

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

**ANALYSIS OF THE ARMENIAN-AMERICAN LOBBY IN THE LIGHT OF GENERAL
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ETHNIC GROUP
LOBBYING**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

U.S. - United States

ANCA - Armenian National Committee of America

USAPAC - US-Armenia Public Affairs Committee

ARAMAC - Armenian American Action Committee

AIM - Armenian International Magazine

PAC - Political Action Committee

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

TRACECA - Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus – Asia

INGOATE - Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe

METHODOLOGY

The methodology chosen for this study is mainly the secondary data analysis. The Armenian-American lobby is analyzed in the light of its compliance with 7 factors of effective ethnic group lobbying, which are derived from the work of Eric M. Uslaner.

The main sources of the research were the articles, position papers, reports, press releases and other relevant information, almost totally retrieved from internet sources, such as the official web pages of the Armenian National Committee of America, Armenian Assembly of America, US-Armenia Public Affairs Committee, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Congress of the United States, etc.

Besides the secondary data analyses, I used also primary data, which were collected through in-depth interviews with a former representative of ANCA, the former editor in chief of the Armenian International Magazine (AIM), and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

One of the marks of the truly vigorous society is the ability to pass directly from thought to action
Eric Hoffer

INTRODUCTION

After the independence of Armenia and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Diaspora Armenians have found a new incentive for retaining their national identity, and that was material and psychological support to the struggling Armenian republic. On the other hand, the Armenians in the Republic of Armenia found a powerful ally overseas which gives a sense of security and power to the landlocked republic surrounded by powerful enemies in the middle of an instable region of Transcaucasia.

The effect of the Armenian Diaspora and especially the US Armenian community has been omnipresent in the recent 20 years in Armenia. However, a more or less objective estimate about the political power of the Armenian-American community is still absent. This study aims at shedding light on the Armenian-American community's political power, using a broadly shared set of criteria to evaluate the political position of the Armenian-American community. The result is a still very limited research, because of lack of previous researches, as well as a critical lack of important data on the demographic and socio-economic conditions, political orientation and behavior of the Armenian-Americans.

The paper outlines the Armenian-American community's strengths and weaknesses, gives some basic understanding about its current status and provides some guidelines to analyze future challenges and opportunities the Armenian-American community will face. Besides its purely exploratory and evaluative purposes, this study aims also to provide some ground for comparison with other ethnic group lobbies, such as the Israeli, Greek and Cuban-American lobbies, which were scrutinized and evaluated by prominent scholars using almost the same set of criteria, with minor modifications. Though it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comparative analysis, this paper might serve as a basis for future researches aimed to that comparison.

Hypothesis: The Armenian lobby in the US meets the majority of the conditions for effective ethnic group lobbying as specified by ethnic group lobbying scholars.

Research Questions:

R1: What is ethnic group lobbying?

R2: Why is it successful in the US?

R3: How does it pursue its interests?

R4: What are the characteristics of the Armenian lobby (When was it? How is it structured? What are its objectives?)

R5: How does the Armenian lobby comply with the conditions of effective ethnic group lobbying?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a great mass of literature on interest groups, examining them from as many points as possible and trying to define the roots of their emergence, the strategies of their success or the composition of their ranks. To draw a general outline of the main points used in the interest group literature, the interest groups are organizations of individuals who share a common cause and who unite their resources in the effort of influencing on the decision-making on the issues which are important to them, or to generate a decision-making effort towards the fulfillment of their shared interest. According to Trice, interest groups are “auxiliary powers that stand between the government and the mass public” (1978, 238).

The concept of interest group activism is an inherent part of the American democracy. As early as in the 18th century, James Madison has acknowledged the existence of interest groups or “factions” as natural phenomenon, whose causes are “sown in the nature of man” (Loomis and Cigler, 1995). According to Lucig Danielian, interest group activity is an essential instrument for realizing citizens’ participation in policy making in modern democratic societies (1992). The phenomenon of interest group activities has played a major role in advancing the modern democratic polity in the form as we know it, by fostering competition among various interest groups, meanwhile establishing rules and procedures to make the outcome legitimate. There have been historically changing attitudes towards interest groups, varying from extreme hatred (in the years of the “Spoils system”) to enthusiastic hailing in the aftermath of the Cold War (Loomis and Cigler, 1995; Haney and Vanderbush, 1999). However, the phenomenon has been continuously present in the public and political life of the US, and, according to some scholars, is the natural product of the political system of the country (Lindsay, 2002).

ETHNIC LOBBIES IN THE US: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Most of the interest groups in the US have pursued causes or goals which were essentially linked to the domestic environment of the US, with the foreign policy usually treated and thought as something free from narrow interest group pressures. However, with the rise of ethnic interest groups, the foreign policy apparatus have also become a target of interest group pressures. With the increase of the US involvement in the international arena as a prominent player, ethnic groups, not surprisingly, became more active in their pursuit of the US official policy stances and measures with regards to their home countries (Shain, 1994/95). Strong ethnic groups like the Irish-Americans in the 19th century or the German-Americans in the 20th century have exercised a significant pressure on the US policy-makers to shift the foreign policy course of the country in the way which is favorable to their ancestral home-countries (Lindsay, 2002).

During the Cold War there was a more centralized foreign policy making in the US, dominated by the president, and ethnic interest groups did not exercise significant power. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the environment for ethnic group lobbying became more friendly, because of increasing belief in the virtues of multiculturalism, as well as because the blurring of the fault line between the friends and foes of the US, and “diasporic elites are less and less inhibited by charges of disloyalty when ancestral identities among their constituencies” (Shain, 1994/95, 812).

INTEREST GROUPS AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

The main argument explaining the special role of interest groups in the US is the “porous” government of the United States, which allows many points of intervention from those, who are interested to affect on the policy making (Shain, 1994/95). On the other hand, the decisively increasing role of the Congress in foreign policy making have allowed the ethnic groups to influence on the process of foreign policy making by influencing on individual Congressmen (Shain, 1994/95; Lindsay 2002; Trice 1978; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2006). Thus, the influential role of Congress in foreign policy making is the single most important factor explaining the proliferation of ethnic group lobbies in the US. The other more general feature of the American politics and society, that explains the activity of interest group politics is the influential role of public opinion, to which the decision-makers in the US are extremely sensitive (Trice, 1978). The power of the mass media in influencing the public opinion and, eventually, the policy-makers choices, have played a significant role in the magnifying the “conflict”, or the cause for which the interest group is striving, making the interest groups disproportionately influential once they learn the techniques of mass media manipulation and get access to it (Danielian, 1992; Trice, 1978). These factors, alongside with the strong tradition of community involvement and political activism of the US society, have created a fertile ground for the proliferation of interest groups in general and ethnic lobbies in particular.

INTEREST GROUPS IN THE US: A CURSE OR A BLESSING?

There are two broadly shared opinions on the ethnic group lobbies among the scholars. The first group considers the ethnic lobbies as natural, and furthermore, beneficial to the overall US interests, because they disperse the American values and symbols around the world and influence

on their home countries to become more democratic and to foster stronger links with the US (Freeman, 2000). One of the main supporters of this idea, Yossi Shain, states that the ethnic lobbies promote in their homelands “the American creed of democracy, human rights, free-market economics and religious pluralism” (Freeman, 2000, 483). This view is supported by several other prominent scholars, who in general argue that ethnic lobbies are not as powerful as they like to be seen, their policies towards their homelands do not contradict to the US interests, the perceived successes of their lobbying effort is nothing more than coincidence, and those “successes” eventually strengthen the US-home country relations and increase the US leverage on their home countries (Freeman, 2000; Shain 1994/95).

On the other side are those scholars, who consider ethnic group lobbies as distracting the US policy-makers from pursuing genuine national interests and who consider the foreign policy as something which should not be affected by narrow inter-societal interests. Those scholars are against the excessive fragmentation of the US society in the name of promoting multiculturalism (Shain, 1994/95). However, most of the scholars stand somewhere in between of those two clear-cut positions.

Similarly, there are contradicting opinions on the overall effectiveness of ethnic group lobbies. Some authors consider the ethnic group lobbies as having a very marginal impact on actual policy-making. A critique to the controversial book “The Israel Lobby” demonstrates the main argument of those, who diminish the real impact of the lobbies: “the US political system is extremely good at providing hollow victories for lobbyists that have little or no real impact on policy – allowing the lobbyists and legislators to score an easy political win” (Russel Mead, 2007, 2). Some others have developed that argument further, suggesting that blaming the lobby for policy actions is a tool used by politicians to justify for their unpopular policies.

The opposite side of the scholarly community argues that ethnic group lobbies have indeed reached significant policy objectives and pressed for much more, despite the fact that their policies contradicted the US national interests, or the US did not have any reasonable interest to support those policies (Lindsay, 2002; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2006). One of the most typical appraisal to the power of the lobbies have written by Mearsheimer and Walt in their book “The Israel Lobby”, in which the authors state that: “The United States provides Israel with extraordinary material aid and diplomatic support, the lobby is the principal reason for that support, and this uncritical and unconditional support is not in the national interest [of the US].” (Russel Mead, 2007, 1). This reasoning is almost verbatim stated with regards to other ethnic lobbies, such as the Greek, Armenian, Cuban or Japanese lobbies by other scholars (Haney and Vanderbush 1999; Uslaner, 1995).

Thus, to sum up the arguments mentioned above, we can say that every ethnic group lobby has had its clear successes and obvious defeats, a fact that speaks about the weaknesses of both arguments. The more reasonable argument would be that the ethnic lobbies succeed in their policies due to the conditions rendered by favorable political and historical moment and fail due to the lack of favorable political and historical conditions. This statement seems tautological, as every success might be referred to favorable conditions and every failure to the lack of it, however, if clearly conceptualized, this framework might be useful in analyzing the causes of success of ethnic group lobbies.

ARMENIAN-AMERICANS: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Armenian American community is one of the most organized, best-educated and the most affluent Armenian communities in the world. However, as opposed to the communities in the Middle East and Europe, the Armenian-American community has been established only some 10 years of history. There were individuals who immigrated to America as early as in the 17th century. One of the prominent Armenians from that period was Martin the Armenian, who moved to America in the 17th century, and has established a cigarette factory in Virginia (Balakian, 1993). However, the first large settlements of Armenians in America emerged in the late 19th century, constituting largely from the Ottoman Armenians, who had fled from Ottoman oppressions and economic hardships in the Ottoman Armenia (Mirak, 1997). The first large Armenian immigration wave to the US has occurred in the immediate aftermath of the 1894-96 massacres of the Armenians by the Ottoman Turks, because of which some 100 000 Armenians fled to the Americas, mainly to the US. The almost uninterrupted flow of Armenians to the United States continued also during the first quarter of the 20th century, due to the Genocide and the hardships of the WWI (Mirak, 1997).

The second major wave of immigration to the US occurred after the WWII and continued during the 50s and 60s. This time the Armenian population was seeking refuge from the nationalistic upheavals of the Middle Eastern countries like Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon. And the third large wave of immigration started in the late 80s and intensified after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Republic of Armenia and continues until now (Mirak, 1997). As a result of these three large flows of Armenians, the US Armenian community grew from insignificant number of 15 thousands in the late 19th century to some 1.2 million people in current days (Ghanalanian, 2009).

However, there is no precise data about the number of Armenian-Americans in the US. The official US census in 2000 gives a number 446,032 which clearly underestimates the real number of Armenian-Americans (US census bureau). This underestimation can partly be explained by a large mass of new immigrants who do not have legal resident status in the US. However, most of the researches give a number between 800 000 to 1.5 million. Much of the discrepancy of the numbers has to do with the definition of American-Armenian, where the optimistic numbers reflect an inclusion of third and fourth generation Armenians, or persons, who have only one-side Armenian ancestry (Balakian, 1993). In any case, the most probable number is 1.2 million or more, considering the ever growing immigration patterns from the Republic of Armenia to the US.

The Armenian-American communities are concentrated in several major states, such as California, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Michigan; however, there are many smaller communities in virtually every state throughout the country (Gregg, 2002; Mirak, 1997). The largest Armenian-American communities are in California, in the areas of the San-Francisco Bay and Los Angeles. Other historically and demographically important Armenian community is the Boston area community of Watertown, which is a home of some 24-45 thousand Armenians and has been one of the important political and cultural centers of the Armenian-Americans (Mirak, 1997).

ARMENIAN-AMERICANS: THE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

Armenian-American community is an interesting combination of two separate political forces whom unites the memory of common ancestry and the commitment to modern Armenia.

To fully understand the complexities of the Armenian-Americans and to realize its strengths and weaknesses it is important to get acquainted with its intra-community politics and some important facts and figures that have shaped the Armenian-American community in the form as we currently know it.

As mentioned above, the establishment of the American-Armenian community was a result of major political and historical transformations and catastrophic rearrangements in Armenia. In the late 19th century the Armenian intellectuals started to form political parties, which rapidly transformed into paramilitary structures and a de-facto superstructure for a state. There were initially two popular parties – the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Hunchakian party, who separately were striving for the liberation of the Armenian people from the Ottoman rule, but who had different tactical and strategic approaches to the accomplishment of that end (Hovannissian, 1997). After the independence of the first Armenian Republic, the ARF Dashnaktsutyun party became the main ruling party, but as the Red Army occupied and annexed the Armenian Republic to the Soviet Union, the ARF was expelled from Armenia, and the US became one of the prominent emigration destinations for the ARF part leadership and members. In the 1921 a third major party was formed in Egypt, called Ramkavar party, or Armenian Liberal Democratic party. These three parties established their party structures, charities, schools, cultural and professional associations and their press in a short period of time, and thus, the Armenian-American community became increasingly politicized and partisan in its nature (Gregg, 2002). At the meantime a fourth party was established in the US, named the Armenian Progressive League; as a government-in-exile, the ARF categorically rejected any legitimacy of the Soviet annexation of Armenia, while the other three entities were more moderate on that issue and even hailed the Soviet annexation of Armenia (Mirak, 1997). Eventually this issue

brought the community to a state of polarization, which shortly embraced all community structures, even the Armenian Apostolic Church, which in 1957 was divided into two parts, one controlled from the Holy See of Ejmiadzin in the Soviet Armenia and serving the pro-Soviet or moderate party members, and the other was controlled by Cilician Holy See of Anthilias and serving the ARF adherents (Gregg, 2002). Thus, eventually, the Armenian-American community has developed two parallel community structures, on the one hand the ARF and on the other side the Hunchaks, Ramkavars as well as “non-aligned” community members. As a result, as Bakalian puts it, “there are two churches, two women’s auxiliaries, two youth/sport organizations, two charitable associations, etc., each affiliated with a political faction nearly every American-Armenian community” (Bakalian, 1993, 97). As we will see in the next chapters, the ARF has traditionally taken a much more rigid stance on the issues of Genocide recognition, relations with Turkey and the Nagorno Karabakh issue.

THE ARMENIAN LOBBY

As shown in the previous lines, the Armenian-American community has been divided almost from the days of its inception and thus, one of the most characteristic features of the Armenian lobby in the US is that there is no unified organization that carries out the responsibilities of advocating on behalf of the Armenian-Americans and representing the whole community. The Armenian lobby is composed of three major organizations, which are the Armenian National Committee of America, The Armenian Assembly of America, and the newcomer – the United States-Armenian Public Affairs Committee. These three organizations

represent the vast majority of the American-Armenians and have proved themselves as able to mobilize significant amount of support both from the grassroots level and from the elite.

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA)

The Armenian National Committee of Armenian (ANCA) is the lobbying arm of the ARF (Gregg, 2002). The organization considers itself to be the successor of the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA), which was established in 1918 and aimed to support the inchoate Armenian republic. The founder of the ACIA was Vahan Kardashian, the former consul of the Ottoman Empire to the Washington, a Yale-graduated lawyer and a devotee to the Armenian question. Kardashian, succeeds in involving several prominent American politicians and public figures into the advocacy campaigns, directed to the strengthening the independence of the first Armenian Republic, and, after the takeover by the Soviets, to the advocacy of the Armenian question in the American public and political arenas (www.asbarez.org). The ACIA had a general council consisting from 72 people, and a 9-member executive body, which was headed by the former ambassador of the US to Germany James Gerard. The chair of the honorary board was the member of the Supreme Court and future Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes. The organization was indeed very powerful, consisting of Congressmen, University presidents, and some 21 State Governors. Throughout its history ACIA had had many achievements, among which important ones are the recognition of the Republic of Armenia in 1920 by the US (neither Azerbaijan nor Georgia were ever recognized by the US), humanitarian aid and grace loans given by the US to the first Republic of Armenia, as well as the blocking of

the Lausanne treaty ratification by the Senate, which was aimed to establish diplomatic relations between the US and the republic of Turkey (Papian, 2009).

The ACIA, which had some 24 chapters in 13 states, gradually developed into the Armenian National Committee of America. Currently the American National Committee of Armenia has some 45 chapters in 25 states across the United States (Armenian National Committee, www.accfresno.com). The ANCA is essentially a grassroots organization and exercises political power by mobilizing its active grassroots members in the support of a policy or action it endorses (Interview with ANCA executive director, www.armeniantimes.eu). The ANCA has two administratively divisions, the Eastern region, which include the Eastern states of the US and has its headquarters in Watertown, Massachusetts, and the Western region, whose headquarters are in Glendale, California (Gregg, 2002). There are some 31 local offices in the Eastern region, and some 12 offices in the Western region, mostly in California. The main headquarters of the ANCA, however, are in Washington D.C., two blocks away from the White House (Gregg, 2002). The ANCA has representations also in Yerevan, Armenia and Stepanakert, Nagorno Karabakh republic (www.anca.org).

ANCA Objectives

The main objectives of the ANCA prior to the independence of the Republic of Armenian had been the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the just retribution of its consequences. However, after the independence of Armenia and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the support to the newborn Armenian statehood became the second broad objective of the Armenian-American organizations and the ANCA in particular (Bakalian, 1993; Gregg, 2002). Almost at the same

time period the Nagorno Karabakh Armenians were involved in a war of independence, so the support to the Karabakh Armenians became the third major pillar of the ANCA lobbying efforts (ANCA position papers, 2006). ANCA has also set one of its priorities to foster ties between the Republic of Armenia and the US (www.anca.org). Thus, there are 4 main policy priorities on the agenda of the ANCA: 1) Armenian Genocide commemoration, 2) support to Armenia (US aid, 907 section of the freedom support act, Humanitarian corridor act), 3) Political and economic support to Nagorno Karabakh republic (US aid, official recognition) and 4) Expanding the U.S.-Armenia Relationship (ANCA position papers, 2006).

Armenian Assembly of America (the Assembly)

As mentioned earlier, the ANCA is a product of the ARF party, and it is essentially a partisan organization, representing only the ARF affiliates and run by them, thus, excluding the larger Armenian-American community. As a result, a significant part of the community did not have a serious voice in the US politics. In 1972 several Armenian-American intellectuals, powered with a generous grant of an Armenian-American businessman, founded the Armenian Assembly of America (Gregg, 2002). The reason behind creating this organization was twofold: first, to represent the non-ARF Armenian community in the US politics, and second, to mobilize the growing Armenian community on a non-partisan basis. Bakalian illustrates the second factor brilliantly, saying that “the Assembly is the product of maturing generation of Armenian-Americans – a generation of educated, professional, affluent Americans who are conscious of their Armenian heritage.” (Bakalian, 1993, 140).

The Assembly has usually been an organization of the elite – the scholarly, business and professional upper-class and upper-middle class Armenian-Americans, and thus, its tactics of lobbying were different from the ANCA, which boasts a grassroots support and a bottom-up advocacy mechanisms (AIM,1996). The Assembly’s main body of membership has usually been its board of trustees and affiliates, which were in the meantime active contributors to the Assembly (AIM, 2000). However, the Assembly is moving towards the larger masses, and there is a clear pattern of increase both in the number of trustees and the number of affiliates and members. According to the former director of the Assembly Ross Vartian, the Assembly has decided to expand its base of supporters and to become a more grassroots organization (AIM, 2000). Currently, the Assembly has some 8000 members in all states. There are grassroots level advocates and activists, who do campaigning whenever needed towards their local authorities. The Assembly conveys annual meetings of its members and organizes various fund-raising events (www.aaainc.org).

The expansion of the Assembly from an elite group of affluent trustees to an increasingly popular organization is easily explained with the non-political nature of the organization, which allows membership from all political backgrounds and independents. It is natural that a community as large (in the Armenian standards) as the Armenian-American, can not be homogeneously partisan or of one specific mentality, which is the precondition of the ARF and the ANCA. In this situation, the demand for a more inclusive and neutral community organization will definitely expand the ranks of the Assembly, if a powerful alternative does not emerge suddenly.

The Assembly’s Objectives

The main objectives of the Assembly are almost exactly the same as the ANCA's objectives and are related to the development of Armenia, recognition of the Genocide, improved Armenian-American relations and a positive stance on the Nagorno Karabakh issue. According to the annual report of the Assembly, one of the major goals it puts ahead of it is "to expand the organization's pioneering research, education and advocacy campaign for universal affirmation of the Armenian Genocide", and to "support and deepen the U.S./Armenia and U.S./Karabakh relationships" (Annual report, 2007). However, in the list of the main objectives of the Assembly there are several key points that either speak about more general and universal goals, such as the advocacy of human rights, democracy, etc., and points regarding the increasing of the cooperation among the Armenian-American organizations, "in securing increasingly more effective collaboration among Armenian-American organizations and to establish results-oriented working relationships with non-partisan advocacy entities and relevant individuals world-wide." (Annual report, 2007). These statements reveal two underlying features of the philosophy of action of the Assembly: first, that the Assembly has adopted more universal causes and liberal-democratic American values as its objectives, and thus, has tried to bring closer the American interests to its own (Armenian) interests, and second, it has a more conciliatory and inclusive approach in its statements of unity and cooperation among the Armenian-Americans, which might appeal both to the non-partisan and neutral Armenian-Americans as well as the feelings of the other American-Armenian organizations' members.

US-Armenia Public Affairs Committee (USAPAC)

The third major lobbying organization of the Armenian-Americans is the USAPAC, which was established in 2006 by Gerard Gafesjian (Press release, 2006). The executive director of the organization is Ross Vartian, who has served many years in the Assembly as the executive director and is a very experienced and skillful advocacy professional. The headquarters of the organization are in Washington D.C. The justification for a new lobbying organization, which seems to be redundant in many ways, is explained by the theory, that the Armenian-American community has a much more variety of opinions and stances that offer the two lobbying organizations – ANCA and the Assembly. According to Mr. Vartian, “Our primary purpose is to add to the community of the Armenian lobby in a unique and collaborative way and make the Armenian lobby stronger by doing it.” (US-Armenian tycoon launches new lobby group, 2006).

USAPAC's Objectives

The objectives of the USAPAC are comparable with the objectives of two other lobbying organizations, the ANCA and the Assembly. The main goals of the organizations are generally stated in the one-page informative document which the USAPAC has released to introduce to itself. The document states, that the main objectives of the organization are “to support an agenda that espouses security, prosperity, democracy, rule of law and market reform for the peoples of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, and, deepens mutually beneficial U.S.-Armenia and U.S.-Karabakh relations.” (Press release, 2006). According to the director of the organization, the USAPAC intends to become a grassroots organization and to complement to existing Armenian lobby, with effective cooperation and coordination of efforts with the ANCA and the

Assembly. According to the interviewees, so far the cooperation has been indeed intensive, however, with some limitations and disagreements in principles. Some observers note, that the USAPAC might actually be the voice of the Armenian government, as Mr. Gafesjian has a special good relations with the governing elite of Armenia (US-Armenian tycoon launches new lobby group, 2006). USAPACs mild position on the Turkey-Armenia protocols can be seen as a sign of a coordinating approach to the Armenian government policies, however, according to Vartian, “We will not hesitate to talk about the pluses and minuses of what is happening in Armenia, just like anyone else does, it would not be a problem for us to criticize.” (US-Armenian tycoon launches new lobby group, 2006).

THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ETHNIC GROUP LOBBYING

Many ethnic lobby scholars have tried to systematize the patterns of successful ethnic group lobbying into a working framework, which could answer the question why some ethnic groups are more effective in their lobbying effort than some others. This research is based on the theoretical framework for successful ethnic group lobbying proposed by Eric M. Uslaner in his study of the Israeli and Arab lobbies in the US (1995). The author himself has based his framework on previous researches on the topic of ethnic group lobbying by Paul Watanabe, Mohammed Ahrari, and other famous scholars, though somewhat modifying their frameworks and adding several points of his own. For the purpose of this study, I have taken the Uslaner's eight-point framework of effective ethnic group lobbying as the basis of my research, however, I

have eliminated one of the points of Uslander, namely the factor of the general public's sympathy to the cause of the ethnic group, because of a lack of relevant information for the Armenian case.

1. The policy that the ethnic lobby pursues must be in line with American strategic interests.

- Genocide recognition is largely AGAINST [-] the US strategic interests. However...
- Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution with effective sovereignty of its people is AMBIGUOUS [*], depends on interpretation and lobbying.
- Armenia's involvement in the regional projects and integration of the region in general is IN LINE with the strategic interests [+].
- Enhancing Armenia-US relations is in line with the US stated interests [+].

-
- TOTAL [+* -] = * Condition is partially met

Genocide recognition is largely against the US strategic interests. However...

Genocide recognition was the cornerstone of the Armenian lobbying effort in the US and in the world some 50 years, until the independence of the Republic of Armenia. Despite vast amount of resources and lobbying efforts, the Armenian lobby has not yet been able to persuade the Congress and the president of the necessity of recognizing the Armenian Genocide. However, the Armenian lobby has achieved significant recognition results in lower level governments, including the 42 states, several city governments, etc. Thus, this pattern indicates that the genocide recognition is not impeded by domestic obstacles, but rather by non-domestic (foreign) policy calculations and concerns.

According to many scholars and experts, Turkey has a key importance for the US, in geopolitical and economic aspects. During the Cold War Turkey has been one of the most reliable allies of the West in the Middle East and one of the few Muslim nations who were supporting the American foreign policies, especially with regards to Israel (Cagaptay, 2009). After the September 11 and the launching of the War on Terror, Turkey's significance as an ally has grown sharply for the US. This increase in significance has been caused by the need for military bases and corridors for the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as by the need to improve the marred US image among the Muslim people around the World. In addition Turkey's economic significance has been growing rapidly, making it the 17th largest economy in world (CIA world factbook). On the other hand the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which is the governing party in Turkey since 2002, has an Islamist background, and during the last 7 years the population of Turkey has radically leaned towards Islamist values (Cagaptay, 2009). Besides that, AKP has shifted Turkish traditional foreign policy direction to a more complex and far-reaching one, trying to become a global power, and deepening its influence in the Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia and Africa. Thus, Turkey's traditional partners (Europe and the US) "are now just one pillar in Turkey's new so-called multidimensional foreign policy" (Abramowitz and Barkey, 2009).

These and many other issues make the US policy makers think and act carefully in order not to lose Turkey. According to Abramowitz and Barkey, "Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said that Turkey is one of seven rising powers with which the United States will actively collaborate to resolve global problems" (2009). In that perspective, the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the condemnation of Turkey's leadership for rejecting it would have serious negative implications for the US-Turkey relations, and the US will end up relying on

only six “rising powers” in its efforts to collaborative global leadership. As far as the Turkish authorities reject the Genocide and consider it a means of pressing Turkey and insulting to Turkish national pride, the recognition of Genocide by the US will automatically deteriorate the US-Turkish relations.

Nagorno karabakh conflict resolution with effective sovereignty of its people is ambiguous, depends on interpretation and lobbying.

The US leadership’s attitude towards the Nagorno Karabakh problem have been influenced by several key concerns, which can be boiled down to two major objectives: a) to prevent the region from being dominated by Russia, b) stabilize the region for economic, security (terrorism) and energy security concerns. As the US tries to diversify its oil import routes from the Middle East, the Caspian oil, going through Turkey to the Mediterranean ports, is an ideal option (de Waal, 2002). On the other hand, the US policy towards the Nagorno Karabakh problem has been influenced by the concern for the inviolability of the borders (Uhlig, 1993/1994).

According to Uhling, existence of unresolved frozen conflicts in Caucasus, makes and even obliges Russia to reassert its historical role as «Transcaucasia's regional hegemon and peacekeeper» (1993/1994), a role, which does not match with the US vision of independent and cooperating South Caucasus . So, a long-lasting and firm resolution of the conflict is in the strategic interests of the US. In this perspective, a resolution of the conflict which provides effective sovereignty of the Karabakh Armenians is in the US interests as long as the Azerbaijani side accepts in full faith the agreement and does not try to destabilize the region driven by revanchist aspirations. The development of Caspian energy and transport projects, which are

done through heavy US investments, also made a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan extremely detrimental to the US interests.

On the other hand, if the Madrid principles, made public by the presidents of the Minsk group co-chair countries, including the US president Barack Obama, can be seen as an indication of the US vision of the resolution of the conflict, then the US position is clearly favorable to the Armenian positions. However, that position is based on the results of negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and thus, reflects the current arrangement of negotiations. The US position in this issue can be seen as even-handed and cautious; there have been no strong pressures on any of the conflicting parties to impose a US endorsed solution. From these points one can assume that the US administration will accept any arrangement of the conflict as agreed upon by the conflicting parties. Is the independence of Nagorno Karabakh against the American national interests? It is clearly so, if that independence becomes a stimuli for a new wave of violence in the Caucasus.

In general, however, the US has key interests in the Caspian oil and its safe transportation. This interest may lead the US policy makers to tilt towards Azerbaijan, especially in the lights of recent warming in the Russian-Azerbaijani relations, in order not to lose positions in the Caspian energy resources allocation deals. However, it is also unlikely that the US will take too much pro-Azerbaijani position, because it might create incentives for Russia to intervene on behalf of Armenia as a balancer.

Some American scholars also advocate for a unified policy towards South Caucasus region, which is in fact a call for supporting not a particular country in the region, but a general regional cooperation (de Waal, 2002). This policy has been advocated especially since the September 11

terrorist attacks, and is based on a simple assumption that the nations of South Caucasus are too small and naturally interdependent to be treated separately.

Armenia's involvement in the regional projects and integration of the region in general is in line with the US strategic interests

One of the pillars of the Armenian-American agenda with regards to Armenia is Armenia's involvement in the regional integration and development of the South Caucasus region, which ultimately will bring to economic prosperity and more security guarantees for Armenia, as well as other states of the region. According to information posted on the Armenian Assembly's web page, the mentioned goal can be accomplished by a) elimination of blockades against Armenia, b) regional cooperation, in terms of large scale regional economic projects encompassing all three states of the region, rather than excluding Armenia, as it is done currently due to Turkish and Azeri efforts, and c) energy security for Armenia, which means to include Armenia in energy transportation projects, which currently bypass Armenia (Issue centre, www.aaainc.org).

The concept of regional development and cooperation in South Caucasus has been stated clearly as a long term strategic interest of the US in the region. The need for increased regional cooperation has been stated by the state department, by the Presidents of the US, and the ambassadors as well. After the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008, the need for a more cooperating and integrated South Caucasus has become an imperative both for Armenia and for the US as well. On December 2009, the US ambassador to Armenia Maria Yovanovich stated in a meeting with Armenian Americans, that, "... Our most important efforts in the security area are focused on supporting Armenia's regional integration. It is a top priority for the United

States to help Armenia and Turkey normalize relations, open the border, and resume commercial and other activities” (Ambassador's speeches, www.usa.am).

As for Armenia, the regional cooperation and integration has always seen as important to Armenian national security and prosperity. In the national security strategy of the Republic of Armenia, it is clearly stated that Armenia’s isolation from the regional projects is considered as a threat to national security of Armenia:

Armenian participation in regional infrastructure projects is of a great significance and, in this respect Armenia highly values the regional TRASSECA and INOGATE programs of the European Union (EU). Armenia also sees Azerbaijan’s effort to isolate Armenia from such regional development programs as a direct threat (National security strategy of RA, www.mil.am).

Besides that, Armenia’s third president, Serge Sargsyan, has been putting more efforts towards the improvement of Armenia-Turkey relations and towards regional cooperation in general.

Thus there is a clear match in the strategic interests of Armenia and the US in the increase and improvement of regional cooperation in the South Caucasus.

Enhancing the US-Armenia Relations is in line with the strategic interests

All three major Armenian-American lobbying organizations state the expansion of the US-Armenia relations as one of their key objectives (ANCA position papers, 2006; AAA annual report, 2007; USAPAC press release, 2006). The Armenian-American community sees good US-Armenia relations as a powerful legitimating factor, which justifies the efforts implemented continuously by the Armenian lobby to assure significant political and economic support of the

US to Armenia, and rationalizes the resources granted by the US government as result of those efforts.

On the other hand it has been the stated US policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union to establish friendly and tight relationships between the US and the former communist countries, which has been the backbone of the “New World Order” strategy, which assumed the global dispersion of essentially US values of democracy and free market economies (Kissinger, 1995). From the first days of the republic the US presidents, Secretary of States and ambassadors to Armenia have repeatedly emphasized the need for tighter US-Armenia relationships (Ambassador's speeches, www.usa.am).

Thus the fostering of US-Armenia relationship is obviously in the stated national interests of the US and in this matter the Armenian lobby fully meets the condition of the “golden rule.”

2. The group should be assimilated enough in the American society, yet it should retain enough identification with the home country.

1. American-Armenians in the American society are mostly ASSIMILATED [+].
2. Yet they continue to identify themselves with Armenia and Armenians: [+].

TOTAL: Condition is met [+]

Armenian nation has a unique history of survival. Throughout its history, the Armenian nation has suffered from oppressions, massacres and mass deportations, has lived in hostile

environments, yet was able to survive and thrive. Its ability to live in a minority status and meanwhile to thrive economically and culturally has been proved by countless communities that Armenians have founded outside their historical homeland (Kouymjian, 1992). Armenians are hard working, creative and have good entrepreneurship skills (Hovhannisian, 1997). Besides that, the Armenian emigrants have had a special attitude towards education and usually have succeeded in providing good education to their children. Thus, according to Kouymjian “Second and third generations turned increasingly to the professions and teaching benefiting from the great value their parents placed on education” (1992). All these factors contributed to the fact that Armenians have been assimilated into the US relatively quickly and effectively and have become respected citizens of that country.

Armenians have immigrated to the US in several major “waves”, starting from the 19th century as a result of American evangelical church’s missionary activities in the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman Sultans’ massacres of Armenians. The largest movement of Armenians, however, occurred during the WWI and its immediate aftermath, as a result of the genocide. Later immigration waves occurred after the WWII and throughout 60s, mainly from the Middle East. These Armenians and their descendants have constituted the core of the Armenian American community, which is highly assimilated in the US society. The next major wave of Armenians immigrating to the USA started in the late years of the Soviet Union and continues until now. The new immigrants are mainly from the Republic of Armenia, as well as from other post-Soviet republics (Hovhannisian, 1997).

The Armenian American community, though assimilated enough into the US society, has generally remained its national identity and identification as Armenians. There are several factors contributing to the preservation of the Armenian identity in the US. One of them is the

fact, that there have been several key immigration destinations in the US, such as Boston, Los Angeles, Fresno, New York, etc., where the new immigrants were directing, thus, very soon in those areas large communities of Armenians have been developed, which resulting to ongoing inter-community communication and activities, thus keeping the Armenians' identities warm (Kouymjian, 1992). On the other hand, Armenians have been immigrating to the US almost continuously during the 20th and 21st centuries, where every major immigration wave has brought with it a renewal of waning Armenian culture, language and identity in the locality, thus, not allowing the Armenian identity to assimilate away.

Anny Bakalian (1993) gives somewhat different explanation on the assimilation patterns of Armenian Americans. According to her, the Armenian Americans' scions do assimilate in terms of losing "cultural and behavioral aspects of ethnicity", however, they preserve their identification with the Armenian ethnicity, as something symbolic, or they simply "feel" themselves as Armenians, though behaving as totally Americans (Bakalian, 1993). The important point, though, is that the feeling of Armenianness remains throughout generations and is a source of pride for those, who claim to be Armenian. As Shain and Barth put it, the preservation of the identity becomes the interest of the ethnic group itself (2003). On the other hand there is still high social pressure against intermarriages, so, according to Bakalian's sample, some 64 percent of Armenian Americans (in New York) have an Armenian spouse.

All of my interviewees stress that especially the second-third generation Armenian-Americans, which constitute the bulk of the Armenian-American community, have assimilated (some used the word integrated instead of assimilated) quite well in the US society. The same can not be said about the new immigrants, who, according to the interviewees, have still very little impact on the socio-political life of the country, as they haven't accustomed to the US

culture of political activism and freedom. According to the article published in the Armenian International Magazine (AIM), the new immigrants come largely from countries, where there has been no culture of political activism and freedom of expression, such as former Soviet Armenia, Lebanon, Iran, Turkey, etc., and naturally it takes a generation to get used to the culture of open society and freedoms of expression and association (1997, No 8). However, the situation is changing rapidly, as the new-comers start to thrive economically, to open businesses and to integrate in the local economy. The city of Glendale, which is the home of some 80 000 Armenians, is a success story of economic flourishing of immigrant population (www.hayk.net). As the majority of the new immigrants, especially from Armenia, have settled in Glendale, the economic success of the city's population will certainly lead to their overall integration in the US society in the near future.

Thus one can argue that the Armenian Americans are largely assimilated in the American society yet they mostly retain their national identity as Armenians.

3. The group should be politically active

- Participation in election campaigns: high [+]

Total: Condition is met [+]

Many political action committee scholars stress, that one of the key measures of gaining supporters in the Hill is by campaign contributions in forms of money, information, or volunteers. Mearsheier and Walt, writing about the political clout of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), stress that "AIPAC success is due to its ability to reward legislators

and congressional candidates who support its agenda and punish those who challenge it” (2006, 17). Similarly, Haney and Vanderbush, summarizing the roots of successful ethnic group lobbying, stress the importance of organized and professional lobbying apparatus, which is capable of providing “useful information and financial resources” (1999, 344). Speaking about the power of mailing and phoning campaigns, a House democrat says that, “when a congressman receives a letter or a phone call, he knows that it is from a voter who is politically active and really cares about the issue. The constituent’s concern gets noticed.” (AIM, vol 7., no 2)

Campaign contributions are made for two broadly defined goals, as specified by Conway and Green (1995). One of the goals is to find new supporters among the Congressmen or to tighten the links with older friends in the Hill; this is called the “maintenance” strategy. Another goal is to replace those Congressmen, who are continuously opposed to the group’s positions with politicians, who have proven record of supporting the group’s positions, or, as Conway and Green put it, the strategy of “expanding” (1995, 159). Both methods require active participation in election campaigns, by providing financial contribution, volunteers, and other resources.

The Armenian PACs have continuously and successfully increased their base of supporters and, thus, their position, largely due to the smart campaign contributions to the key legislatures and other important political figures. The Armenian lobby has employed the two above mentioned strategies of “maintenance” and “expanding” quite often throughout its political activity (ANCA, AAA, Asbarez, AIM). As all other effective ethnic lobbies, the Armenian American PACs usually were driven with a simple “performance appraisal” method in choosing whether they will support the incumbent Congressmen or not. Armenian American PACs have used several methods in defining whether the Congressman has the merits to be supported or not. Among the most common measures of appraisal of the Congressmen are: a) close examination of

Congressmen's voting records, as how had the Congressmen voted on an issue of significant importance to Armenia (record cards of ANCA), b) examination of the speeches, publications regarding the Armenian issues, c) attendance at meetings organized by individuals or organizations hostile to Armenians, or formal associations with those organizations (Asbarez, AIM, ANCA). ANCA has gone further in its appeal to identify the position of a candidate regarding the Armenian issues, and has created questionnaires, which are sent to the politicians. Based on their answers to the points in the questionnaires, the decision is made whether to support the politician or not (Press releases, 2010, www.anca.org). A recent endorsement by ANCA of a Republican candidate in a primary election campaign clearly indicates the process of decision making of the ANCA on whom to endorse, as well as reveals the relevance of the above mentioned strategies in the US politics:

We are encouraged by Dr. McGoff 's strong stance on issues that pertain to Armenian – Americans” said ANCA National Board Member Steve Mesrobian. “Dr. McGoff offers us a real opportunity to not only remove Rep. Burton, who so vigorously supports Turkish government interests, but also to elect someone in his place who has the moral judgment to speak truthfully on human rights issues. In his recent response to the ANCA questionnaire, McGoff wrote, "The Armenian Genocide is a fact.” (Press releases, 2010, www.anca.org)

In the above passage one can identify the strategy of “expanding” used by the ANCA in supporting a politician, who, if elected, will replace a hostile to Armenian issues incumbent. On the other hand one can observe the usage of the techniques of questionnaire in determining the position of the politician on Armenian issues.

The sheer scale of political activity of the Armenian public advocacy organizations speaks about the resources and capacities of those organizations. According to the data provided by “Citizens for responsibility and ethics in Washington” in 2008 Congressional elections only ANCA endorsed 15 candidates for the Senate and 211 candidates for the House of Representatives (Crew files complain against the ANCA, 2009). Most of the endorsements have

been individually supported and followed up by the ANCA's regional "chapters" or offices (ANCA press and media releases, 2010).

As a supplement to the grassroots campaigning of ANCA, the Armenian Assembly works chiefly in the Washington D.C. with the Congressmen, their staffs, and the party leaderships, educating them on the priorities and concerns of the Armenian-Americans (www.aaainc.org; Gregg, 2002).

Armenian American PACs and other organizations have an impressive record of fund-raising, both for political contributions and for non-political, community activities or for other causes related to Armenia and Armenians. As a single example of the huge fund-raising potential of the Armenian American community can be seen the annual telethons organized in the US mainly for the support of Armenia and Karabakh. Since 1991 the All Armenian Fund has collected some 200 million USD, the lion's share of which has provided the US Armenian community (www.himnadram.org). This sum was gathered to contribute to the development of Armenia and for other pan-Armenian causes. As the same causes are behind the Armenian-American PACs platforms and agendas, one can easily argue that nearly the same amount can be collected for making contributions to those American politicians' campaigns, who support Armenian causes and who eventually, if successful, become the policy makers of the US.

This assumption is strengthened by a research by Trevor Rubenzer, who suggests that in 2006 Armenian Americans have contributed some 5 million dollars to political campaigns of candidates from both parties (2007). This is a huge amount and, according to the author, is just bit smaller than the contributions made by the Cuban-American lobby, which is the one of the most effective and affluent ethnic group lobbies in the US (Brzezinski, 2006; Haney and Vanderbush, 1999). And the result of those contributions has been the significant increase in the

number of “yea”s in the Armenian Genocide resolutions at the Congress (Rubenzer, 2009), as well as the radical expansion of the Armenian caucus in the Congress. According to the Armenian Assembly, the number of members of the congressional caucus on Armenia has almost doubled since 2001, reaching to 148 in 2009 (www.aaainc.org).

These numbers are a solid proof of the influence of campaign contributions on the Congressional decision making. As Rubenzer puts in his research,

Diasporic interest group campaign contributions are designed to do more than simply reward an existing ideological tendency. Rather, there are cases when 35 ethnic identity group PAC contributions have a leading effect on congressional voting and sponsorship behavior (2009, 26)

Another finding of Rubenzer's research indicates that the party factor has a big role in deciding the vote for or against the Armenian Genocide. Interestingly enough, Rubenzer has come to a conclusion that the amount of Armenian population in Congressional voting districts has no effect on the voting patterns of the Congressmen on the Armenian Genocide resolution issue. These trends, if accurate, suggest the democrats are more likely to vote for the Armenian Genocide resolution than Republicans, so, in general, sponsoring the Democratic Party will be a rational stance by the Armenian lobby.

The successful fund-raising capacities of the Armenian Americans can be explained with a theory put forward by Tam Cho and Gimpel (2007), who suggest that political fund raising has more chances of success if the people, who contribute, are linked in a network, and ideally, live in vicinity to each other. As the Armenian Americans usually live concentrated in certain regions, (California, Massachusetts, etc.), they have the potential to cluster, make networks and contribute to fund-raising events more actively, which has been the case at least since 1991.

However, it is worth noting that there have been numerous instances where the Armenian-American groups succeeded in advancing their agenda despite the discrepancy of finances spent

to that end by them and by their opponents (Gregg, 2002, www.latimes.org). Financial contribution is only one aspect of the political activity of the Armenian-American public advocacy groups. Successful participation in the political processes has been the result of combination of several strategies and measures, including grassroots organization efforts (voting, mail writing campaigns, phone campaigns, volunteers, etc.), successful contacts in the Washington D.C., effective coalitions with other groups, and dissemination of information supporting their endorsement (Gregg, www.ANCA.org).

To sum up, the Armenian-American public advocacy organizations have a very active political participation in all levels of government. According to interviews with the representatives of the ANCA and the Armenian Assembly, the organizations' political involvement is fruitful in terms of gaining more supporters on the Armenian causes and gaining prestige or "perception of power", which, according to one of the interviewees, is the most important in politics. Thus, the Armenian lobby has met the condition of political activity.

4. The group should be politically unified

Armenian-American community is NOT politically unified [-]

Condition is not met [-]

The political unity has been identified as one of the key factors of successful lobbying (Uslaner, 1995, Scranton, 1989; Lindsay, 2002). According to Uslaner, the political unity of the Israeli lobby has played a major role in elevating the Jewish-Americans to a position of

popularly accepted influence on the American political processes (1995). On the other hand, the lack of political unity has been identified as one of the most decisive factors of the ineffectiveness of Arab Americans and the Latinos (Uslaner, 1995; Lindsay, 2002). However, one of the researchers of the Armenian lobby argues that the lack of political unity and the rivalry between the two Armenian lobbying organizations was beneficial to overall successfulness of the Armenian lobby, because it “led to *hypermobilization* of this ethnic group’s resources, and the formation of key alliances in Washington including members of Congress and other lobby groups and organizations” (Gregg, 2002, 4). Though, it is worth mentioning that the same author stresses that on the most important issues the two major Armenian-American organizations do cooperate and take a unified stance: “despite their differences, ANCA and the Assembly present a unified front in Washington” (2002). Thus, essentially, the Armenian lobby has succeeded in its lobbying efforts due to internal cooperation and a unified stance on the policies pursued, indicating that political unity does play a major role in the effectiveness of ethnic group lobbying.

The Armenian-American lobbying organizations have generally felt the necessity of a unified front throughout their existence; however, the highly politicized Armenian-American community could not find enough political will to put aside their political differences in a genuine effort of unification. The most successful effort to unify the Armenian-American organizations paradoxically resulted in a division of the Armenian-American community’s lobbying effort, which, prior to that, was carried out only by the ANCA (Gregg, 2002). In 1972 the Armenian-American intellectuals came together to establish an organization, which would represent the entire Armenian-American community in the American politics (www.aaainc.org).

However, the organization did not succeed in its primary purpose, and became the second lobbying organization of the Armenian-Americans.

Besides the ANCA and the Assembly, there is also the USAPAC – US-Armenia Public Affairs Committee, which was established in 2006, funded by Gerard Gafesjian and the Gafesjian Foundation (USAPAC press release, 2006). Though this organization compliments the existing Armenian advocacy organizations, it still is an independent organization of its own. The existence of three major advocacy organizations indicates that the Armenian American community is not politically unified or homogenous. There are numerous instances where the Assembly and the ANCA have took different positions on important issues, and there are still more examples where these two organizations have cooperated and have spoken with coordinated positions. According to the ex-director of the Assembly Ross Vartian, the Assembly and ANCA always try to cooperate and coordinate their positions before going to Congress (AIM, 2000). Almost the same has said one of the representatives of the ARF Kiro Manoyan during an interview with me. According to him, during the overwhelming majority of cases the ANCA and the Assembly coordinate their positions. The interviewee emphasized the role of outside “powers”, such as the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, in increasing the cooperation efforts between the two Armenian American lobbying organizations.

The fact, however, remains that the Armenian American organizations are essentially different in their stances, strategies and constituencies and choose to cooperate driven from the necessity of reaching their goals. The main incentive to cooperate comes from the fact that, as Garnik Nanangulian puts it, “You can’t win your agenda in the Washington if you’re divided. If the two Armenian lobbies present the same issue differently or insist on the different priorities, the cause suffers” (AIM, 1993). However, even this self-evident truth did not prevent the two

lobbying organizations from appealing to the Congress separately with somewhat different agendas, which, naturally, has weakened their stance.

Eric Uslaner has used the phrase “politically unified” mainly referring to American Jews and the AIPAC, which, as a coalition of many pro-Israeli organizations, has a solid and unified voice in representing the Israeli interests (Uslaner, 1995). Actually the initial purpose of the establishment of the Armenian Assembly was exactly the unification of the Armenian American community in its efforts to gain political support in the US government (AIM, 1993; history, www.aaainc.org). According to an interview with the former editor in-chief of the Armenian International Magazine (AIM) Salpi Ghazaryan, the idea behind creating the Assembly was to unify the different and sometimes opposing voices of the Armenian-Americans. Paraphrasing Henry Kissinger on Europe, she said that the issue many American politicians used to ask is “whom do I call if I want to reach the Armenian-Americans?” In case of the success of the Assembly, the politician would call the Assembly, but now he or she has to give signals to at least two major organizations and wait either for their coordinated approach or to reach both of them individually. Thus, the Armenian-Americans do not match the criteria of political unity, and this fourth factor of our eight-factor analysis stands as “condition not met.”

However, a further research is necessary to prove or rebuke the hypothesis put forward by Gregg, according to which the dividedness of the Armenian lobby has actually helped it in achieving its lobbying successes. It is still a question whether the gains of the Armenian lobby would be more or less if there was one united Armenian-American lobbying organization with broader legitimacy and grassroots support.

5. The Group should be Well-Organized

Level of organization: high [+]

Condition is met [+]

The fifth factor for effective ethnic group lobbying says that the group has to be well organized. Though the author does not give clear criteria for measuring the level of organization of the community, we can identify the organizational level of a community by looking on its structure, history, current level of involvement as well as other factors, which will be identified throughout the paper. The most important characteristics of a well-organized community is the existence of organizations for all sectors of the society, all age-groups and all political and religious affiliations.

The Armenian-American community is one of the best organized Armenian communities in the World as well as one of the most organized ethnic groups in the US. According to Gregg, the split in the Armenian-American community between the ARF-supporters and non-supporters has created parallel community structures, such as two youth organizations, two lobbying organizations, two educational organizations and even two churches; this factor can count for the well-organization of the community (Gregg, 2002). There are youth organizations, Armenian Apostolic Churches, Armenian Protestant and Catholic churches, political party organizations, educational, cultural and sport organizations (Gregg, 2002).

There are organized Armenian communities almost everywhere in the US, wherever the population of the local Armenians is above a dozen (Hovhannisian, 1997). According a Turkish journalist-investigator, “the total number [of Armenian organizations in America] is staggering

when considering they all have branches in all corners of the land. Excluding the religious groups the number of Armenian establishments is 1046. With the religious groups this number reaches 1228” (Money spent by the Armenian Lobby in America, 2001). There are active youth organizations and numerous programs offered to the Armenian-American youth to communicate with the Armenian-American community as well as with the Republic of Armenia (Gregg, 2002; www.aaainc.org; www.birthrightarmenia.org).

According to Robert Mirak, the Armenian-American community has established many “full-day, professionally staffed and well-financed schools with Armenian and non-Armenian curricula” (1997, 408). Besides the full-day schools there are numerous Saturday schools, which aim to provide language courses to Armenian-Americans. Starting from the late 50s, the Academia of the US has started to pay a genuine interest towards the Armenian Studies, which led to the establishment of Armenian Studies programs in several prominent universities, such as Harvard, the University of Michigan, Tufts University, Columbia University, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and Berkeley, California State University, the University of Chicago, as well as several community colleges around the US (Mirak, 1997).

As mentioned by Robert Mirak, the Armenian-American community has been divided in two schisms because of its members' attitudes towards the Sovietization of the first Armenian Republic and the tensions between the representatives of the ARF (dashnaktsutyun) and other political parties (Mirak, 1997). This process brought about the division of the Armenian Apostolic church into two independent dioceses, one representing the Holy See of Echmiadzin, and the second representing the Holy See of Antelias, Cilicia. The two Sees have 130 parishes around the US (Dekmejian, 1997). Besides that, there are Armenian Protestant and Catholic churches, which have some thirty churches. Thus, overall, there are some 160 churches in the US

serving the Armenian-American community. All churches mobilize social structures around them, from youth groups to church choirs and church committees, which bring the community close to each other and keep them organized.

The Armenian-American community has radio and TV broadcasting programs in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Providence, Northville and Southfield, both in English and in Armenian (Armenians in the US, 2009). There are other cultural and sport organizations, either under the umbrella of the ARF party or the Ramgavar/non-partisan; these include benevolent unions and cultural associations, such as Homenetmen Armenian General Athletic Union, Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural Association, Armenian Relief Society, AGBU, Tekeyan Cultural Association, Armenian Student Association, and many other smaller organizations (Balakian, 1993). All the mentioned organizations have their chapters in major Armenian-American community centers and have significant membership.

There are many Armenian-American newspapers and periodicals, in Armenian, in English and bilingual. There are ARF supported newspapers, such as “Asbarez”, “Armenian Weekly”, “Hayrenik”, the Ramgavar supported periodicals, such as “New Day (Nor or)”, “Armenian Mirror-Spectator”, and neutral periodicals or newspapers, such as “California Currier”, “New Life”, “The Armenian Observer” (Mirak, 1997). This is a short list of major newspapers and periodicals, however, there are many other periodicals, and, with the era of information technologies, still more internet periodicals, blogs, and other informative-communicative internet resources.

Armenians have immigrated to the US in large numbers during and because of terrible political shocks, with a feeling of strong injustice towards them, and, naturally, with strong commitment to amend the wrongs done to them. Due to that reason, the Armenian-American

community has set up many institutions and organizations committed to the fulfillment of historical justice, in case of the Genocide, and the vast portion of the community activity is directed towards the accomplishment of that goal. These factors have naturally mobilized the Armenian-American community, and, as Gregg notices, the Armenian-American immigrants were much more committed and organized than the immigrants from other countries, such as Germany or Portugal, who voluntarily left their homes for better economic conditions (Gregg, 2002). Besides that the Armenian people in general have strong family ties and like to develop tight community ties, resist intermarriages and have long-lasting history of surviving in “odars” societies as a national minority. The Armenian Church has usually performed the role of a state within a state, regulating the social interaction inside the Armenian communities. All these factors support the strong organizing tendencies of Armenians in the world and in the US in particular, because of the friendly and democratic nature of the country. Thus, the Armenian-Americans have all the characteristics of a well-organized community. This condition is met.

6. The group should be sufficiently numerous [or strategically located/concentrated].

- Numerous: MEDIUM-SIZED [*].
- Strategically located/concentrated. YES [+].

TOTAL: condition is partially met [*]

Many Diaspora and ethnic lobby scholars identify the size of the ethnic group as one of the key factors of influencing the Congress and the President (Shain, 1994/95; Uslaner, 1997;

Lindsay, 2002). On the other hand, even if the size is not impressive, the strategic location of the group has also an important role in defining the potential political power of a group. As Wright Jr. has put it with regards to the Jewish-Americans, “[they] are strategically located in large states (New York, Illinois, California) with disproportional weight in the Presidential elections because of the electoral college system of winner-take-all” (1982, 1656). Referring to the importance of the size of the group, Vanderbush and Haney stress that the ethnic group can be influential, if it “enjoys a large and unified base of politically active members” (1999, 344). Thus, the size and the concentration in key states is an important factor contributing to the overall effectiveness of ethnic group lobbies.

The Armenian-American community is not among the largest ethnic groups in the US, and can be categorized as a medium or small ethnic group. If we consider the small ethnic groups as those with less than 1 million people, medium-sized groups as from 1 to 5 million, and large groups as above 5 million people, then the Armenian-American community will be among the middle-sized communities, though one of the smallest in that category (US census bureau). However, the strong point of the demographics of the Armenian-Americans is that they are concentrated in key states, which are very important in the Presidential as well as Congressional elections, especially in case of a tight race. As mentioned above, the Electoral College system in the United States presidential elections does not allow a proportional distribution of the college; instead, the candidate who wins the simple majority of the votes, takes the whole college. In this case and especially during tight competition between rival candidates, every vote counts, and a large, organized and politically active ethnic group can play its voting cards extremely effectively to extract concrete policy promises and public rhetoric from the candidates in exchange to its support and endorsement.

The Armenian-Americans seems to have relative strength in their strategic concentration than in their population numbers. Though, if one looks on the data of ethnic groups in the US as provided by the US Census Bureau, one can observe that there are several ethnic groups which count by tens of millions, like the French, Irish, German, English, etc., and all others with maximum 5-6 million population. These “core” ethnic groups, however, are the least politically active according to ethnic group scholars, the most assimilated into the US society, and usually do not identify themselves in terms of their ancestor country (Lindsay, 2002; Shain, 1994/95). Thus, the largest ethnic groups are out of the game, and the most active ethnic groups have from 1 to 6 million population in the US (Armenians – 1 million, Jews – 6 million, Greeks – 1.5 million) (US Census Bureau). In this sense it would be correct to rank the Armenian-American community’s largeness in comparison to other active and vital ethnic groups, rather than all ethnic groups.

The data on the total number of the Armenian-Americans varies as much as some seven hundred thousands. Some sources give number as low as 800 thousands, other give as high as 1.5 million (www.noravank.am, Gregg, 2002). However, most sources estimate from 1 million to 1.2 million Armenian Americans in the US. This number is less than 0.3 percent of the total US population. This is a tiny portion of the total US population, however, the number of Armenian-Americans, if compared to other active ethnic groups, such as Jews, Greeks and Cubans, is a medium-sized community.

However, the Armenian-American population has historically concentrated in such important states as California, New York, New, New Jersey, Massachusetts, etc. This concentration, combined with the political activity and organized character of Armenian-Americans, has resulted in serious political clout, which has been ranked among the most

effective ethnic groups in the US. According to a journalist of the Los Angeles Times, “as California is one of the most important states also for the presidential race, the Armenian community in Glendale is in a favorable situation to command on the outcomes and demand courtesies in exchange for their votes.” (AIM, 1999).

Thus, though the Armenian community in America is not a large one, it is very well-positioned, which, in the conditions and specificities of the American politics, gives it ample opportunities to wield disproportional amount of power. The fact that the Armenian-American community is well-organized and politically active magnifies the effect of its strategic location. Thus, the sixth factor can be said to be mostly completed.

7. The group must be seen as pursuing legitimate interests

- Self determination of the Karabakh people: legitimate [+]
- Recognition of a conspicuous crime against humanity – the Genocide: legitimate [+]
- Freedom from blockade: legitimate [+]
- Increasing ties between Armenia and America: legitimate [+]

Condition is met [+]

The respect for and aspiration to legitimacy has been one of the most important characteristics of the American politics and society (Kissinger, 1995). The legitimacy of the cause, on the other hand, is cited as the most important factor of the success of ethnic group lobbies (Haney and Vandebush, 1999; Shain, 1994/95; Wright, Jr. 1982, Uslaner, 1997). Some

authors go as far as to suggest that actually the successes of ethnic group lobbies are due to the fact that the policies they pursue are already in the minds of the policy makers, or seem quite legitimate and natural to the general public, thus, the ethnic lobbies succeed in “pushing on an open door”, rather than opening a new door all by themselves (Lindsay, 2002, 39).

According to Robert Trice, the most successful ethnic lobbies have tried to represent their causes in the light of legitimacy, by “creating a domestic political climate that is favorable to their policy preferences.” (1978, 240). In another passage the same author states, that if interest groups pursue policies which are considered legitimate among the general public, “they are more likely to elicit a “knee-jerk” supportive reactions from both decision-makers and the mass public alike.” (Trice, 1978, 244). All these statements boil down to a general idea, that in the American politics it is extremely important to support legitimate causes. Without a widely perceived legitimacy, or, as one author puts it, without referring to American symbols, the cause would be very hard to advance (Wright, Jr., 1982).

Taking into consideration all the above mentioned statements on the importance of the legitimacy of the causes, let us analyze the Armenian-American lobby in terms of its causes’ legitimacy. First, looking at the Nagorno Karabakh issue, one can identify two contradicting perceptions of the conflict in the eyes of outside observer. On the one hand there is a struggle for self-determination of a suppressed nation, which has successfully won its right to live independently and freely. This is a generally accepted legitimate cause, and has a special appeal to the US politics and society, because the American people have themselves gone through war and confrontation to win their right to live as an independent nation. The main symbol and the uniting factor of the US society has been the idea of freedom, freedom from political pressures, freedom of choice, religion, and even freedom from need (Kissinger, 1995).

In addition, the United State's emergence in the international arena as a great power has been accompanied with introduction of the value system of Woodrow Wilson, embedded in his fourteen points, in which one of the most important points was the idea of self-determination of the nations. Afterwards the United States have played a major role as the ideological pioneer of the anti-colonization movement, and largely through her commitment the nations of Asia, Africa and Oceania have gained independence and self-determination (Kissinger, 1995). The underlying cause of the Cold War struggle between the US and the USSR was the emancipation of the Central Europe from the communist slavery and the prevention of further colonization of any other piece of land in the globe by the Soviets. Coming to the recent years, the US and her special envoy were the major ideologues and architects of the independence of Kosovo (Daalder, 2000). All these facts speak about the strong sentiment among the American public and a reflecting tendency of its leadership to support self-determination causes and treat it as a natural and legitimate cause.

On the other side of the coin is the issue of the inviolability of borders, which, in the case of the Nagorno Karabakh issue, has been complicated by geographical isolation of the Nagorno Karabakh from the Republic of Armenia and the need for a land "corridor" to ensure the physical survival of the inchoate republic. Though the Armenian side rightly argues that the border of the Caucasian republics have been outlined by the Soviet authorities by violently ignoring the ethnic factor, and that the administrative borders of the former Nagorno Karabakh autonomous region inside the Azerbaijan SSR did not reflect the historical territory of Karabakh, the fact remains that the US policy-makers adhere to the existing borders and judge the conflict with the maps of the Soviet Union. However, if the issue of land corridor can be represented as a factor of physical survival for Nagorno Krabakh rather than an occupation of Azerbaijani territory, the US

position will be largely favorable, as the issue will remain under the legitimate cause of self-determination. Thus far the importance of the land corridor has been recognized by all American administrations, as reflected in the statements and documents proposed or agreed by the American co-chairs of the Minsk group. Thus, by and large, the Nagorno Karabakh issue can be considered as legitimate cause for the criteria of the US society.

The second major cause sought by the Armenian advocacy groups is the official recognition and condemnation of a conspicuous crime against the humanity – the Genocide. The American informed public has always been very sensitive towards the recognition and condemnation of the Genocide. According to Ara Papian, on the 18th of January, 1927, the Senate rejected the Turkish-American treaty of the 6th of August, 1923, partly because of the Armenian question and the failure of the Turkish republic to comply with the arbitration of the President Wilson, which had assigned the historical Armenian lands to the first republic of Armenia (www.wilsonforarmenia.org). Throughout its recent history, the Congress of the US has brought forward resolutions condemning the Turkish government for not recognizing the Genocide. Besides that, the legislatures of 42 states, several major cities, as well as prominent media outlets and scholars have recognized the Armenian Genocide (www.anca.org). All mentioned parties constitute the American nation and represent its sentiments much more than does the White House, because the President is constrained by real or perceived foreign policy and geopolitical limitations. In general, however, the issue of the Armenian Genocide recognition is the issue of justice, which is a universally legitimate cause to pursue.

The Other two causes of the Armenian-Americans, namely the regional integration of the South Caucasus and Armenia within the region and the end of the blockade of Armenia, and the fostering of relations between Armenia and the US have face-value legitimacy, and do not

require a lengthy research or analysis to prove. Both causes have been cited multiple times as crucial US interests by prominent US leaders and high officers (www.usa.am). Besides that, the passage of the section 907 of the Freedom Support Act and the Humanitarian Corridor act by the US Congress (the first restricting the US aid to Azerbaijan because of its blockade against Armenia, and the second restricting the US military aid to Turkey for the same reason) can be identified as not only the success of the Armenian lobby, but also the proof of genuine legitimacy of these causes in the eyes of the American public and policy makers.

Thus, in general, the seventh and last factor of the effectiveness of ethnic group lobbies is fully completed by the Armenian lobby.

CONCLUSION

We had identified seven main factors, which contribute to the effectiveness of ethnic group lobbying. How does the Armenian-American lobby stand against these factors and what are its strengths and weaknesses? According to the research, the Armenian-American community fully meets four conditions, does not meet only one condition and partially meets the other two conditions. Here is a briefly recapitulation of the paper's findings on each individual factor.

1. The group interests should be in line with the US national interests (The Golden Rule of lobbying)

In this study I have identified four major objectives of the Armenian-American lobby, which are: 1) the Genocide recognition, 2) Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution with recognition of its independence, 3) Armenia's involvement in the regional projects and integration of the region, and 4) fostering of US-Armenia relations. The research shows that the first objective does not

meet the US national interests, and the second objective is ambiguous in that matter and its reconciliation with the US national interests depends on interpretation, lobbying, and the Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations. Thus the overall status of the first factor is “condition is partially met.”

2. The group should be assimilated in the US society, but retain its ethnic identification.

The analysis of the second factors reveals that the Armenian-American community mostly meets the condition; the community has achieved significant upper-middle class status due to hard working nature, love to education and the tendency to save. Meanwhile, according to Bakalian (1993), as well as interviews and the examining of the Armenian-American publications, it is clear that most Armenian-Americans strongly retain their Armenian identity, at least as a symbolical value. Thus, the second condition is met.

3. The group should be politically active.

The Armenian-American community has had significant and effective participation in the US politics, which is expressed in endorsements, campaign contributions, critical campaign monitoring, coalition building with other interest groups and politicians, and much more. However, this study did not evaluate the voting turnout of the Armenian-Americans because of a critical lack of research on that issue (my request to ANCA to provide their estimates of Armenian-American voting behavior remained unanswered). An earlier research by Anny Bakalian among the New York and New Jersey Armenians reveals a generally high voting turnout. Thus, as much as the political activity of the Armenian-American organizations is concerned, the third condition was also met.

4. The group should be politically unified.

This condition is the only condition which is not met by the Armenian-American community. Because of specific historical conditions, a deep schism was developed among the American-Armenians (as well as Diaspora Armenians in general), which led to division of the community into two camps. The phenomenon has started almost 80 years ago and gradually was petrified and became a norm. Thus, the fourth condition is not met.

5. The group should be well-organized.

Ironically, the same schism in the community, described in the above paragraph, led to emergence of disproportionately abundant community organizations and associations. The rivalry between two main camps in the Armenian-American community, on the other hand, provoked more organizational activity inside each camp, thus leading to a situation, where there are highly organized and firmly establish community organizations in every Armenian-American community across the country. Thus, the fifth condition is met.

6. The group should be sufficiently numerous or strategically located/concentrated.

The Armenian-American community is not sufficiently numerous, but it is strategically located. So, the condition is mostly met. Besides that, the research shows that all successful ethnic lobbies represent relatively small populations (relative to the total population of the US) and are comparable to each other (Greek-Americans – some 1.5 million, Cuban-Americans – 1.2 million, Jewish-Americans – 6 million). Thus, we can conclude that the actual numerousness of ethnic groups is not as important as other factors, such as its organizational level, mobilization potential, smart political participation, etc.

7. The group must be seen as pursuing legitimate interests.

The main objectives that the Armenian-American lobby pursues either appeal to inherently American symbols values, such as the right to self-determination of a freedom-loving people, or

are universally accepted legitimate purposes, such as the condemnation of Genocide. The freedom from blockade, regional integration and the increased US-Armenia relations are found to have almost face-value legitimacy. Thus, all four main objectives can be seen as legitimate in the US society. However, there are no researches about the percentage points of Americans who are familiar with the interests of the Armenian-American community if they perceive those interests as legitimate. The seventh condition is also met.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The research has shown that out of seven identified factors of effective ethnic group lobbying some 4 are successfully met, and among the remaining three, only the fifth factor is marked as “not met.” These findings suggest the following implications for the Armenian-American public advocacy groups:

First, considering the successfully “met” conditions, the first obvious implication is that the Armenian-American community is successfully integrated (assimilated), highly organized and politically influential community pursuing fully legitimate interests. These conditions create ample opportunities for the Armenian-American community to further increase its effectiveness, by applying not only to the policy-makers, but also to the general public.

On the other hand, considering the limitations and weaknesses of the Armenian-American community, the first and only condition, which is not met, is the political unity of the

community. This condition, however, is one of the few conditions that are fully under the control of the Armenian-Americans, and no external or insurmountable obstacle exists for shifting the condition from “not met” to “met.” All that is needed to that end is a working consensus on the issue by all Armenian-American organizations and enough political will can fill the existing schism between the two parts of the community.

Regarding the two other factors, which are “partially met”, first, let us discuss the “golden rule” factor – the congruency of interests of the Armenian lobby and the US. The research shows that the Genocide recognition is against the national interest of the US. This explains why the efforts of the Armenian lobby in this regard have been vehemently opposed by the executive, who has more decisive power in foreign policy making. However, the expansion of the Genocide recognition issue from a pure foreign-policy issue to a universal issue of human rights, as well as the increase of recognitions from lower levels of government speaks about the possibility of transforming the Genocide recognition issue to the sphere where it belongs – to universal issue of justice and human rights.

According to this paper, the Nagorno Karabakh independence is ambiguous, and depends on interpretation, lobbying and the negotiations between Armenia-Azerbaijan. Though this is a topic of a further research, so far the research implies that the independence of Nagorno Karabakh can be reconciled with the US interests if a coordinated and persistent effort is taken by Armenian-Americans and the Armenian government.

The second factor which the research has found as “partially met” is the numerousness and strategic location of the Armenian-Americans. As the Armenian-Americans are strategically located in key states, it is possible to transform the strategic location to a feasible political clout,

which can be done in the case of effective and active involvement of the community in the public and political life of their locality.

Thus, the findings suggest that there are real possibilities of further increasing the effectiveness of the Armenian-American lobby by working towards higher level of cooperation among two camps of the Armenian-American community and reaching eventual political unity, reaching a higher level of community involvement of the Armenian-Americans, especially the new comers, and a more coordinated and working relationship between the Armenian-Americans and the Republic of Armenia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research revealed that there are three conditions of effective ethnic group lobbying which are still unfulfilled by the Armenian lobby, and thus, the recommendations will focus on improving Armenian lobby's position with regards to those three conditions. The recommendations are divided into three groups, each group corresponding to one of the unfulfilled conditions.

First, the recommendations to reconcile the Armenian-American interests with the US national interests on the issues regarding the Genocide recognition and the Nagorno Karabakh republic recognition.

A. The Genocide recognition:

As the Genocide recognition has been continuously thwarted (mainly by the executive) on the ground that it contradicts to the key US interests and alienates an important NATO ally – Turkey, it is necessary to represent the issue in the light of universal values, such as justice and human rights, and to separate the recognition of the Genocide from a foreign policy implications and to move it to the sphere of moral values. There are at least two ways of doing so:

First, shaping a favorable public opinion on the issue; this will enable the president to recognize the Genocide in a face-saving manner, referring to strong public opinion pressure. This can be done by increased public advocacy and educational campaigning targeted to the general public to educate them on the issue of Genocide. Besides that, the Armenian lobby should build more coalitions with powerful human rights NGOs to advocate for the recognition of Genocide together with them. With vast resources and broad legitimacy, the mainstream NGOs can do a lot of work to influence the public opinion on the issue of Genocide.

Second, the legislation on Armenian Genocide recognition should represent only recognition and moral condemnation of the Genocide, ruling out any irredentist and compensation claims, or suggesting any foreign policy implications resulting from the recognition. This will enable the Congress to accept the legislation with less opposition from hard-line realists, and, meanwhile, will enable the president to refer to the issue in a manner which is aloof from foreign policy implications.

B. Favorable US position on the Nagorno Karabakh republic recognition

One of the most tremendous tasks with regards to the Nagorno Karabakh issue is the representation of the issue in a legitimate light. As the Azerbaijani side tries to emphasize on the “occupied” territories and to transform the issue to the legitimate sphere of territorial integrity, and meanwhile tries to diminish the self-determination aspect of the conflict, the Armenian side

should concentrate on the advocacy of the main and root cause of the conflict, which is the aspiration of a nation to get freedom from repressions on the ethnic and religious grounds, or, in short, emphasize on the self-determination point of the conflict, representing the territorial dispute as a secondary issue and more of a technical ramification of the main conflict. The recommendations towards achieving the above-mentioned goals are as follows:

First, the Armenian-Americans should shape a mainstream public opinion on the issue, representing it from the right angle. To do so, it is important to expand the conflict from a Armenian-Azerbaijani one to a more general issue of fundamental human rights. Again a set of coalitions with right and powerful NGOs can be sought, advocating on the rights of the Armenians to get rid of repressive alien rule, as well as concentrating on the disastrous consequence of the Azerbaijani blockade on Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia. There have been no serious studies on the effects of the Azerbaijani-Turkish blockade on Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, which could be very useful in this regard.

Secondly, the Armenian lobby should try to reach the Academia and to shape a favorable academic view on the Nagorno Karabakh issue. There is a critical lack of good, even handed and comprehensive research on Nagorno Karabakh in English. The Armenian-Americans should try to fill this gap by getting published academic articles and books representing the issue in a pro-Armenian angle.

Third, the Armenian-American lobby should try to enhance its cooperation with the Armenian Republic on the Ngorno Karabakh issue, to coordinate positions, and to advocate on the right aspect of the issue, as defined by the status of Armenia-Azerbaijani negotiations the necessities of the moment. A coordinated Armenia-Nagorno Karabakh- Diaspora approach to the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh issue can do a better job, than a uncoordinated, though

intense, lobbying of each side individually. Thus, a unified strategic approach to the world-recognition of the Nagorno Karabakh republic is needed. In addition, the Armenian lobby can start to study the US-led public advocacy campaign which led to the recognition of the independence of Kosovo.

The second groups of recommendations refer to the lack of political unity among the Armenian-Americans. The divided nature of the Armenian-American community has often impeded the advancement of the Armenian causes. On the other hand, the new wave of immigration from the independent Armenia has created a third schism in the already divided Armenian-American community, as the new immigrants seem to avoid intensive contacts and integration into the Armenian-American community. The recommendations to increase the political unity among the Armenian-Americans are as follows:

First, there is critical necessity to create a forum, in which all sectors of the Armenian-American community would be represented. This forum could serve as a first step towards the political unification of the severed community.

Secondly, serious steps should be taken to unify the Armenian Apostolic church in the US and Canada, which is in an abnormal condition of being under the jurisdictions of two Holy Sees (Anthilias and Ejmiadzin), despite the fact that there is no theological difference between those two Sees. The unification of the church can be a propelling factor towards the elimination of the intra-community division.

Third, the new immigrant Armenians from the Republic of Armenia can play a role of a conciliator between the older generation Armenian-Americans, because the new comers from Armenia are usually neutral and, together with the older-generation neutral Armenians, can undertake a general a reconciliation effort, aimed at bringing together the Armenian-Americans.

There is clearly a factor of established bureaucracies in the Armenian-American community, which will be resentful to change in the both camps of the Armenian-American community; that's why it is important to do the maximum to preserve the existing community structures, or to undertake reforms and changes by a common decision-making effort to obtain a wide consensus from all affected parties.

The third group of recommendations refers to the fact that the Armenian-American community only partially meets the condition of being numerous and strategically located. The main recommendation in this regard would be to try to offset the relatively small population numbers by increasing the community activism of the Armenian-Americans.

First, the already established and highly organized Armenian-Americans should try to influence on relatively passive new immigrants to get involved in the community activities. This could be done by intensive education campaigns, or through a set of some form of incentives. The establishment of broad community forums will be very beneficial to involve the new immigrants into the community activities, and, eventually, transforming them from passive immigrants to active citizens.

Second, the Armenian-American organizations should try to increase their base of volunteers and active members, by recruiting new members both from the new immigrants and old settlers. Particular importance should be given to the Armenian-American youth. More programs should be designed to appeal to the modern American youth, because, if you lose the Armenian-American youth, you will lose the community after a generation.

Third, the Armenian-American should establish large, viable and non-partisan professional associations, which could become natural incentives for other Armenian-Americans to join in a perspective of career growth and expansion of professional contacts. The associations could

serve also as a helpdesk for the new immigrants to get integrated into the American society more quickly and effectively.

These are only a limited set of recommendations to improve the Armenian-American public advocacy power. Many of the recommended steps have been tried throughout the history of the community, but without a significant success because of different historical conditions; still many steps have not been implemented or designed yet, but are in the minds of the community leaders and activists. Thus, there is a hope that eventually the commitment to the Armenian causes will prevail over narrow group commitments and a unified Armenian-American community will be able to exercise broader political influence and respect, transforming it to material benefits to the Armenian nation and nationhood.

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