions on Armenia's current strategic relations with external world."

The research questions that this paper aims to answer are the following:

1. How will Armenia-USA relations and military cooperation develop in the light of strengthening Armenian cooperation with NATO?
2. How will further development of Armenia-NATO cooperation reflect on the process of Armenian integration to EU?

3. What could be the repercussions in Armenia-Russia relations in case of strengthening Armenia-NATO relationship? How the process of strengthening Armenia-NATO cooperation could effect on Armenia-CSTO relations?
4. What repercussions will occur in Armenia-Iran relations in case of intensification of cooperation with NATO?
5. What will change in Armenia-Turkey relations, including Armenian Genocide problematics, in the context of strengthening cooperation with NATO?

Methodology

In this Internship Project methods to be employed are historical, comparative, explanatory secondary analysis. Deductive and inductive analytical methods were used while analyzing occasional papers, essays, monographs, official documents, field expert papers related to the topic.

For the purpose of this project Interviews were conducted with a state official, a Member of Parliament, the policy analysts that have expertise in the field of Armenian foreign relations and are familiar with the current stage of Armenia-NATO relations.

The interviews were conducted with the following persons:

Mrs. Marta Aivazian. - The Head of NATO division, Department of Arms Control and International Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

Mr. Zakharyan Stepan. - The deputy of National Assembly of Armenia. Member of NA Standing Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mrs. Shushan Khatlamanjyan. - Coordinator of Institute for Civil Society and Regional Development (ICSRD)

Mr. Alexander Iskandaryan. - Director of Caucasus Media Institute.

The results of these interviews are analyzed and presented in this Policy Internship Project.

The present Internship Project will discuss Armenian participation in the NATO sponsored programs since 1994, and then will explore further perspectives of development of Armenian foreign policy and security system with great and regional powers in the context of deepening Armenia-NATO cooperation.

Chapter 1. Armenian participation in the NATO sponsored programs:

Partnership for Peace program

The PfP program focuses on defense cooperation, seeking to transcend mere dialogue and cooperation to forge a real partnership with each partner country and NATO. In accordance with the PfP Framework Document, which was issued by the Heads of State and Government alongside the PfP Invitation Document, NATO undertakes to consult any active partner state if that partner perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence, or security. Furthermore, its nature is clearly defined by NATO: “All members of PfP are also members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) which provides the overall framework for cooperation between NATO and its Partner countries. However, the Partnership for Peace retains its own separate identity within the framework provided by the EAPC and maintains its own

basic elements and procedures. It is founded on the basis of a bilateral relationship between NATO and each one of the PfP countries” (Web page: <http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb030201.htm>.)

According to Cornell,¹ NATO and its wide array of programs in the region, most of which are organized under the auspices of Partnership for Peace (launched in 1994), appears to be the most promising organization as a vehicle for change. This is proven by its track record in Central and Eastern Europe, not the least of which is its programs to bring new accession countries up to European standards in both military and political terms, and through its role as security provider in the Western Balkans. Moreover, NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) is the only multilateral security mechanism that actively involves all three states of the South Caucasus (Cornell, 2004).

According to Major General Arthur Aghabekyan, Deputy Defence Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Armenia-NATO cooperation within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program is viewed as an important element of Armenian security. Armenia has also expressed a readiness to share the responsibility for security in the Euro-Atlantic region, and, to the extent of its capabilities, participate in antiterrorist initiatives, peacekeeping operations and regional cooperation programs (Aghabekyan, 2004).

PfP programs relating to education, training, military-to-military contact, opening to the militaries of member states, etc., are designed to achieve the following *goals*:

- to facilitate transparency in national defense planning and budgeting processes;
- to ensure democratic control of defense forces;
- to maintain the capability and readiness to contribute to operations under the authority of the United Nations and/or the responsibility of the OSCE;

¹ Svante Cornell is Deputy Director of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University; and Research Director of the Silk Road Studies Program, Uppsala University, Sweden. He is also Editor of the Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst (<http://www.cacianalyst.org>).

- to develop cooperative military relations with NATO, for the purpose of joint planning, training and exercises, in order to strengthen the ability of PfP participants to undertake missions in the field of peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations, and others as may subsequently be agreed;
- to develop, over the longer term, forces that are better able to operate with those of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance” (Web page: www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb030202.htm).

As it is noted in the article of Aghabekyan, “the participation of Armenia’s Ministry of Defence in NATO’s Partnership for Peace program has been instrumental in both the enhancement and development of more purposeful cooperation. As a result of an implemented defence policy during recent years both a quantitative and qualitative increase of Armenia’s participation in the PfP program has been noticed” (Agabekyan, 2004 pp.1-2). Along with peacekeeping operations, Armenia is also looking to improve its ability to cope with and respond to natural disasters, especially earthquakes; and has been seeking assistance and training to improve its disaster preparedness capabilities.

As mentioned above, Armenia has pursued what it describes as a policy of “complementarity” that seeks to balance its links with both Russia and NATO. Only in this context Armenia can further develop its cooperation with the Alliance. PfP has thus proven to be a useful tool of security cooperation with the West, and Armenia is participating in more than thirty PfP activities annually.

Planning and Reviewing Process

The Planning and Review Process is offered to Partners on an optional basis and draws on NATO's extensive experience in defense planning. It is in essence a biennial process involving both bilateral and multilateral elements. For each two-year planning cycle, Partners wishing to participate in the process undertake to provide information on a wide range of subjects including their defense policies, developments with regard to the democratic control of the armed forces, national policy relating to PfP cooperation, and relevant financial and economic plans. On the basis of each Partner's response, a Planning and Review Assessment is developed. A set of Partnership Goals is also prepared, in order to set out the measures each Partner needs to introduce in order to make its armed forces better able to operate in conjunction with the armed forces of Alliance countries. After bilateral and multilateral consultations, the Planning and Review Assessment and the Interoperability Objectives are jointly approved by the Alliance and the Partner country concerned (PARP, 2002).

On October 10, 2003, Armenia joined PARP, demonstrating its determination to expand and activate its security cooperation with NATO. The goal of Armenian participation within the framework of this program is to create national peacekeeping forces and a demining center according to NATO standards for participation in a NATO/PfP exercise and with the purpose of real engagement in peacekeeping operations in the nearest future.

According to the 24 Partnership Goals, "... Armenia expresses its will to prepare one motorized company, three combat support platoons (reconnaissance, mortar, grenade), a demining platoon, NBC protection group and an emergency unit for participation in NATO

exercises and peacekeeping operations by 2006, and to adjust the structure of its peacekeeping battalion to NATO standards” (quoted in Aghabekyan, 2004).

The result of this program is that now Armenia has units ready for real co-operation with NATO. And an inspection team from the Armed Forces of the NATO member country Greece has already assessed Armenian peacekeeping platoon and concluded that it is ready to participate in NATO-led peacekeeping operations (Aghabekyan, 2004).

Cooperative Best Effort 03 exercises

CBE 03 was 11 day NATO-sponsored exercise conducted in June 2003, with more than 400 soldiers and officers from 19 countries, including forces from Georgia, Greece, Italy, Poland, Russia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the U.S. The exercise featured the formation of a single multinational battalion that practiced routine peacekeeping drills such as riot control, ambush defense and convoy escort. (Web page: <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2003/06-june/e0616a.htm>)

The conduct of the first NATO-sponsored military exercise, “Cooperative Best Effort 2003” (June 16-27, 2003) in Armenia signaled the potential and desire on the part of Armenia for stronger relations with the Alliance. These exercises could be perceived as a test of correspondence and readiness of Armenian forces to participate in NATO-led peacekeeping operations, because almost all services and branches of the Armenian armed forces were engaged in it.

Since CBE 03 were regional exercises, the participation of neighboring countries forces was expected and everything was done by Armenian government to promote it. From that

perspective, participation of the Turkish officers wasn't a surprise; moreover they were co-directors of the exercises along with Armenian colleagues. In that sense it was very strange because Armenia and Turkey even do not have diplomatic relations. Another interesting fact regarding these exercises is the participation of Russia, which usually avoids PfP exercises, and it was the first time they participated in such an event.

Moreover, for the first time in the history of PfP exercises, observers from the Mediterranean Dialogue countries were present in Yerevan. As Lieutenant-General Quintana, commander of NATO Joint Command South, mentioned in his letter sent after the exercise, this event revealed new qualities and approaches in co-operation between NATO countries and partners (Aghabekyan, 2004).

The natural side of CBE 03 was the refusal of Azerbaijan's militaries to participate in these exercises. Such kind of behavior was expected, since Azerbaijan usually avoids participating in activities organized in Armenia, even in the frames of such joint programs as PfP. But this fact didn't effect on Armenian Government decision to participate in CBE 04. On many occasions Armenian government officials state that Armenia is ready to cooperate both with Turkey and Azerbaijan in the framework of regional cooperation, and support such cooperation without any preconditions. Nevertheless Azerbaijan's government did everything to prevent Armenian participation in CBE 04. Therefore, NATO announced cancellation of multinational military exercises in Azerbaijan in response to Baku's refusal to allow Armenian servicemen to participate in CBE 04. Such kinds of incidents are hindering regional cooperation and negatively effect on establishment and maintaining of the confidence and security system in the South Caucasus region. In this regard Armenia accepted that NATO should take adequate disciplinary steps against Azerbaijan. However, Azerbaijan-NATO cooperation deepened even

further: the same year they signed IPAP document. In this regard, it should be perceived as a warning signal for Armenia, together with lack of adequate response from NATO to brutal slaying of Armenian officer in Budapest.

Armenian experts have criticized the possibility of Turkish officers' participation in CBE 03. Namely, Dr. Aivazian point out three dimensions of this criticism: from the perspective of common accepted norms of military cooperation, national spirit and symbolism and internal political process in the Armenia. From the perspective of common accepted norms of military cooperation, author states that after Turkish occupation of North Cyprus in 1974, Greece, as a traditional member of NATO, periodically refused to participate in any NATO exercises along with Turkey. Participation of Turkish militaries in CBE 03 would harm the fundamental principles of Armenia's national mentality. The Turkish officers presence in Armenia would be assessed by some Armenians (who still believe in revitalizing and strengthening of Armenian sovereignty) as an honor to Turkish power and lose of Armenian national dignity. Armenian high ranked officials, while making decisions relating to Armenian national Consciousness, should take into consideration opinions of all political parties, expertise and citizens as a whole. Lack of such consultations would further worsen public's opinion toward its government. (Aivazian, 2002)

The present state of Armenian-Turkish relations also creates obstacles to regional co-operation in the framework of NATO Partnership for Peace program. The nearest NATO sub-regional command, for example, responsible for the development of such cooperation, is based in Izmir in Turkey, a country with which Armenia does not have diplomatic relations.

Individual partnership Action Plan

IPAP or Individual Partnership Action Plan is described as follows by the NATO communiqué. They serve as an additional means for Allies to provide support for and advice to interested partners. The IPAP is initiated by partners and are used to prioritize, harmonize, and organize all aspects of NATO-partner relationships via EAPC and PfP. It is reportedly the partner's opportunity to address their particular circumstances and interests. The plans are developed on a two-year basis and "NATO will provide its focused, country-specific assistance and advice on reform objectives that interested partners might wish to pursue in consultation with the Alliance." IPAP is NATO's effort to respond to growing complaints from the PfP partners that the program was too narrowly focused and rarely addressed key reform concerns of the partner states. The program has just begun and it is too early to tell whether the IPAP program will effectively redress this vocal concern (Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, 2003).

NATO began offering IPAP to the Partnership for Peace (PfP) allies following its 2002 Prague summit. The plan is essentially a two-year schedule of cooperation that aims to increase interoperability between NATO and PfP partners. IPAPs are designed to bring together all the various cooperation mechanisms through which a partner country interacts with the Alliance, sharpening the focus of activities to better support their domestic reform efforts.

In practice it means that IPAP should clearly set out the cooperation objectives and priorities of the individual partner country, and ensure that the various mechanisms in use correspond directly to these priorities. NATO will provide focused, country-specific advice on reform objectives. Intensified political dialogue on relevant issues may be an integral part of an

IPAP process. IPAP will also make it easier to coordinate bilateral assistance provided by individual Allies and partner countries, as well as to coordinate efforts with other relevant international institutions. Objectives covered fall into the general categories of political and security issues; defence, security and military issues; public information; science and environment; civil emergency planning; and administrative, protective security and resource issues (Web page: www.nato.int/issues/ipap/index.html).

On 16 December 2005, Armenia became the third country, after Georgia and Azerbaijan, to agree an IPAP with NATO⁷. In this regard NATO Spokesman James Appathurai said “...We are pleased to see that all three South Caucasus partner countries now have agreed IPAPs with NATO,...This reflects the 2004 Istanbul Summit decisions to place a special focus on the strategically important regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia” (Web page: www.nato.int/docu/update/2005/12-december/e1216a.htm).

Armenia’s Ambassador to NATO Samvel Mkrtchian described the IPAP submission as “a serious step that raises relations with NATO to a new level”. An analysis by the Armenian Mediamax news agency described the development as a “real breakthrough” in Armenia-NATO partnership, as part of which Armenia commits itself to further security and democratic reform (Web page: www.noravank.am/?l=3&d=6&f=90).

On 12 October 2006 Robert Simmons, NATO Special Representative for the South Caucasus and Central Asia, visited Armenia. He held the meetings with RA President, Minister and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. During his visit NATO Information Center was opened in Yerevan. While assessing IPAP Robert Simmons stated that it is being implemented in all directions (Web page: <http://www.azg.am/?lang=EN&num=2006101404>).

⁷ On 29 October 2004, Georgia became the first country to agree an IPAP with NATO. Azerbaijan agreed one on 27 May 2005, Armenia on 16 December 2005, Kazakhstan on 31 January 2006, and Moldova on 19 May 2006.

Interviewers opinion on IPAP document (see Appendix 1, question 1) and whether all its provisions will positively effect on Armenian national security interests, could be characterized as positive one. All respondents express the opinion that IPAP document and all its provisions correspond to Armenian national security interests and intensification of Armenia-NATO relation wouldn't hinder Armenian cooperation with strategic partners (such as Russia and Iran).

While analyzing the IPAP document several problems were identified. Particularly the article 1.2 (“relations with neighbors”) stated “...Armenia seeks normalization of relations with Turkey and is determined to pursue constructive dialogue, including direct talks with Turkey...” (Armenia’s Commitments under IPAP with NATO, 2006). Taking into consideration the current state of Armenian-Turkish relations and all problematics, namely - Armenian Genocide, closed borders, absence of any diplomatic relation and anti-Armenian policies, the Turkey is the side which should be pushed to normalize its relations with Armenia. But in practice Turkey openly demonstrates its anti-Armenian policy and puts unworkable preconditions for establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia, including non discussion of Armenian Genocide issue and giving up of Nagorno-Karabakh and the buffer zone. In the light of such conditions, the article 1.2 of IPAP document should be revised, and at least the phrases of “mutual efforts” and “without any preconditions” should figure while speaking about the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relation.

It is worth to mention that the Armenian Government has expressed a strong desire to increase cooperation with NATO, but has made clear that it does not see NATO membership as its ultimate goal, unlike Georgia and Azerbaijan. Thus, Armenia has expressed a desire to make some parts of its forces interoperable with NATO, so that it can participate in NATO-led peacekeeping operations (Web page: www.arminfo.info/political-issue23.html).

According to Aghabekyan, the advantages of IPAP program are that reforming the defense system should take place gradually and under the conditions of unsettled conflicts. Aghabekyan also notes that reforms will be implemented taking into account four principles: *realism, stepwise principle, flexibility and profound analysis* and will be held within the context of the overall reform of the state system. Working out of the security strategy, its further public discussion and consideration by the Parliament of 2007 convocation will form the core of the reforms. In his words, the reforms to be implemented within the IPAP will allow forming an army by 2015 that is adequate to challenges of the 21st century (quoted in Web page: www.armeniandiaspora.com/archive/32251.html).

On June 14, 2006 Defense Minister Serge Sargsian and Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian attended the North Atlantic Council (NAC). The meeting agenda was a discussion of Armenia's implementation of the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). This followed the first assessment meeting by a delegation of NATO international staff to Armenia in May to evaluate the implementation of the agreement between NATO and Armenia. Following their presentations, Ambassadors of the NAC member states made statements assessing Armenia's pace and progress in implementing provisions of the IPAP. In this regard, the Ambassadors attached importance to the democratization process in Armenia as the groundwork for security, reforms in the defense sphere, and extension of the political dialogue with NATO (Web page: www.armeniaforeignministry.am/pr_06/060614_sargsian_oskanian_nac.html). It is clear that Armenia didn't get high grades on implementing IPAP program because many provisions and actions prescribed in this Program aren't implemented in practice. Especially the following articles:

1.3 Democracy, human rights rule of law, and combating corruption

1.6 Democratic control of the armed forces

Regarding the above mentioned articles there is little progress in Armenian reality and this fact is reflected in the assessment of IPAP document. Hence, signing nice programs and saying profound speeches aren't enough to get high grades. Armenia-NATO cooperation within the framework of IPAP requires a lot of time and efforts to achieve Armenia's commitments under IPAP.

Armenia's participation in the Individual Partnership Action Plan will form the basis for strategic cooperation with the Alliance. It is the highest possible level below membership that any NATO partner country can have. IPAP is a very important document that refers to security, defense issues, as well as human rights, struggle against corruption, democratization, specifically public and parliamentary control over security. This document can be characterized as a “pragmatic” one since participation in the IPAP provides an opportunity to form a long-term strategic plan of partnership within NATO.

Chapter 2. Interest of “geostrategic players”² in Armenia from the perspective of strengthening Armenia-NATO cooperation

Historically the South Caucasus (or Transcaucasus) has always been a crossroads of empires and invaders, an arena for competing regional powers and, in much of the last two centuries, a pivotal geopolitical element in the “Great Game” of world powers. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the South Caucasus region becomes the vital arena where major and regional

² Brzezinski used the term “geostrategic players” to define states with “the capacity and national will to exercise power or influence beyond their borders in order to alter ... the existing geopolitical state of affairs” (Brzezinski, 1997, p. 40).

powers started actively promote their own interests. At first, it is essential differentiate between major and regional powers. Major active players in this region are definitely Russia and the US; considerable player is also the EU, the regional powers for South Caucasus region are Turkey and Iran. The US considered by some analysts as the “first truly global power” and “ultimate arbiter” in the region of “the Eurasian Balkans” (Brzezinski, 1997, p.123). Brzezinski included to the category of geostrategically active states also Turkey and Iran, although he labeled them as “geopolitical pivots” – states that are important because of “their sensitive location” and “their potentially vulnerable condition for the behavior of geostrategic players” (Brzezinski, 1997, p.41).

In the light of new geopolitical situation emerged in the region countries of the region began to seek new alternatives and benefits from the Euro-Atlantic enlargement at the same time considering the interests of the major and regional players. Thus a new tendency takes place in the world political arena aimed at redistribution of global power balance where the strategic initiative could belong to the West, lead by US, if, of course, this tendency sustains itself for a longer span.

US Interests in South Caucasian region and Armenia

The US entered the game on the “Grand Chessboard” noticeably only in the late 1990s, but plays an increasingly important role today, demonstrating its geopolitical and economic interests and ambitions in South Caucasus region by providing economic, political and military assistance to the newly emerged countries. Since the early 1990s, Washington officially backed

and promoted the “Turkish model”³ for Caucasian-Central Asian states (Liina, 2002). In this regard US was acting through Turkey and was very cautious in extending further direct military cooperation with South Caucasus states. However in mid 1990s the above mentioned situation steadily changed and US started to more actively and directly engage in the geopolitical processes that took place in the South Caucasus region. After 9/11 major shifts in US foreign policy occurred and the South Caucasus was included as an important part in anti-terror campaign.

The most important goal for US to strengthen its geopolitical presence and further enlargement is to minimize geopolitical presence of Russia and China, the states that have real potential to challenge the US status as a super power. In this context, it is worth to mention the decision of American government to establish a big American military base in Bulgaria as well as the announcement made by the US that in all probability anti-missile complexes will be established destined to protect East European territory from Iranian missiles. The Iranian missiles, with the range of 1300 km, are not technically able to reach to Europe, and it is obvious that the aim of these complexes is to limit Russia in launching a rocket blow⁴. That’s why the US aims at allocating anti-missile systems close to Russian and Chinese boundaries. Due to its geographic location Armenia became more attractive to the geopolitical and security interests of United States (Ter-Harutyunyan, 2006).

It should be mentioned that US is mostly interested in strengthening its relation with Armenia since. Comparing with neighboring countries, particularly Azerbaijan, Armenia is

³ US regards Turkey’s secular democratic capitalism as a model for emulation in the Caucasian-Central Asian area that she hopes will develop along democratic lines, and therefore US has been supporting closer Turkish ties with the newly-independent states in this region (Liina, 2004).

⁴ According to the American anti-missile tactics it is easy to destroy the rival’s missiles when the latter are just gaining height. However for this purpose it is necessary for anti-missiles to be situated in close to the enemy’s lands as much as possible, to “manage” to blow rockets while it is making a start.

neither rich of natural resources, nor has major transportation routes. The attractiveness of Armenia for US is Armenia-Russia close military cooperation, which is limiting US position in the South Caucasus region and also the large Armenian Diaspora living in the US (estimated about 1 million). All these factors compose the importance of Armenia for US geopolitical interests. In this context close NATO-Armenia cooperation is best opportunity for United States to strengthen its position in South Caucasus thereby shrinking Russian, Iranian and Chinese influence in this region.

The first research question of the present Internship Project asked, “How will Armenia-USA relations and military cooperation develop in the light of strengthening Armenian cooperation with NATO?” To sum up, strengthening of Armenia-NATO cooperation is driven by US and its NATO allies’ geopolitical interests in the region. The process of enlargement of NATO could be perceived as an enlargement of US interests in more general and institutionalized manner, since US is a leading country in NATO and it is country that has more vocal say in this organization. At the same time Armenia is cooperating with US and NATO in order to get technical assistance, as well as to balance the growing cooperation of NATO with Georgia and Azerbaijan. Possible repercussions for Armenian foreign policy in the light of strengthening Armenia-NATO will be pragmatic and beneficial for both sides (Armenia-US) if Armenia could further promote the policy of “complementarity” and manage to maneuver between the interests of great powers. Because only in that case Armenia could be attractive partner for United States.

EU Interests in South Caucasian region and Armenia

EU policies in the South Caucasus region are mostly driven from its economic interests representing the interests of national governments or large multi-national organizations. For example, British-based multi-nationals, such as BP, Shell and British Gas. For the sake of its commercial interests EU is interested in promotion of democratic values, free market and institutionalized democracies in neighboring countries. However, there is no common EU policy to meet the common EU interest in this region. In this sense US is considered as a sole representative of overall Western policies in the South Caucasus. Even in 2003 the EU didn't include South Caucasus states in ENP program. According to Divadriani, the decisions to exclude the South Caucasus countries from ENP program illustrated the lack of strategic vision towards this region (Divadriani, 2004). As a result, the EU found itself in the position of "splendid isolation"⁵

The recent inclusion of ten new members into EU family changed the policy of European Union toward South Caucasus states. In 2004 three South Caucasus states were included in the New Neighborhood Initiative. This fact raises the cooperation between EU and regional states into new level. For Armenia, the ENP is important not only in terms of economic development, strengthening democracy and democratic institutions, political dialog and regional security problems, and cooperation. The ENP is also important conceptually since it implies the utilization of integration processes for the achievement of stable regional development and establishment of reciprocal confidence in the South Caucasus. One shall not forget that the resolution of main obstacles to the security and further development of Armenia resides in the European dimension. The settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is done under the

⁵ The term of "splendid isolation" was used in an on-line article (Rondeli, 2004).

auspices of the OSCE, while the settlement of Armenian-Turkish relations, the international demand to lift blockades and the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey are potential prerequisites for the EU membership of Turkey.

The ENP has important practical significance because it can provide a new foundation for Armenia's cooperation with EU states in the sphere of security, foreign and defense policy, and South Caucasus regional security. The European Security Strategy, in particular, stipulates: "It is not in our interest that enlargement should create new dividing lines in Europe. We need to extend the benefits of economic and political cooperation to our neighbors in the East while tackling political problems there. We should now take a stronger and more active interest in the problems of the South Caucasus, which will in due course also be a neighboring region" (European Security Strategy, 2003). Nevertheless, EU security system and geopolitical interests haven't completely shaped and it has no common well developed security mechanisms and models for dealing in this region. In contrast, many international organizations (such as CoE, OSCE, and NATO) are actively involved in the South Caucasus region.

The new expansion of the European Union gave impetus to the EU ambition to become a powerful political and economic agent throughout the world, with a new stimulus. However, inclusion of any new member, especially Eastern, tends to entail new challenges within both internal and external relations. This was reflected in the de facto failure of the latest attempt to formalize the EU institutional fundamentals. This showed that a considerable amount of time is necessary for "developing" the concept of the "Wider Europe". Therefore, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which is based on this concept, cannot be the same for all the neighbors, and suggests one and the same "size" to fit all, including the countries that have

already promulgated their political positions as “towards Europe” and have institutionalized their relations within the framework of the PCA⁶ (Minassyan, 2005).

Interviewers’ opinions on the question relating to Armenia-EU relation in the context of deepening cooperation with NATO (see Appendix 1, Question 3) are following: Most interviewers see NATO as an additional mechanism to progress their relation with EU member countries. Particularly, it is essential for Armenia in the context of Turkey commitment to become an EU member. In their words, Armenia should make an effort along with its European partners, to include the Armenian issues (Armenian Genocide, economic blockade and establishment of diplomatic relations) as a precondition for Turkey to seek a membership in EU.

The third research question of the Policy Internship project asked, “How will further development of Armenia-NATO cooperation reflect on the process of Armenian integration to EU? ” To sum up, Armenia-EU relations in the context of strengthening cooperation with NATO will *partially intensify*. Because of absence of common developed EU foreign policy and security strategy toward South Caucasus states. Even in some cases the geopolitical interests and foreign policies of EU members confront each other (e.g. during war in Iraq Poland and Spain were initially active supporters of coalition led by US; meanwhile France and Germany were against the military campaign in Iraq). Firstly, close Armenia-NATO relation will have positive effect on Armenian further cooperation with EU, because it is an additional prospectus for deepening relation with Armenian partner countries that are members of EU (particularly France and Greece). Secondly, almost all NATO members are also members of EU (if not, they are aspirant to EU enlargement). But it should be noticed that in some issues mainly regarding security

⁶ The main legal basis of the EU-Armenia cooperation is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed in April 1996 and effective since July 1999. The PCA stipulates comprehensive assistance to Armenia in transition to market economy and sustainable democracy. The 1999 Agreement embraces practically all spheres of cooperation except military. The willingness of the parties to establish closer relations is manifested, first of all, in the efforts to maximally execute this Agreement. (Quoted in Minasian, 2005)

arrangements the interests of EU members and NATO don't coincide. That is why, Armenia should be cautious while implementing its policies toward of the EU and NATO.

Russian Interests in South Caucasian region and Armenia

Russia is considered as one of the experienced players in the South Caucasus region, which until 1991 belonged exclusively to Moscow's sphere of influence. After the collapse of the Soviet Union there was a short lull in the Russian interest towards the South Caucasus due to the internal disorientation and conflict situation in the federation (military campaign in Chechnya). However, as time passed and the most important successor state of the Soviet Union recovered from the transition shock, Moscow "regained" its interest towards and tried to refill the post-Soviet power vacuum in its near abroad, including the South Caucasus, which geographically is a base for the projection of power to another important region, the Middle East, with its vast resources of oil and gas.

Russia now holds a fairly well-entrenched position in the region following a steady reassertion of power and influence. After the incoherence of the Yeltsin period, Russian strategy under Putin has been of a regaining and restoring Russia's traditional influence along its southern periphery. This has been largely accomplished through the application of a more sophisticated strategy of exerting influence by using energy as leverage, with an economic dependence constituting a new "soft power" over the more traditional Russian "hard power" emphasis on blunt military force or localized, low-intensity conflict (Giragosyan, 2006). President Putin, after a difficult start, has achieved remarkable success in making himself into a valuable partner for key Western leaders, skillfully exploiting every opportunity to forge personal ties. This

presidential diplomacy has particularly targeted the trans-Atlantic security disagreements, also paying serious attention to relations with China.

Armenia's strategic relationship with Russia has been transformed from that of a partnership based on bilateral interests to a platform serving to project Russian interests. This Armenian role as a platform for Russian interests has had a cumulative effect of a steady mortgaging of Armenian national security. The clearest demonstration of this trend can be seen in the "debt-for-equity" agreements of 2002 and 2003, a series of questionable deals granting Russia control over key strategic enterprises and consolidating its dominance over the country's vulnerable energy sector. Through early-2006, for example, Russia has been able to secure, with the assent of an overly compliant Armenian government, control or outright ownership of much of the country's energy network, including its hydroelectric plants, national electricity network, and its sole nuclear power plant (Giragosian, 2006).

Armenia is the only Russian ally in the region, and is considered by many in Moscow as a Russian frontier outpost. It is currently the only South Caucasian republic, holding membership in the Organization for Collective Security Treaty (known as the Tashkent Treaty), a post-Soviet military alliance led by Moscow and viewed by some as a counterweight to NATO's growing influence in the post-Soviet space. The level of bilateral economic cooperation is impressive as well, with Russia being the second major trading partner of the country and home to the hundreds of thousands of Armenian migrant workers who send millions of dollars in cash remittances to their relatives back home (Harutyunyan, 2006).

Military cooperation between Armenia and Russia is progressing, and Russian Federation (through the framework of CSTO⁷) is considered to be the guarantor of the Armenian national

⁷ The Collective Security Treaty/Collective Security Organization provides a multilateral-looking framework within which Russia develops relations with each member country separately. Armenia is the sole member country of the

security. In 1997, Moscow and Yerevan signed a key “Friendship Treaty,” which included a mutual assistance provision - in the event of a military attack on either party. This agreement was strengthened in January 2003 by a new bilateral military-technical agreement. Armenia receives, in part, military equipment, spare parts, supplies and training from Russia’s armed forces. Armenia views Russia as the strategic guarantor of its position within the region and this is reinforced further by the continued stationing of Russian ground, air and air defense forces on its territory⁸. In 2000, Yerevan signed an agreement allowing Russian troops to stay in Armenia through 2025 and, In January 2002, Russia and Armenia agreed to establish a joint “counter terrorism” brigade. All these agreements and security arrangements closely tie Armenian national security concept with Russian Federation (through CSTO) military presence in Armenia. In this context on January 2006 the position of the Russian part was expressed more definitely in the form of announcements made by the secretary general of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Nikolai Borduzha and the first vice prime minister in Russia, the defense minister Sergei Ivanov. In the interview given to “Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie” weekly Borduzha pointed out that “...military aggression to any CSTO member state (in this case having Armenia in view) will be automatically considered as an aggression committed to the other members of the organization” (quoted in on-line article, Web page: <http://www.noravank.am/?l=3&d=27&f=321>).

CSTO in the South Caucasus. The CSTO, signed at Moscow’s initiative in 1992, was abandoned in 1998 by Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan, who did not renew their membership in the Treaty as it came up for renewal. the CSTO includes three "regional groups of forces": the Western group of Russia and Belarus, the South Caucasus group of Russia and Armenia, and the Central Asian group of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Svante et al, 2004).

⁸ The core of Armenia’s national air defence is the Russian-operated joint air defence command center outside of Yerevan, which is integrated into the Russian and CIS air defence networks. Air defense is further bolstered by a sole squadron of current generation Russian Air Force fighters (MiG-29s) and a battalion of Russian ground-based strategic air defence systems (SA-12s) that are stationed in Armenia (Giragosian, 2005).

Interviewers' opinions regarding the question of possible repercussions on Armenia-Russian relations in the context of strengthening with NATO (see appendix 1, question 2) mostly coincide. Almost all interviewers expressed their concern about the future of Armenia's relations with Russian (particularly in the field of military cooperation) in the light of intensification of Armenia-NATO cooperation. Mr. Iskandaryan correctly stated that further development of cooperation with NATO should be possible only in the condition of not harming Armenia-Russia relation. In the words of interviewers, the importance of maintaining and developing security cooperation with Russia is undisputable and important agenda for Armenian national security. This fact is also reflected in the opinion survey conducted in December 21, 2005. According to the result of this survey, 75.9 percent are for the further deepening of strategic partnership with Russia; and 93.3 percent of the respondents declared that the Russian military base in Armenia should stay⁹ (Liloyan, 2005).

The third research question of the present Internship project asked, "What could be the repercussions in Armenia-Russia relations in case of strengthening Armenia-NATO relationship? How the process of strengthening Armenia-NATO cooperation could effect on Armenia-CSTO relations?" In sum, there is a possibility of worsening Armenia-Russia relations in the context of strengthening cooperation with NATO. But it is possible in two cases: First, if Armenia sees cooperation with NATO in the context of becoming a full member; Second, if Armenia intensifies its relations with NATO without "consulting" with Russia.

Given today's realities, the first case is not a serious possibility since Armenian officials (both Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs) on many occasions stated that Armenia did not aim to become a NATO member. Regarding the second option, Armenia should develop its

⁹ This is shown by the opinion survey conducted by the Russian non-commercial organization "Caucasian Institute of Democracy Development Foundation". The respondents in Yerevan and in all the Armenian regions numbered 1,600 (Liloyan, 2005).

national security concept in accordance with Russian regional interests, if it further wants to see Russia as its “security guarantor”.

Iran Interests in South Caucasian region and Armenia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islamic Republic of Iran has steadily tried to increase its geopolitical weight in the South Caucasus region. Despite US policy aiming to limit Iran’s geopolitical role in south and delegating this role to Turkey (US close ally in the region) Iran still is considered as one of the most influential regional players. To achieve and maintain the status of regional power Tehran implemented its policy at three levels. These levels are correctly presented in the Halliday article. First, it has striven to build strong economic ties with the South Caucasian countries, a policy restricted by American trade and investment sanctions. Secondly, it has attempted to assume the role of a mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to try to limit its spread (to its multi-ethnic society). Thirdly, it has cooperated with Russia on defense, strategic and economic issues in an effort to counter the Western influence (Halliday, 2006). Among three republics in the region, Iran has managed to build truly good neighborly relations with Armenia. The ties are especially tight in the economic and energy spheres (a gas pipeline is currently under construction between the two countries, aimed at decreasing Armenia’s chronic energy dependence on Russia), but politically too the countries have not had significant problems. Fundamentalist Iran, by contrast, has not only refused to join Muslim Azerbaijan's and Turkey's economic blockade; it has developed a dynamic trade with Christian Armenia. Iran has a number of serious differences and confronting interests with Turkey and Azerbaijan, and its view of Armenia is dictated by its geopolitical and regional interests. Firstly,

Iran-Azerbaijan disputes over Caspian Sea demarcation¹⁰. Secondly, competition between Turkey and Iran for the hegemonic role of the regional power (including the transportation routes). And, finally Iran's northwestern province bordering on Azerbaijan is populated mostly by Azeri Turks (about 20 million) ethnically close to those across the frontier. There have been semi-nationalist movements in the province during past decades and some of the Iranian Azeris seek unification with Azerbaijan (Novikova, 2000). That is why Iran isn't interested in seeing Armenia weakened and trade with Iran is constantly developing (Iran is third trade partner for Armenia).

The Teheran's position regarding close cooperation of Armenia with the Western countries and organizations is mostly negative. Iran perceives its cooperation with Armenia and Russia as a restraining mechanism of Western influence in the South Caucasus (Martirosyan, 2003). In September 2002 the then Iranian Ambassador to Armenia, Mohammad Farhad Koleini, publicly criticized Armenian Foreign Minister Oskanyan after the latter said that Armenia was adjusting its foreign policy to the dramatic global changes that had occurred after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Koleini indicated his country's discomfort with the deepening US-Armenian ties when he noted that "even great powers must not have illusory approaches to their capabilities." He rebuked the Armenian government for pursuing what he called "globalist security" (Danielyan, 2005). Nevertheless, apart from this issue, overwhelmingly Christian Armenia and predominantly Muslim Iran have enjoyed exemplary international friendship. Armenia will continue to maintain close economic and political ties with Iran, viewing the latter as a major counterweight to its foes - Turkey and Azerbaijan. Although

¹⁰ Iran's major regional conflict is with Azerbaijan over differences in the ownership of Caspian oil and on projected oil and gas pipeline routes from the Caspian basin to Western oil consumers. The cheapest pipeline route lies across Iranian territory but, under U.S. pressure, preference has been given to the Western "Baku-Ceyhan" route through Turkey (Novikova, 2000).

Iran has only recently begun to break out of its political isolation, Armenia sees Iran as an important actor in multilateral initiatives for the creation of a secure geopolitical environment in the region.

Interviewers' opinion towards question regarding Armenia-Iran relation in the light of Armenia strengthening cooperation with NATO (see Appendix 1, question 5) were diverse. For example, Mr. Zakaryan's opinion is that these two issues (Armenia-NATO cooperation and Armenia-Iran relations,) are not interrelated and they are developing in different directions. In contrast, Ms. Khatlamajyan correctly notes that intensification of Armenia-NATO cooperation may hinder Armenia's relation with Iran. She believes the Armenian officials should make their best choice (if it is needed) in what direction develop their policies.

The sixth research question of the present Internship project asks, "What repercussions will occur in Armenia-Iran relations in case of intensification of cooperation with NATO?" In the context of strengthening Armenia-NATO cooperation Armenian officials and policymakers should be more pragmatic and cautious in order not *to lose one partner* (Iran) while trying *to gain another one* (NATO). As it was mentioned above, Armenia is a land locked country and has access to external world only via Georgia (transportation routes through Georgia are complicated due to ongoing conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and Iran (is the only well organized land corridor with external world, plus Armenia-Iran energetic projects). Iran is strategically important partner of Armenia, at the same time is at a nuclear standoff with the West. In the possible scenario of war against Iran Armenia should decide its stances. That is why Armenian policy should be pragmatic, prioritized, balanced, and driven from national security interest in order not to lose a neighboring strategic partner.

Turkey's Interests in South Caucasian region and Armenia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey, as a regional proxy of United States, started actively to participate in political, socio-economic process emerging in new independent states of the South Caucasus region. Steadily Turkey, along with Iran, became important regional power that had its geopolitical and economic intentions. The role of Turkey as a regional power is defined by Brzezinski “Turkey is a “critically important geopolitical pivot” that “stabilizes the Black Sea region, controls access from it to the Mediterranean Sea, balances Russia in the Caucasus, still offers an antidote for Muslim fundamentalism, and serves as the southern anchor for NATO” (Brzezinski, 1997).

Turkey's interests in the region are following: by strengthening its position in the South Caucasus region to lessen the position of Russia and Iran and afterwards gain an access to the Caspian resources, ensuring the transportation of these resources through its territory. To achieve above mentioned goals in the early 1990s Turkey began to pursue a policy of pan-Turkic euphoria in order to intensify its relations with Turkic speaking states¹⁷ (that are rich of oil gas resources) and include them in its orbit of influence. However Turkey's paternalistic cultural approach towards the Caucasus-Central Asian region has also brought resentment from these states and therefore its influence in this region has been lesser than would have been expected (Liina, 2002). In this regard, Cornell considers that pan-Turkic euphoria isn't any more on the agenda of Turkish foreign policy and now Turkey is pursuing pragmatic and stable policy toward the South Caucasus states (Cornell et al, 2004). This statement is not fully corresponding to the truth since the Turkey's present policy toward Armenia represents the elements of Turkish pan-Turkic ideology and Armenophobia.

¹⁷ Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzia, Uzbekistan

Turkey gives primacy to relations with Azerbaijan, both because of the close cultural and linguistic affinities between the two states, and because of Azerbaijan's pivotal geopolitical position. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline have added economic importance to the South Caucasus for Turkey. The logic of these plans establishes the supremacy of geopolitics over economics by stressing the importance to exclude any Russian or Iranian already existing pipelines and bypassing Armenian territories. Consequently Turkey's ambition to become an energy corridor between the Caspian and Europe has led to increased attention on Georgia, the geographic link between Turkey and Azerbaijan and Central Asia. Turkey has improved its relations with Georgia to the level of strategic partnership. After Iranian military threats toward Azerbaijan in July-August 2001, Turkey had taken on a role of a guarantor of Azerbaijan's security.

The imposition of a blockade of Armenia by Turkey in April 1993 once more shows the Turkish enmity toward Armenia. Although the economic impact on Armenia of the closed border and the trade embargo was marginal, it was far more important in terms of international law and Armenian national security (Giragosian, 2005)

The Turkish blockade, although seemingly rooted in Turkey's role as Azerbaijan's strategic ally, offered its own threat to Armenian national security well beyond the framework of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict or its relations with Azerbaijan. In fact, the Turkish role in the twin blockade of Armenia was driven as much by its pursuit of regional power as by its support for Azerbaijan. In this regard, "the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis has strategic two-dimensional causal field: first, a clash of divergent strategic interests and objectives of the immediate parties to the conflict and, second, a similar clash between the great and regional powers" (Aivazian,

1998, 204). That is to say, that the political responsibility for the resolution of the NK conflict not only to Armenia but also on the great powers (Russia and US).

It is worth to mention that Turkey along with Armenia, NK, and Azerbaijan is a direct participant of the conflict, since it, except for direct military invasion into Armenia, has exercised other possible means of warfare (economic blockade, Anti-Armenian propaganda and threatening). That is why, the main strategic challenge that Armenia faces today, in the words of Dr. Aivazian, is “to withstand this pressure from Turkey and Azerbaijan to ensure its long term security” (Aivazian, 1998, 205). Mr. Hovhannesyan, Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, characterized Turkey as the main obstacle to peace in the region. According to him “Turkey's policy had been to isolate Armenia, while laying the blame of an aggressive and uncooperative attitude on Armenia. Turkey had sometimes seemed to promote rapprochement with Armenia, but these initiatives were only meant to deceive the international community. In light of this attitude, only little progress could be expected from the recent decision of the EU to open accession negotiations with Turkey” (61st Rose-Roth seminar, 2005).

Moreover, Turkey still refuses to recognize Armenian Genocide, which in fact, is a serious threat to Armenia's security. In this regard Armenia's population is very sensitive on security issues. “The Turkish state has never repented committing Armenian Genocide,” which can serve as a basis for new acts of genocidal policies. Moreover, there are no reliable security guarantees from the international community for Armenia against Turkish aggressive policy and pressures, and tensions between Turkey and Armenia have potential “of spilling into a direct military intervention” by Turkey (Aivazian, 2003, pp.11-12).

The interviewers opinion on the question regarding Armenian-Turkish relations from the perspective of strengthening cooperation with NATO (see Appendix 1, question 4) is

contradictory. Particularly, Mr. Zakaryan and Ms. Khatlamanjyan expressed the opinion that further integration to NATO would positively affect on Armenia-Turkey relation. Moreover they added that possible normalization of Armenian-Turkey relations (including: waving blockade, establishing diplomatic relations, Armenian Genocide issue) is possible in the context of cooperation with NATO. In contrast, Mr. Shaghelyan didn't share the same opinion. Evermore, she correctly considered that NATO wouldn't be interested to push possible prospectus for resolving Armenia-Turkey problematics in an unbiased way. In this context the Turkey's interests would be predominant over Armenia's ones.

The last research question of present Internship Project asked, "What will change in Armenia-Turkey relations, including Armenian Genocide problematics, in the context of strengthening cooperation with NATO?" Analyzing the materials related this research question, the following conclusion was made: Strengthening cooperation with NATO and undermining the role of CSTO could increase Armenia's vulnerability in the face of possible Turkish aggression. NATO isn't an appropriate organization through which Armenia can address and find unbiased formulas for stabilization of its relations with Turkey since the political weight of Turkey (close ally of US) is very impressive comparing to that of Armenia, a traditionally pro-Russian country. It should also be taken into consideration that intensification of relations with NATO could worsen Armenia's relations with Russia (guarantor of Armenian security). In case of restarting Armenia-Azerbaijan war, Turkey (guarantor of Azerbaijan security) will obviously support Azerbaijan. Given this situation Armenia will stay alone with Turkish (member of NATO) and Azeri military aggression. That is why NATO won't be able to guarantee Armenian long-term security.

Conclusion and Implementations for practice

The hypothesis of the present Internship Project states that “the process of strengthening relations with NATO (particularly IPAP program) will have crucial impact on Armenian foreign policy with potentially important repercussions on Armenia’s current strategic relations with external world.” Through the analysis of research question and related materials it will be right to say that the present hypothesis has been supported. As it was mentioned above, the process of intensification of Armenia-NATO cooperation has direct influences on Armenia’s foreign relations with great and regional powers. These influences were covered in the second chapter while separately discussing every state: US, EU, Russia, Iran and Turkey.

Since the process of deepening Armenia-NATO cooperation is an ongoing process it is worth to address the following questions: Should Armenia strengthen its relation with NATO, taking into consideration current state of Russian-Georgian relations? Would Armenia become the full member of NATO?

Actually these questions were asked during interviews conducted for this Internship project (see Appendix1 questions 6 and 7 respectively) and the interviewers opinion regarding these questions were following. Mr. Iskandaryan correctly states that “...we shouldn’t put Armenia and Georgia in the same shoes, they aren’t comparable, since Georgia hasn’t anything to lose regarding its relations with Russia (it has already lost everything that was possible) while Armenia should be interested in preserving good relations, ...it is the matter of national security of Armenia.” This opinion was mostly shared by Ms. Khatlamanjyan, she also underlined the importance not to be excited so much by the idea of strengthening relations with NATO, since it may hinder Armenia’s relation with its strategically important partner (Russia). Ms. Aivazian

and Mr. Zakharyan also underlined the importance of preserving good relation. However, they also mentioned that Armenia should balance its security system through cooperation with NATO. And the last question of questionnaire regarding of possible membership of Armenia in NATO (see appendix 1, question 7) was mostly answered in the same way by all respondents. All of them directly tied the upcoming Parliament and Presidential elections with possible membership of Armenia in NATO. As they mentioned, “The future Parliament and President are those who will decide over this issue”

Nevertheless it should be mentioned that the process of developing Armenia-NATO is pregnant with possible repercussions on Armenia’s foreign policy and consequently on Armenia’s national security concept.

Each state devises its foreign policy and national security system from its geographic conditions and geopolitical interests of great and regional powers. Being a landlocked state with shortage of natural resource and surrounded mostly by hostile countries, Armenia had to define its foreign policy and security concept in an extremely hard conditions, when even one “wrong step” could cost a high price for Armenian statehood and Armenian nationality as whole. Driven from this perspective, the core of Armenian security concept is to maintain strategically important geopolitical balance between competing great and regional powers, while seeking sufficient maneuverability and securing as many policy options as possible. But in the context of recent geopolitical developments Armenia has two real possible directions for securing its statehood and national security. First option is to preserve and prolong its membership in CSTO, while continuing its cooperation with NATO, without any commitments to become a member of this organization. The second option is to seek the membership of NATO and disturb its cooperation with CSTO, like Georgia and Azerbaijan. So, this issue of “right choice” becomes a

real challenge for Armenian policy makers and, as it was mentioned above, this choice would determine the future of Armenia as state.

The adoption of the second option will minimize Russian role in South Caucasus, since Armenia is the last outpost of CSTO (led by Russia) interests in the region. Armenia has to delegate its national security system to NATO (led by US). The issue is that Armenia has unsolved problems with two of its neighbors – Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkey is strategically important member of NATO, a key American ally. Azerbaijan is strategic partner of Turkey (the guarantor of Azerbaijan's security) and maintains huge natural reserves of oil. This creates a strong triangle of mutual interests among US-Turkey-Azerbaijan. Therefore, it is obvious, that if the US becomes the principle broker in the region, Azerbaijan's and Turkey's interests would count for more than Armenia's, because the latter does not have anything of comparable value to offer the US. Even if Armenia becomes a full member of NATO, it still won't be a guarantee for its security.

In 1974 NATO wasn't able to prevent Turkey's aggression against Cyprus, the closest ally of Greece, and as a result Turkey occupied the northern part of Cyprus. The membership of NATO didn't help Greece to secure its closest ally's citizens and its territorial integrity, as well as Turkey's threats against the Greek territory proper. Twice Turkey and Greece were at the brink of full-scale war. Taking into consideration Armenian-Turkish-Azerbaijan relations, especially the potential of NK conflict, there are no guarantees for Armenia against a similar scenario.

Today, the presence of Russian military base in Armenia is serving as one of the preventive factors against a possible military intervention of Turkey and Azerbaijan. Hence, given the conditions of unresolved conflict of NK and hostile relations with Azerbaijan and

Turkey, the replacement of one security umbrella (CSTO) by the another one (NATO) would threaten Armenian national security system.

Questionnaire

1. Have you heard about launching IPAP program by NATO in Armenia?
 - Have you analyzed this program?
 - Do you agree that the all provisions of above mentioned program would positively effect to Armenian Security System?
2. Generally, how would close Armenia-NATO cooperation effect on Armenia-Russia relations? Particularly, in field of Military cooperation (in the framework of CSTO)?
3. How would IPAP program reflect on the process of Armenia-European Union integration?
4. What could change in Armenian-Turkish relations from the perspective of close Armenia-NATO relations, including Armenian Genocide problematics?
5. How would the process of developing Armenia-NATO cooperation reflect on Armenia-Iran relations?
6. Should Armenia strengthen its relation with NATO, taking into consideration current state of Russian-Georgian relations?
7. Do you see Armenia in future as a full member of NATO?

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