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# The Effects of Nationalism on Territorial Integrity Among Armenians and Serbs

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE EFFECTS OF NATIONALISM ON  
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AMONG  
ARMENIANS AND SERBS

By

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Department of International Affairs  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. NATIONALISM, AND HOW IT DEVELOPED IN SERBIA AND ARMENIA...	6
2. THE CONFLICT OVER KOSOVO AND METOHIJA.....	27
3. THE CONFLICT OVER NAGORNO KARABAKH.....	56
CONCLUSION.....	89
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	93
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	101

## ABSTRACT

Nationalism has been a driving force in both nation building and in spurring high levels of violence. As nations have become the norm in modern day society, nationalism has become detrimental to international law, which protects the powers of sovereignty. In the latter part of the twentieth century, secessionist groups and the international community alike have disputed the call for independence by citing the right to majority rule, despite legally bound borders. This paper examines the history of nationalism, with particular emphasis on the cases Serbia and Armenia. It explores the history of two disputed regions-Kosovo and Nagorno Karabakh, and analyzes those tragic events in the 1990's that placed them on the forefront of international relations.

*If poems were the expression of one's ethnicity they would remain local, but they are written by individuals in all cultures, which makes them universal.* - Charles Simić

## INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this thesis is to compare two relatively small countries (nations) with the emphasis on their circumstances in the late 20th and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, as well as their efforts to solve their most vital national problems, those of territorial integrity, homogeneity and sovereignty.

At first glance, Armenia and Serbia have very little, or almost nothing in common. They are geographically separate and very far from each other. Ethnically, culturally, linguistically, economically, militarily, or by any other yardstick for comparison – they are different. Yet, their post-Cold War circumstances provide that missing link, that of both countries facing serious difficulties on the paths to preserve their national cohesion, territorial integrity and independence.

Despite the initial assessment that the countries lack common features, there are still some geographic and topographic similarities between the two. They both built their homes on transnational 'highways.' Armenia is situated in the Transcaucasian zone, while Serbia is in the heart of the Balkans, providing the connection between Europe and Asia Minor. The countries are like the two sentinels or connective bridges on two of the most important passages between Asia and Europe. In that respect, their common element is their geo-strategic positions. Their encounters with international relations are also similar in that they experience both positive and negative circumstances due to their size and strategic locations. They are often also in the position of being collateral damage, due to the policies of other nations from either Europe or Asia in their ambitions to spread their influence from one continent to the other.

Another factor which has influenced internal conditions and the international positions of both Armenia and Serbia is the role of Ottoman Empire. For centuries these two Christian nations have been exposed to the brutalities of Turkish oppression and domination. In defending 'Christian Europe' from intrusion and aggression by 'Turkish invaders,' both nations have suffered huge population losses and have been exposed to economic exploitation, which have acted as barriers for them on their way toward

economic and technical progress of the modern times. Both countries also had higher relative positions in international affairs in the years prior to several centuries of Turkish oppression.

In their efforts towards emancipation and inclusion into the modern world, Armenia and Serbia have both been exposed to the serious and often competitive and adversary interests of modern history's Great Powers. In the case of Armenia, competing powers have included Russia (both Tsarist and Soviet), the Ottoman Empire/Turkey, and the Persian Empire, or Iran. In the case of Serbia, the most influential powers have been the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Russia (again, both Tsarist, Soviet and modern).<sup>1</sup>

Since the 1990's, both Armenia and Serbia have faced intensified similar problems concerning their territorial integrity. Armenia has for a long time attempted to re-incorporate the predominantly Armenian-populated region of Nagorno Karabakh which is located within the territorial borders of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan and Armenia are both former member states of the Soviet Union, and continue to function under the influence of Russia as members of the Commonwealth of Independent States—a loosely formed economic and political organization whose membership contains the majority of former Soviet states, minus those in the Baltic region. In case of Serbia, the region of Kosovo and Metohija (often shortened to Kosovo or Kosmet) is considered the cradle of the Serbian nation, though its Albanian minority has today become a majority in that region.

Today, for the first time since the signing of the Geneva and Helsinki Conventions, we are witnessing a historical precedent: internationally organized efforts to change borders of a sovereign state in which the reasons given have nothing to do with de-colonization. In an atmosphere of nationalism, coupled with economic difficulties including a high level of unemployment, the reassignment of national borders in these two countries becomes very dangerous and is therefore a delicate and important topic of study.

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<sup>1</sup> David Chioni Moore, "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique." *PMLA*, Vol. 116, No. 1, Special Topic: Globalizing Literary Studies, (January 2001), 122.

It is essential to understand how nationalism arose in Serbia and in Armenia, in order to put the present day hostilities into perspective. Nationalism is a growing concept of interest and research, and many scholars attribute the nationalism factor to problems in international affairs. Beyond paying lip service to the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a factor in the creation of many of today's states, nationalism has recently come into the spotlight since the 1990's, in the aftermath of the Cold War. I argue that nationalism is the driving force of present-day political parties and candidates in Serbia and Armenia, and that the primary targets of these nationalistic movements have been on the Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabakh regions. Political parties of Armenia and Serbia that wish to come into or remain in power must maintain hardliner stances on these two geographic areas of contention if they hope to gain the support of their constituencies.

I believe that this topic is important to research for several reasons. First of all, both the Balkans and the Caucasus have historically been hotbeds of ethnic tensions. Time has proven that despite former federalist government suppression of conflicts, nationalism has not disappeared, disproving Fukuyama's "End of History" theory. I would argue that Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory is correct insofar as ideological wars have been replaced (thus far, concurrent with Fukuyama's first theory), with violence occurring at the fault-lines of civilizations, and particularly at the borders of Islam and Christianity.

These conflicts have become internationalized, whether the contending parties desired it or not. The intervening states and organizations have participated not only as mediators, but in military uniform as well. These conflicts are no longer petty little wars within their own borders, they have become intra-national conflicts that affect the contending countries, and subsequently threaten the stability of neighboring states and the region, and finally gain the attention of the rest of the world.

In the cases of Armenia and Serbia, a 'velvet divorce' is not an option because compromise for both sides would mean losing the territory they are fighting to keep, and no resolution of compromise could end the violence. The situations of these countries are interesting because some believe they represent the abuse of sovereignty. Their outcomes could potentially give hope to other secessionist groups who want independence as well. The original rationale behind the establishment of the rights of independent countries

under the Geneva Convention was as an attempt to right the wrongs of border changes of World War I and decolonization after World War II. It was not to open the door for every group of peoples that felt the need to be self-governing.<sup>2</sup> If this were to happen, every ethnic group or regional irredenta could assume that they reserve the right to their own country. The worst-case scenario resulting from a trend of secession could lead to the creation of hundreds of micro-states, creating an even greater lack of cohesion in the United Nations, not to mention spawning millions of refugees and internally displaced persons.

We also have to look at the historically similar characteristics of Serbian and Armenian nationalism. These are both small, ancient peoples that have spent centuries defending their territories from the expansions of other nations, powers and forces. There is a strong and relatively non-flexible group system of values, which makes it difficult to negotiate with other countries that do not share them. This negotiation becomes even more important in the newly globalized world, where the ability to quickly and efficiently conduct deals that are enforceable is appreciated more so than position and tradition, which are viewed as archaic.

As the world becomes smaller and more integrated, it is easy to presuppose that its people are also becoming more unified. In some ways, this is a correct assumption, as more people are traveling and working abroad than ever before, and world and regional cultural, monetary, and political organizations are gaining in power and influence. On the surface, it might even appear that regional organizations would eventually make individual nations obsolete, an aspect of great contention for member-states of organizations such as the European Union (a concern that has grown to become perhaps its greatest fallacy). Thus, it is very easy to recognize that more interactive encounters with other nationalities or minorities also leads to conflict, for reasons such as the protection of cultural traditions, resentment of prior preferential treatment by the reigning government, economic disparity, and territories of contention. Delving further into the history of the origins of nationalism is crucial to understanding how these conflicts have

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<sup>2</sup> Mark W. Zacher, "The Territorial Integrity Norm: International Boundaries and the Use of Force." *International Organization*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Spring 2001), 221.

become serious concerns in the present day, and why there is a growing anxiety about how they might unfold.

*Nationalism emerged because it could.*<sup>3</sup>

CHAPTER 1: NATIONALISM,  
AND HOW IT DEVELOPED IN SERBIA AND ARMENIA

According to Anthony Smith, there are three prevalent ideas over how nationalism came to be. One is that modern-day nationalism is the result of historical events, that is, a passing feeling something that will disappear once history has run its course. It claims that nationalism will be superseded by poly-ethnic societies.<sup>4</sup> Another theory is that nationalism is a by-product of the industrializing of nations. Ernest Gellner a proponent of this model, and believes that modernization has brought societal fragmentation. He also believes that feelings of nationalism will not disappear until all states have made the difficult transition to the Western model. The third view that Smith discusses is that of perennialism, which claims that nationalism is the basic force that leads to modernity, and that it is encoded into the primordial nature of nations. This theory has generally been discredited by scholars who claim that ethnic conflicts are a primeval aspect of peoples, which discredits the progress that history has made.

Smith then dismisses these initial theories, claiming that none of the models are sufficient in explaining the complexities of nationalism. He believes that it is imperative to approach nationalism in the context of the history of the cultures and politics of communities. He argues that many factors influence a society, including the transformation of administrations, economies, and the influence of mass communication and the inevitable disintegration of traditional cultures. Two other scholars are important to mention for their work on the study of nationalism. One is Eric Hobsbawm, a British Marxist who believes that nationalism is the tool used by political elites in order to convince the masses of the importance of their state. The other scholar is Benedict Anderson, who is a leader in the modernist school of nationalism. His work “Imagined Communities” contends that the original seed of nationalism was born in the creation of the United States, and that nationalism in other parts of the world can be traced back to

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen van Evera, “Hypotheses on Nationalism and War.” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1994), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. (Cornwall, Great Britain: Polity Press, 1995), 82.

the U.S. Many believe that nationalism was created by elites and intellectuals who had access to literacy, and thus disseminated it to the masses.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of nationalism, like many other movements, has evolved over time and has adapted to our changing world. In the nineteenth century it was viewed as a positive force in nation-building and state liberation, while in the twentieth century it was been described as divisive, harmful and potentially dangerous. Earlier forms of nationalism had come about as directed reactions to the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman empires, in particular between 1870-1914. This time period has been described as the 'second wave' of nationalism, since the first, which ran from 1830-1870, was focused on the democratic ideals that grew out of the French revolution. This second wave of nationalism was born out of the ethnic and linguistic divisions of people. Scholars believe it is imperative for these divisions must be de-politicized to avoid conflict. Outside parties have developed methods for dealing with nationalism, including separating the cultural from the political level of the nation, de-militarizing it, and 'normalizing' it, via multi-lateral agreements. This approach to nationalism is often criticized because it does not take into account the full intricacies of ethnic disputes.

Smith also argues against the modernist viewpoint because he feels that it does not explain the recent revival of nationalism. While the world has modernized and progressed, the desire to find a connection with people similar to us has superseded the power of globalization. This is a sensible reasoning, considering that the ideology of nationhood is founded on the theory of nationalism, where citizens are loyal to the nation, the nation governs the people, and in order for a person to have an identity, they must belong to a nation<sup>6</sup>. We must also take into account that the world is divided into nations, further legitimizing nationalism. Nations are bound by territories, which unite the people of the state geographically. This explains why citizens are possessive of the territory they live in: international standards defend the right that the land became essentially 'theirs.' A huge problem from there is borne, as borders have changed over centuries, and people

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<sup>5</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*. (London: Routledge, 1998), 55.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. (Cornwall, Great Britain: Polity Press, 1995), 55.

have migrated, forcefully or willingly, to the point where it is rare to find a truly homogenous nation.

It is also essential to mention ethnies, which are smaller units of a population that share a sort of solidarity. In the pre-modern era, this is how ‘nations’ existed. Many ethnies have over time grown into ‘nations’ of people. Serbian nationalism can be seen as an example of this: a people who viewed themselves as a ‘nation,’ even before the country itself was created in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The same case can be made for the Armenians. Over time, states have been constructed around dominant ethnies.

Peripheral ethnies, which today would be defined as ethnic minorities, also make up the population of a state. Very often the minority populations are subject to discrimination by the dominant ethnies, usually if the minority population continues to hold onto its cultural values without overt efforts to assimilate it with the rest of the state’s populations. It should also be pointed out that there are Diaspora ethnies (two very prominent ones include Jews and Armenians), that tend to stick together regardless of what state they live in. Diasporas, particularly those that are wealthy and live in influential nations, can often be nationalism’s greatest tools. Their desire to be connected with their homelands, as well as their extensive resources and abilities to connect international actors with domestic politics, are extremely useful for their nation of origin.<sup>8</sup>

The way that ethnies hold on to their collective past is by retaining their ethno-history, or mythistoire. This is a population’s subjective view on their history which is, perhaps unfairly, often described as a collection of myths<sup>9</sup>. These myths are nearly always based on real events which, over time, have become partially distorted by idealization and hindsight, and have provided ex-post-facto allegories in order to reflect how and why the nation has evolved into its current position. Adding emotional details to occurrences such as a horrific and futile battles, gives hope and meaning to the people today by telling the stories. The veneration expressed serves to confirm that their ancestors’ blood was not spilled in vain. A popular example is the epic myth of the Battle

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<sup>7</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. (Cornwall, Great Britain: Polity Press, 1995), 58.

<sup>8</sup> For a good read on this subject, look up “Diasporas and International Relations Theory” 2003, by Shain and Barth

<sup>9</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. (Cornwall, Great Britain: Polity Press, 1995), 63.

of Kosovo, where the Serbian leader Knez Lazar is visited by an angel the night before the historic fight, and is offered the choice between an earthly or heavenly kingdom. By selecting the latter, he seals the peoples' fate in losing the war and falling under the Ottoman Empire, but simultaneously ensures that the descendents of these warriors will have a guaranteed place in heaven. Thus, the memory of having belonged to an enduring community, even if it is built from memories of a medieval past preserved in legends, has long-lasting potential for mass appeal.<sup>10</sup>

Nationalism in the post-Yugoslav and post-Soviet spheres had long been suppressed or ignored as long the source of power had remained centralized, generally under the flag of communism. Once this power began to weaken, the door to expressing ethnic grievances had opened.<sup>11</sup>

### *Serbia:*

There are claims that Balkan nationalism is rooted in xenophobia and racial prejudice due to conflictual differences in religion and unresolved territorial disputes. Some believe that the nationalism of the Balkans is an attempt to create homogenous nation-states at the expense of minority ethnic groups. This explanation is aimed at oversimplifying the understanding of nationalism for foreign readers, and should be discouraged as it overlooks key elements of nationalism.

The Serbian national consciousness has developed out of centuries of being sandwiched between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Turkic empires. Serbian nationalism grew as a form of struggle against assimilation and as a reaction to foreign domination. Bearing in mind that Serbian borders in the nineteenth century were not where they are today drove the Serbian nationalists to seek a change in the international status quo both ideologically and politically.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*. (London: Routledge, 1998), 122.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War." *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1994), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Ivo Lederer as cited in Veljko Vujačić, "Historical Legacies, Nationalist Mobilization, and Political Outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian View." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (December 1996), 780.

Serbia's nationalism benefited from a well-educated Diaspora in the Habsburg Empire. These intellectuals suggested a national cultural revival, and were later instrumental during World War I in bringing about unification of the various nationalities in the form of Yugoslavia<sup>13</sup>. It could be equally argued that the support of the Diaspora is also of critical importance for Armenia.

As the Serbian state expanded, Serbia itself proved to be a relatively successful constitutional monarchy, which allowed both political parties and extensive political participation. It also provided citizenship to its population, in spite of the huge rates of illiteracy and the relative backwardness of its largely agrarian constituencies, namely peasants. A sense of nationality was further instilled in the people during the Balkan wars and World War I, during a time when it was virtually impossible to find a family that hadn't suffered casualties. This contributed to a growing sense of martyrdom that would soon emerge in the collective Serbian psyche.<sup>14</sup>

Because the road to independence had been paved with so much blood, one of the defining elements of Serbia's political culture was the cult of a strong statehood. This element was later enforced during the persecution of Serbs, particularly by Croatian Ustashe and Nazi Germans during World War II.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the Serbs identified themselves as the ethnic victims of alien empires, as well as of some of their neighbors.

Even after the creation of Yugoslavia, Serbia's national consciousness had not evaporated, but ties of "Greater Serbianism" were exchanged for "Yugoslavism" during communist times. Despite having spearheaded the unification of the six nations, Serbia was not afforded a special role in the newly-created state, nor was it praised for its efforts in and contributions to the Allied movement in World War II.<sup>16</sup> It became submerged as just one of several states that were now part of a larger whole, and only when the

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<sup>13</sup> Veljko Vujčić, "Historical Legacies, Nationalist Mobilization, and Political Outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian View." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (December 1996), 780.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> Bette Denich, "Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide" *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (May 1994), 367.

<sup>16</sup> Armenia, too, calls upon this sense of betrayal by foreign powers. Ronald G. Suny, "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (December 2001), 894.

disintegration of Yugoslavia began to be seen as a reality did the Serbian national identity finally emerge onto the political arena.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Serbia's state and nation-building had happened as a reaction to foreign imperial domination, and with the aim of incorporating its Diaspora into the new nation-state. Because Serbia had existed as an independent country prior to the unification of Yugoslavia, a sense of Serbian nationality had always been present, albeit dormant.<sup>18</sup>

The structural preconditions for nationalist political mobilization were created out of the existence of Serbian cultural and political institutions. This allowed for a separation of Serbian and Yugoslav identities. Other conditions for the nationalist mobilization included the self-identification, political experiences, historical memories and institutional legacies.<sup>19</sup>

A connection can be drawn between the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. For both countries, what contributed to their collapse was the federal center's inability to contain the process of disintegration, which was caused by the increasingly adamant demands for autonomy and independence coming from its peripheries. Other nations with frail or undeveloped national consciousnesses had already created policies on the basis of nationalism, and this was an unexpected consequence of Communist policies.<sup>20</sup>

Vujačić cites Max Weber's writings as prognostic in the case of Serbia in particular. By proving the existence of an overlap between the nationalist and 'imperialist' aspects of the country, the characteristics of the 'dominant' state are witnessed in a multinational country. This also explains the somewhat defensive tactics that were evident in Serbia (as well as Russia) during the mid 1980's.<sup>21</sup>

National cohesiveness is a complicated matter. Solidarity based on nationalism is by and large created based on shared historical experiences.<sup>22</sup> These are generally political at their core. Political experiences obviously can be interpreted by any leaning

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<sup>17</sup> Veljko Vujačić, "Historical Legacies, Nationalist Mobilization, and Political Outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian View." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6, (December 1996), 781.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, 782.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, 783.

<sup>20</sup> Simone Chambers and Jeffrey Kopstein, "Bad Civil Society," *Political Theory*, Vol. 29, No. 6 (December 2001), 846.

<sup>21</sup> Vujačić, 766.

<sup>22</sup> Anthony Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. (Cornwall, Great Britain: Polity Press, 1995), 63.

across the spectrum, and change over time. Nationalism is something that is always evolving and is remade by academics, ideologists and politicians.

Weber's idea is also useful in showing that feelings of national solidarity are often attributed to historical and political experiences. Solidarity is also created out of the interaction with other groups, particularly when the groups are considered historical or potential enemies or threats.<sup>23</sup> From this angle, the concept of national identity will always be partially negative at its root.<sup>24</sup>

We must also separate the concepts of the 'nation' from that of 'nationality.' Nationality is the feeling of solidarity against other groups. A nation combines values that are tied together by the feeling of prestige. It is then manifested in the attempts to form a common state. If states are political communities fighting over a specific territory, violence can erupt when there is a conflict between nations.

A 'nation' is tied together by feelings of cultural solidarity, which are then reinforced by the common political and historical experiences of the group. The state is developed consciously for a specific purpose. On the other hand, the nation is a political association. When cultural solidarity and political association are fused together, they create the modern nation-state. The key to any nation is to aim for political power, which is based upon a shared culture. According to Weber, this is also the advantage that today's nation-states have over empires of the past.<sup>25</sup> The fact that Serbia was recognized as a nation-state prior to being classified as part of a multinational republic explains the feelings of national legitimacy that Serbs hold.

In order to interpret national conflicts within their historical contexts, the nation sees itself as a cultural community that has shared memories and a common political destiny. Its goals are prestige and territorial-political power. A closer look at the history of the Kosovo and Metohija region shows that the distribution of prestige and power has contributed to ethnic and national conflict between Serbs and Albanians. The ever-changing process of status-reversal and conflict over this territory has created painful memories for both sides. Status reversal and cases of persecution have only intensified

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<sup>23</sup> Bette Denich, "Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide" *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (May 1994), 377.

<sup>24</sup> Veljko Vujačić, "Historical Legacies, Nationalist Mobilization, and Political Outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian View." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6, (December 1996), 767.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 768.

these pre-existing negative memories. Despite the many centuries of living in a shared space, assimilation has never occurred, and differentiation between the two groups has been based on religious, linguistic and ethnic markers. The effects have been reinforced the solidarity of each group as strictly separated from the other.<sup>26</sup>

In order for nationalism to take hold as a concept, it must hold appeal in all types of social strata. It often falls on the responsibility of the academics, the intellectuals, the writers and the poets to create that nation's sense of consciousness if the nation lacks a strong bourgeois class. An example of intellectuals planting the seeds of nationalism can be found in the writings of Serbian novelist and academic, Dobrica Ćosić. Since nationalist ideologies are often confined to and understood by the more educated classes, nationalism has a great appeal for these people as feelings of prestige and ethnic honor create feelings of status superiority for the masses.<sup>27</sup>

Wars fought on the grounds of nationalism have the capacity to appeal to citizens living in poorer, often rural, regions, with their lack of economic opportunities and education. They can lead people to believe that their nation's way of life is superior to others, allowing them to take on the façade of prestige. This appeal of nationalism is common to both Serbia and Armenia, where ethnically intermixed and distanced areas with strong rural traditions are common. Consequently, volunteers can be recruited more easily using nationalist rhetoric evoking historical memories and ethnic pride. In Serbia's case, negative historical experiences, such as the persecution of Serbs in World War II, have contributed to a fear of repeated ethnic attacks, making the people more vulnerable to the seduction of ethnocentric rhetoric.<sup>28</sup> In the absence of economic progress via industrialization or trade, sometimes the only way political parties and intellectuals can boost national self-esteem is to play up feelings of ethnic pride.

Nationalism and national wars can also be interpreted as true democratic forces, cutting across class lines, and inverting historical social hierarchies by creating national

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<sup>26</sup> Veljko Vujačić, "Historical Legacies, Nationalist Mobilization, and Political Outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian View." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6, (December 1996), 769.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, 770.

<sup>28</sup> Bette Denich, "Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide" *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (May 1994), 370.

heroes out of ordinary people.<sup>29</sup> Nationalism incorporates the intellectual, the peasant, the military officer, the politician, the civil servant, even the Diaspora.

Since the dominant nation becomes the building block of a larger state, that political center of the federal state can come into conflict with the other peripheral national groups, as was the case in Yugoslavia. Serbia was viewed as that dominant nation, in part because it was the largest in the six-state federation. As opposed to the Soviet federation, Yugoslavia was far more de-centralized, and Serbia did not carry as much clout in its country as Russia had in the Soviet Union. Historical similarities between the two exist and can be seen in their unification roles: Serbia via wars of liberation, Russia via military conquests. These unification experiences have led to the predominance of a 'heroic tradition' which affords citizens of those two states a certain psychology based on their historic mission of state-building. While the two countries portray generosity in their willingness to incorporate other national groups into a larger confederation, they battle with their internal nationalist aspirations. The Serbs pushed away their own ethnic identity and identified themselves as Yugoslavs, but for a while they remained the dominant state, and their sense of national pride was therefore intact. It was only when Serbia's status of superiority came into question by the peripheral states' own nationalist rhetoric that Serbian nationalism reemerged.<sup>30</sup>

The initial Serb reaction to particularistic claims was one of defense, showing disappointment at the 'ingratitude' of the other smaller nationalities against their efforts of unification. An excerpt from the famous *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences* summarizes this reaction very well:

"It is first and foremost a question of the Serbian people and its state. The nation which had achieved statehood after a prolonged and bloody struggle, had created a parliamentary democracy on its own, and which in the last two wars lost 2.5 million compatriots, is the only one which has been deprived of its own state by a party committee after four decades in the new Yugoslavia. A worse historical defeat in peacetime can hardly be imagined."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Veljko Vujčić, "Historical Legacies, Nationalist Mobilization, and Political Outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian View." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6, (December 1996),, 771.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, 774.

<sup>31</sup> Nick Miller, "Postwar Serbian Nationalism and the Limits of Invention." *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2004), 158.

The Memorandum continues by condemning the secessionist trends, arguing for recentralization, and uses the term ‘Serbophobia’ to describe how the other nationalities were treating the Serbian nation. The *Memorandum* suggested Serbian secession from Yugoslavia and retaining its historical borders. By this time, the northern region of Vojvodina and the southern region of Kosovo had been granted the status of ‘autonomous provinces,’ and Serbia wanted to regain its original boundaries, including these two regions.

As ethnic divisions continued to increase, aggressive political positions quickly replaced defensive actions. As threats of ethnic violence emerged, and the legitimacy of the state came into question, new political coalitions emerged in Yugoslavia. Right-wing nationalist groups materialized as a replacement for, or rather, as a revamping of old Communist cadres. Furthermore, the army was on high alert, due to threats of reform and loss of territory, and in reaction to peripheral nationalism. They were soon ordered to defend the borders, as well as the country’s prestige.

The role of the intellectuals in this disorder should not be overlooked.<sup>32</sup> It is precisely the intellectuals who had criticized the changes to the Yugoslav constitution in the early 1970’s, and who argued that the country was moving toward a confederalization of Serbia. Kosovo’s status was repeatedly on the Serbian party agenda since the mid-1970’s.

By the 1980’s, the weak Yugoslav state only added fuel to the fire of the Yugoslav National Army’s persecution of the Albanian irredenta. The government’s inability to stop Serbian emigration from the region, and its’ failure to address the concerns of local Serbs, who found themselves under the jurisdiction of the Albanianized party organization, further partitioned the nation. Intellectual rhetoric promoted separatism as the Kosovo legend continued to hold symbolic value in the traditional Serbian mythology. The intellectuals referenced this myth in their *Memorandum*, despite the fact that the Kosovo legend was discarded as anti-communist, and was generally ideologically unacceptable with its portrayal of “Greater Serbian chauvinism”.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Vujačić, 776.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, 784.

With the breakthrough of Milošević as a populist for the Kosovo Serbs in 1987, the ideological configuration began to change. He placed himself as the leader of a grass-roots movement at a time in which activists held the most prominent role. He provided legitimacy for the intellectuals' efforts as leader of the Communist party. The small factions of Serbian nationalists grew into larger groups, eventually spiraling out of control as mass rallies exploded, forcing the resignations of several 'treasonable' and politically corrupt elites.<sup>34</sup>

Milošević, however, was more than just a political figure for the Serbs. His appeal came from the emphasis he placed on social justice and economic reform in a country that was weary from failed expectations and political corruption in the Communist party. He was seen as a true communist belonging to the people, and appealed to both the workers and intellectuals. He fought bureaucrats and successfully roused the masses. Over time, he began to incorporate nationalist themes in his political rhetoric. These themes would have been unacceptable in an earlier decade—a time when the communist party's hold was stronger. Now they resonated so strongly with his constituency that the party actually supported him.

An example of Milošević's nationalist rhetoric is his blame of Serbia's lack of development as a result of exploitation by some of the richer states, such as Croatia and Slovenia, rather than as a result of its own internal weakness. The League of Communists had become fragile, and it no longer held the power to expel him from the party for spouting nationalist (and thereby anti-communist) associations, consequentially subverting the internationalist Yugoslav spirit.<sup>35</sup> His style of leadership not only prevented attempts at conflict resolution, but also provoked ethnic reactions in other republics that perceived his mannerisms as threatening 'greater Serbian hegemony.'

By the time war broke out in the early 1990's, it was practically impossible to reverse the damage that had been done, as the other republics in Yugoslavia began to proclaim their own national self-identifications. Milošević insisted on playing up the tradition of a 'heroic struggle,' and often repeated the statement "Serbia will either be united, or it will perish." He had successfully directed early seeds of social discontent

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<sup>34</sup> Nebojša Vladisavljević, "Nationalism, Social Movement Theory and the Grass Roots Movement of Kosovo Serbs, 1985-1988." *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 5 (July 2002), 774.

<sup>35</sup> Vujačić, 785.

into full-blown national conflict. Moreover, he was able to combine nationalism with orthodox communism, which allowed him to maintain a sense of political legitimacy.<sup>36</sup>

### *Armenia:*

As in Serbia, the national awakening of Armenia came from various intellectuals and writers who attempted to cultivate the national culture in the nineteenth century. The ideals of the French revolution were thus infused by the educated Armenians, who combined the notions of the rights of citizens with democratic-liberal ideology.

The second wave came about during the Russian revolution. The Armenian revolutionary movement had been based on socialist ideology, or rather, Marxist, at the end of the nineteenth century. After the success of the Young Turk Revolution in the Ottoman Empire, Armenians in Turkish territories struggled with the new realities of being treated as second class citizens. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or ARF, began to move towards a concept of an independent Armenian state, and spearheaded this to become a national cause. The success of the Balkan wars against the Ottoman Empire gave an opportunity for Ottoman Armenians to improve their own situation.

In 1998, the Karabakh Committee reformed itself as the Armenian National Movement as an umbrella organization for a coalition of forces which served as an alternative to the Armenian Supreme Soviet. In 1990, the ANM became the government of Soviet Armenia, and by the end of the year, the country was functioning with all the aspects of a sovereign state without actually having declared its independence yet.<sup>37</sup>

The two main issues on the republic's agenda between 1991 and 1994 were that of Karabakh and the economy.<sup>38</sup>

A variety of troubling factors preoccupied Armenia. Since 1988, the number of refugees and internally displaced peoples in the region grew to close to 350,000 Armenians from Azerbaijan and Karabakh. Many of the former Soviet republics were also experiencing economic disasters from the dissolution of the socialist economic

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<sup>36</sup> Vujajić, 786-788.

<sup>37</sup> Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* (Watertown, Massachusetts: Blue Crane Books, 1999), 7.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

system. Armenia, under blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey, found it even more difficult to make the transition to a market economy.<sup>39</sup> Its exports had no place in the market now that they could no longer compete with cheaper and higher quality goods from other countries. Inflation ran rampant, factories shut down, and the middle class was quietly disappearing as the number of emigrants kept increasing.

In 1994, the cease-fire between Armenia and Azerbaijan allowed some room to focus on the building of the state and its institutions. A constitution was drafted and adopted in 1995 by general referendum, which strengthened the powers of the president at the expense of others. The National Assembly was dominated by the ANM and Levon Ter-Petrossian was reelected in 1996, but allegations of vote-rigging cast a shadow over his rule.

By 1997, the personal differences in the leadership of the ANM began to take their toll. The governing party was now perceived as being complacent and careless, and the opposition party had grown impatient. The cease-fire also gave an opportunity for new issues to come to the agenda, and for the others to be re-strategized.

In addition, the leadership of Karabakh began to grow in strength and popularity, at the expense of the ruling Armenian government. Unable to find a compromise between international pressures and those of the Armenian masses on the subject of Karabakh, Ter-Petrossian resigned in February of 1998.<sup>40</sup> Further issues arose with the assumption of Robert Kocharian, the former leader of Karabakh, as president of Armenia. The question of his legitimacy was brought up by both international observers and opposition parties, concerned over his citizenship (he was a citizen of Karabakh, and not of Armenia proper).

Armenia's struggle to become a flourishing new independent state was mired by several problems. For one, it had not been independent in nearly a millennium, except for a short period between 1918 and 1920. Then there was the issue of Karabakh, on which politicians were divided into those who attempted pragmatism and those who pushed for national ideology, and who considered a lack of ideology blasphemous. These

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<sup>39</sup> Stephen van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War." *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1994), 35.

<sup>40</sup> Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* (Watertown, Massachusetts: Blue Crane Books, 1999), 9-11.

complexities came to the forefront of Armenian policy with the Nagorno Karabakh becoming the pinnacle of its testing ground. It became the issue that tied together every aspect of Armenia's governing, from its foreign policy to security to its economy and within the arena of domestic politics. It is Karabakh that causes both inspiration and concern for Armenia by both promoting national values and creating vulnerability for its citizens and the Diaspora.<sup>41</sup>

There are only two options for the Armenians on the subject of Karabakh-to be pragmatic, or to invoke national ideology. This is a conflict of worldviews. Between waging a successful war, ensuring supplies such as food and oil made their way to the people living under a blockade, attempting to establish state institutions and creating an economy, the country's administration had its hands full.<sup>42</sup>

The transition from a Soviet Armenia to an independent Armenia had been relatively peaceful and orderly. Unlike its neighboring countries, Armenia had managed to avoid the violence that often comes with a change in administration. The country began to take desperately needed steps towards reform of every aspect of its society-education, the judicial system, health care, economics, and politics. Political parties adapted to the new governing administration by changing their resistance agenda into more politically relevant programs for which national ideology provided a convenient cover.<sup>43</sup> The fact was that party pluralization was now legally taken advantage of, and by the end of 1998, over 70 political parties had been registered, the majority of which were small and insignificant.<sup>44</sup> It is not the number of parties that are created that addresses concern, however-parties are born, disappear, or mutate and combine very frequently. It is the dominant personalities in the parties that warrants attention. The cult of personality of a leader is often, unfortunately, more of a driving force than the party's programs. In addition, external financing is a source of contention because it can give

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<sup>41</sup> Ronald G. Suny and Michael Kennedy. *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation* (Michigan University Press, 1999), 80.

<sup>42</sup> Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* (Watertown, Massachusetts: Blue Crane Books, 1999), 11-15.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, 20-21.

unfair advantage to certain parties. The amount of political financing that comes from the Armenian Diaspora is noteworthy.<sup>45</sup>

The first awareness of an Armenian national movement can be dated to a small protest in 1987 concerning the pollution generated by Yerevan's factories. It raised consciousness but was not instrumental in producing change. The second mass demonstration that would occur was the Karabakh movement in February 1988 that demanded unification with Armenia.<sup>46</sup> The Nagorno Karabakh movement was important for several reasons. It symbolized the aspirations of the nation, it was an example of a political conflict that would turn violent, had evolved for over a decade, and represented an administrative issue within one state-the USSR-that would later be transformed into war between two independent nations.<sup>47</sup> One major difference between this conflict and that in Serbia was that the Karabakh issue was held in two different perspectives by the people of Armenia. For those Armenians in Karabakh, the movement revolved around a single issue, which was the fight for independence. For the Armenians in Armenia, the Karabakh conflict was indeed at the forefront of, but not the only issue, of its agenda.

Similar to Kosovo, the Karabakh issue was exasperated by the different statuses it had been afforded over the years and its manipulation by foreign powers. In February 1988, in light of Gorbachev's espousals of glasnost and perestroika, the citizens of Karabakh raised their request of unification with Armenia with great hope to Moscow, believing it was finally ready to right the wrongs of what they believed was its unfair internal boundary system.<sup>48</sup> The response was not in the Armenians' favor, however. When Moscow failed to respond in a timely fashion to the anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait in late February and early March of that same year, Armenians began to question the validity of the Soviet system that failed to guarantee the security of its citizens.

This was not unlike how Armenia had been treated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When peaceful petitions were sent by moderate Armenians without

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<sup>45</sup> Gerald J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* (Watertown, Massachusetts: Blue Crane Books, 1999), 23-24.

<sup>46</sup> Ronald G. Suny, "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (December 2001), 884.

<sup>47</sup> Libaridian, 26.

<sup>48</sup> Ronald G. Suny, "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations, 876-877.

results, these moderates would consequentially turn revolutionary. Without the support of Western nations, Armenians began to view them as imperialistic with only capitalistic interests. This explains why many adopted revolutionary Marxist political ideologies.<sup>49</sup>

Karabakh ended up being the trigger and symbol of the protest movement against the Soviet system. Differences would remain between political leadership in the autonomous province of Karabakh and that of Armenia as a constituent republic of the USSR, since the first had no international standing. The Karabakh Committee-a group of Armenian intellectuals dedicated to the reunification of Karabakh with Armenia- nonetheless continued in their pursuit, regardless of lack of legitimacy. As it gained in influence, the only legal and ruling party-the Communist Party-was showing how incapable it was of controlling the nationalist movement. Many members of the ruling party were sympathetic to the group's goals, while others were concerned with its direction and implications. As the movement grew in size and influence, Armenia's government tried to curb its radicalization which could inevitably challenge the Soviet system. It thus decided to imprison the movement's leaders during the time of a devastating earthquake in December of 1988, thus allowing them to be indisposed during a time they could have rallied the masses in relief efforts. By June 1989 they were released during a time of popular frustration with the corrupt government and bureaucracy. The Karabakh Committee now began to transform itself into a political organization-the Armenian National Movement-which had several items on its agenda, not least of which was the unification of Karabakh with Armenia. They offered a program of national rebirth. By the time the ANM came to power in 1990, it had to somewhat shift its original goals conform to the policies of a governing body.

Over the next few years during the most violent periods of the conflict over Karabakh, many changes were underway. The situation had become internationalized, and multi-country organizations attempted to step in and mediate the hot zone. Citizens of Karabakh felt as though they needed to represent themselves, since they were the object of contention-Azerbaijan, of course, would not allow this. This naturally was a source of grief for many Armenian nationalists, for whom recognition was half of the

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<sup>49</sup> Gerald J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* (Watertown, Massachusetts: Blue Crane Books, 1999), 27.

battle. In addition, the ruling party in Armenia felt the need to soften its political agenda in order to function as a normal country. The ANM under the rule of Ter-Petrosian, was called out for betraying its roots and selling out its nationalist aspirations in order to be favored by the international community. The final straw was his acceptance of the internationally planned, phased solution to the Karabakh conflict instead of insisting on a packaged resolution, which is what more nationalism-invoking politicians demanded. Pragmatically it was the only acceptable political solution, but in the eyes of the nationalists, he was now a traitor. He was replaced in 1998 by the more politically savvy Robert Kocharian, a native to Karabakh, who is still in power today.

It is important to remember that many of the current political parties and leaders have not presented clearly articulated solutions for Karabakh, neither before nor after Ter-Petrosian's resignation. Many, such as the Armenian Revolutionary Front had strong objections to an international compromise on Karabakh, but had no constructive solutions of their own to offer. The least popular solution would have been the securing of rights of the Armenians in Karabakh and leave it the way it is, within Azerbaijan. This raises the concern that the idea of compromise is politically volatile without even the clarification of what it means. This makes it easily manipulated by political parties that send mixed signals to the population. No politician wants to be accused of betraying the cradle of Armenian civilization. At the same time, no politician will be successful in keeping a one-track mind on the conflict if the country is to progress in its relations with other states. All the while when national visions and spiritual yearnings and international aspirations kept the morale of the population at a high, the reality was that the country's economy had sunk to the point of bankruptcy. This was one of the major issues during the 1996 presidential campaign. The government's mishandling of economic reforms, the lack of international investment, and the corruption and clannishness of officials would lead to the disappearance of the middle class. In the end, there was no real solution to the problem, beyond printing more money for increased salaries, which would only lead to greater inflation. Other controversies lie in the relative strength of the president in comparison to the parliament. The president is only powerful if he or she has the support of the Parliament; otherwise, he is reduced to a figurehead. Other concerns include the legitimacy of the democratic process, which has come into question more than once over

election irregularities. Two other great set-backs to the democratization of Armenia were Ter-Petrosian's one time ban of the ARF, and his decision to use the army to control the crowds' response to the 1996 elections.

Since the resignation of Ter-Petrosian, the revolutionary zeal of political parties has not died down. Now that he was out of the political limelight, the opposing parties would take advantage of the moment to satisfy their own programs. Despite his unglamorous exit, he, along with the other intellectual leaders of the Karabakh Committee, had defended the rights of the Karabakh Armenians and led Armenia to its independence. By chartering a path for the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, he will be remembered as Armenia's dominant politician for ten years.

It is important to differentiate the attitudes of Armenians in Karabakh from those in Armenia. Those in Karabakh have long lived in isolation from their brethren in the mother state, and have thus their politics have historically evolved differently. They live with a siege mentality and in a military environment, and are at the mercy of Azerbaijan's policies. They thus demand a nationalist solution of union with Armenia.

The future of Karabakh's status affects all Armenians-those in Karabakh, Armenia proper, and in the Diaspora- in different ways and degrees. The pan-national character of the problem thus places huge pressure and responsibility particularly on those who are in the position to do something about it. Currently, that is Kocharian. The difference between his philosophy and that of Ter-Petrosian, however, is in his willingness to compromise the interests of a particular issue over the practicalities of other aspects of governing, such as working towards democratization<sup>50</sup>. The international community's positions on territorial integrity are that of a highly regarded principle of international security and regional stability. Libaridian states that Kocharian viewed the war as about heroes, whereas Ter-Petrosian also saw economy, psychology and the families of soldiers.<sup>51</sup> He was not, however, ready to compromise certain things, such as

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<sup>50</sup> Malkasian, Mark. "*Gha-ra-bagh!*" *The Emergence of the National Democratic Movement in Armenia*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 4. It must be noted, however, that this book is extremely subjective.

<sup>51</sup> Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, U.S.A., Transaction Publishers, 2004), 202.

caving in to economic strangulation and diplomatic isolation in order to defend the rights of the Nagorno Karabakh citizens, something that is visible in Serbia's policies as well.<sup>52</sup>

The ANM's core goals were to bring normality and stabilization to Armenia, to transcend its past, and to follow the course of pragmatism in domestic and international affairs. By focusing on other aspects of government beyond just the scope of Nagorno Karabakh, it was unfairly accused of betraying its roots. Other parties, such as the National Democratic Union, the ARF, and the Communist Party of Armenia extolled their own national ideology in response, giving the Armenian state and its people a pre-ordained role which could never be fulfilled to their expectations. A division had grown between the ideologists' struggle for Armenia's soul and the pragmatists who were attempting to redefine Armenia's place in the world, and who were accused of national heresy.

To explain these differences further, it helps to summarize the political parties and their agendas. Ter-Petrossian's party, the ANM, had the goals of creating a government that provided for the security of its people, ensuring economic well-being, and of resolution to conflicts that could undermine the country. There would be no revolutions or ideological regimes that could transform the state's economy overnight, only time, and nationalism could not replace caution. Armenia's independence was not to represent the first step for Karabakh's desired unification. In addition, a weak and isolated Armenia-which could inevitably occur, if it were to pursue solely nationalistically inclined programs-would not be beneficial to the security of the citizens of Karabakh either.

The war in Karabakh could not be ignored by the Armenian government, as it would have been socially and politically unacceptable for the populations to experience another genocide. Following the 1994 cease-fire, however, the early solution was to agree on peace while leaving Karabakh's status de facto independent of Azerbaijan. Resolving the Karabakh crisis was necessary to ensure Armenia's civil relations with its neighbors and the international community.

Another manifestation of Armenian nationalism was Armenia's stance that all Armenians living outside the country (except for those in Karabakh) were members of

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<sup>52</sup> Gerald J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* (Watertown, Massachusetts: Blue Crane Books, 1999), 66.

the nation, historically, culturally, and spiritually, but not legally. This provides a pragmatic concession for the wealthy Armenian Diaspora to feel a connection with their country of origin, while at the same time, not compromising legal contentions.

Because Armenia was now a multi-party system, it was inevitable that political parties began to gain in influence, such as the National Democratic Union which believed that Armenians were a special people by their history of survival through oppression, which affords them great potential. This potential is to be manifested in order to create one, non-fragmented Armenian state. Because the Karabakh conflict had ended with Armenians having the upper hand, it served as an example of how the Armenian destiny could be fulfilled. The price of stirring up nationalism, however, is often the loss of the country's stability.

Another political party, its communists, has not thrived as well in post-Soviet Armenia. Rather than accepting Armenia's new foreign policy in the world, they would assume loyalty to Russia, assuming Moscow would reward them with Karabakh. The fact that neither Russia nor the Soviets had assisted the Armenians in their quest for Karabakh in the past was a non-issue for the communists. This obviously did not make them a particularly popular party in Armenia. Pragmatically as well, it was unreasonable to expect Russia, despite the empathy it may have for its Orthodox Christian brethren, to pursue a risky foreign policy in supporting Karabakh's quest for independence if it did not suit its own interests.

One of the most notorious of the nationalistic parties, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, held the ultimate goal of uniting all historically Armenian territories. It was originally founded at the end of the nineteenth century as a vessel to bring about reform in Ottoman Armenia, but by 1919 had adopted a goal of independence. When the First Republic of Armenia was founded, it was done so largely by the efforts of the ARF. The party's slogan was "Free, Independent, and United Armenia," and became a particularly attractive group for Diaspora Armenians for whom it represented the rectification of historical discriminations. With its idealized mission statement, the ARF's strategies and priorities may have changed over the years, but the pursuit of the homeland-the "Hay Tad," or Armenian Cause-has remained its championing foundation, and the party considers itself its guardian. Interestingly, the ARF original strategy was focused on

independence in 1920 and onward throughout the Cold War and not unification. It is with the outbreak of violence in Karabakh starting in 1988 that the party adjusted its strategy to become more in tune with the nationalistic fervor of the peoples.

*To be a Serb is implicitly to be Orthodox, explicitly to celebrate the [S]lava and importantly to associate oneself with a heroic tradition of struggle.*<sup>53</sup>

## CHAPTER 2: THE KOSOVO AND METOHIJA CONFLICT

It is impossible to state that the conflict over Kosovo is unique in the world. It is not a post-Cold world phenomenon either, considering it has been an issue of concern for several decades.<sup>54</sup> The root of the violence lies in the clash between the rights of two different groups that belong to two different civilizations<sup>55</sup>. One is the right of the Serbian people whose state, culture and church all come from this territory. The other is that of Kosovo Albanians who have also inhabited the area for a long time, and whose population has doubled in size from the 1960's-1980's, and have attempted to claim self-determination. In a way, Kosovo has become an allegory for the contradictions of the post-cold war world.<sup>56</sup>

Kosovo and Metohija themselves are heterogeneous territories both ethnically and administratively. They are geographically contiguous, but separated by Drenica in the north, and by Crnoljeva and Prevaličko in the south. Kosovo is a valley 84 km long and 14 km wide, rich in mineral ores and fertile agriculturally. Lately it has been noted for its rich oil deposits. Because of its geographic position and its natural resources, it has been an important crossroad for the routes and settlements of peoples from the Stone Age to modern times.

Metohija comes from the Greek word metochos-monastery estate or monastery property (meaning that Serbian kings have given this land to monasteries). In Albanian, the territory is called Dukadin; however, Dukadin is meant to encompass a larger area,

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<sup>53</sup> Veljko Vujačić, "Historical Legacies, Nationalist Mobilization, and Political Outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian View." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (December 1996), 781.

<sup>54</sup> William R. Ayres, "A World Flying Apart? Violent Nationalist Conflict and the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (January 2000), 105.

<sup>55</sup> Errol A. Henderson and Richard Tucker, "Clear and Present Strangers: The Clash of Civilizations and International Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (June 2001), 333.

<sup>56</sup> Branislav Krstić-Brano, *Kosovo: Facing the Course of History*. (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 23.

including parts of Albania. It too has been populated and developed over several millennia.<sup>57</sup>

Overall, Kosovo and Metohija have been, and remain, valued territory from which water flows into three seas, and which hosts the largest U.S. military base in south-eastern Europe.<sup>58</sup>

The physical area covers 10,887 square kilometers, or about 12.3% of the territory of Serbia, and hosts about 20% of the population of the country. No records show that it has ever been a separate administrative, military, nor religious unit. Nor did they exist as a province, sandžak, vilayet, banovina or region throughout its history even under the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, the historical borders between Yugoslavia and Albania occurred as a result of struggles of the countries during the world wars, and subjected to the opinions of international experts who helped create it.<sup>59</sup>

As an organized political unit, Kosovo and Metohija's roots can be traced back to the documents of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), albeit through inconsistent editorial notes. At the Fourth Congress of the CPY held in Dresden in 1928, the Comintern called for the overthrow of the Serbian bourgeoisie from power as well as the allegedly imperialist creation of Yugoslavia. Metohija was intended to be incorporated into Montenegro, since a large portion of it belonged to the latter since 1912.

Yugoslavia represents a unique case in Europe wherein peoples coming from a variety of different languages and styles of faith were combined with historical territories of another people. Kosovo and Metohija were politically constructed out of the debris of the Kingdom of Serbia's breakup. Its manner of creation would inevitably cause destabilization in any state. The obstacle that faced the people of the Balkans after liberating themselves from Turkish oppression had been how to create their new states. It was particularly important for Serbia on how to resolve the changes that had occurred on their historic territories of Kosovo and Metohija during the Ottoman occupation of the region, and which was reflected in a severe change of demographics. The new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes thus had to both integrate their territories into the mother

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, 27.

<sup>58</sup> This would be Camp Bondsteel, erected in the aftermath of the bombing of former Yugoslavia.

<sup>59</sup> Branislav Krstić-Brano, *Kosovo: Facing the Course of History*. (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 33.

country, and to bring in settlers. The resettlement of the Albanian Muslims was put on pause. Following the completion of the administrative-territorial aspects, it was necessary to return the Serbian peoples who had owned lands and built settlements earlier in the area back to their roots.

This led to the Decree on Settlement of September 24th, 1920, which stated that free state land was to be allocated for the new settlers returning to the lands of their forefathers. As for Turkey, it had agreed that, since its withdrawal from the Balkans, it was prepared to sign an agreement on the resettling of some two hundred thousand people in 1936. This was not an individual or unique idea-the nations of Bulgaria, Romania and Greece had arranged similar agreements. In talks that took place two years later, it was concluded that the Yugoslav Muslim peoples that spoke Turkish or were of Turkish origin would also include Albanian Muslims. Plans were made for Turkey to receive 40,000 families, and this resettlement was supposed to take place during the period from 1939 through 1944. It was then that Turkey stated that it was not prepared financially to cover its half of the expenses, although the negotiation would still be carried out, pending Yugoslavia's promise to cover the other half. In the end, the convention remained unsigned.

Meanwhile, the Law on the Review of Allocation of Land to Settlers in Macedonia and the Kosovo-Metohija region (Official Gazette of the DFY, no. 56/45) stated that a part of the settlers would lose their right to owning land. The Decision on the Temporary Prohibition of Return of Settlers to their former places of residence then followed, which banned them from returning to Macedonia and Kosovo and Metohija. This was abolished in 1953, when Serbia applied the Law on the Treatment of Abandoned Settlers' Land in the Kosovo-Metohija Region (official journal of the PR of Serbia, no. 9/47). This allowed those settlers who had left Kosovo and Metohija under duress and pressure by Nazi occupational forces and their Albanian supporters during World War II to be allowed to return to their estates by September 30th, 1947, otherwise they would lose their rights to the land, and without compensation. Over 2000 families did not return until that date, and because the state authorities were not compelled to guarantee the return of the previous owners, it was recognized that Serbs were expelled

from Kosovo and Metohija by Nazis and that the new Tito's government accepted and confirmed the Nazi's anti-Serbian measures.

No investigation was made to discover why Albanians had settled into the territories of Kosovo and Metohija while it was under Italian occupation during World War II. The fact that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia would recognize the rights of these new citizens over those of the original inhabitants was best explained by the insistence that Albania would eventually become unified within the framework of Yugoslavia itself, according to the CPY Secretary General.

In 1940, Marshall Tito, then Secretary General of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia asked that Metohija be directly linked to the Central Committee of CPY and proposed that both Kosovo and Metohija become a Regional Committee with separate connection with the Communist Party, which was accepted unanimously.

The following paragraphs discuss a list of documents that describe Kosovo's administrative status within Yugoslavia.<sup>60</sup>

The AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council of Peoples' Liberation of Yugoslavia), 1943 document provides for the establishment of a Federal Yugoslavia, without references to autonomous regions or provinces.

The 1946 Constitution (The Official Gazette of the FPRY, No. 10/46): The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, as well as the Autonomous Kosovo-Metohija Region-which was shortened to Kosmet-were, according to article 104, to be established within Serbia proper, providing the confirmation of its National Assembly. Statute 105 provided for each of the autonomous units to have the National Assembly and the Main Executive Board as their administrative appendage.

The provision about the autonomous units was included in the Constitution of Federal Yugoslavia solely for Serbia. Neither the Regional Assembly nor the Assembly of Serbia had suggested that Kosovo and Metohija become an autonomous region.

The 1963 Constitution (The Official the official gazette of SFRY, no. 14/63) stated that the country would be made up of only republics, and did not set up

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<sup>60</sup> Documents found in Branislav Krstić-Brano, *Kosovo: Facing the Course of History*. (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 40-42.

autonomous provinces. Article 11 mentioned that republics may set up provinces according to the wishes of the population, and states that within Serbia there exist autonomous provinces, those of Vojvodina, and Kosovo and Metohija. This constitution in essence loosened up the party's hold on politics, and all republics were made equal.

With the 1968 Constitutional Amendments (The Official Gazette of the SFRY, no. 55/68), the word Metohija vanished from the name of the province "Kosovo and Metohija." In addition, the provinces were allowed judicial authority, and executive and representative rights-a provincial assembly which could not legally pass laws.

In the 1971 Constitutional Amendments (the official gazette of the SFRY, no. 29/71), an addition was created to the first article of the constitution, which had originally stated that the SFRY was a state of 'voluntarily united and equal nations.' It now included the names of the Socialist Autonomous Provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo which are constituent parts of the SR of Serbia.' It also stated that 'equal participation and responsibility' was guaranteed by the federation. This called for direct representation of the provinces in the State Presidency, the Federal Executive Council, and in the Constitutional Court.

The new 1971 constitutional amendments symbolized the end of the conversion of Yugoslavia by practically giving provinces the powers of constituent republics.<sup>61</sup>

In the 1974 Constitution (the official gazette of the SFRY, no. 9/74), article 5 remained intact which stated that the whole of the SFRY territory was unified and consisted of territories of the Socialist Republics. However, article 206 stated that republics and autonomous provinces were considered equals, and called for the provinces to have their own constitutions. Article 245 stated that all nations and nationalities were to have equal privileges.

Although the 1974 constitution did not create any great changes, it did violate the conditions of the AVNOJ agreement, upon which Federal Yugoslavia had been composed. It established the state on the foundations of republic-nations, and the rights of nations and national minorities-referred to as nationalities-are established as equal. The Constituent Assembly was to be no longer democratically elected, but the new constitution of the state was to be created by the assembly which expressed the positions

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<sup>61</sup> Krstić-Brano, 41.

of one political party. This constitution doubtlessly brought about the beginning of the Second Republic. The provision basically meant that changes to the constitution could be made with the consent of all republics and provinces, the system of government could be altered significantly only if a state decided to secede or if the republic would break up.

A phase of duality appeared within the Republic of Serbia after this time period. Article 3 of the constitution stated that the republic is a 'state,' while article 5 stated that the republic had a 'territory.' Article 2 mentions that the province is a constituent part of the republic, but article 4 calls the republic a 'socio-political community.' In addition, under this constitution, the citizens of the province have 'sovereign rights.' Finally, article 300 of the Constitution of Serbia created contradictory norms, because none of the other five states had autonomous provinces, and could therefore pass their own laws, but Serbia was indebted to the provincial assemblies of Vojvodina and Kosovo in order to make its own decisions. Serbia's Constitution could now only be altered if the assemblies of the provinces were in agreement. The conflicts in the constitution would later become present when the state authorities were faced with situations in which the provincial authorities took on powers as though they were sovereign.<sup>62</sup>

The federal authorities and those of other republics began to become aware of the urgency of fixing the constitutional position of Serbia. The outcome was changes in the Constitution of the SFRY, and of the SR of Serbia. Thus, the 1988 Constitutional Amendments (the official gazette of the SFRY, no. 70/88). The changes reiterated that the SR of Serbia was self-managing and that the constitutional powers of the autonomous provinces were to be upheld within the autonomous communities within the state. With a March 1989 amendment to the 1974 constitution, it was stated that changes in the Federal Constitution would mean changes in the republics' constitutions as well. In the 1989 amendments to the Constitution of Serbia (the official journal of the SRS, no. 11/89), the earlier article 300 was replaced by stating that provincial assemblies right to veto would have to be considered by the Assembly of Serbia. The provincial assemblies could request changes, and if it were to be denied by Serbia's Assembly, a six month period would have to transpire before requesting a referendum to be organized by it. These changes were consented to by Vojvodina's Assembly in February and by Kosovo's in

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<sup>62</sup> Krstić-Brano, 42.

March of 1989. The vast majority of the delegates voted in favor (180), with ten against, and two abstentions.

It deserves to be mentioned that it took fourteen years for Serbia's right as a state to become equal to those of the other nations of the SFRY, insofar as being able to function as fully self-managing republic.<sup>63</sup> It was not surprising, therefore, to observe other states drafting up their own constitutions in light of these recent changes in 1988.<sup>64</sup> Slovenia and Croatia decided to prepare to leave the SFRY, and seceded on June 25th, 1991. Slovenia's constitution as an independent state was publicized on December 23rd, 1991, while Croatia's was passed on December 22nd, 1990. The remaining four republics that had stated were in favor of retaining Yugoslavia re-worded their constitutions to appropriate the changes within the federal constitution. Serbia's September 28th, 1990 constitution repeated that it was a republic which comprised an integral part of the SFR of Yugoslavia (The official journal of the republic of Serbia, no. 1/90). The province of Kosovo reverted to its original name, Kosovo and Metohija. The powers previously given to the autonomous provinces were taken away, with the National Assembly of Serbia holding legislative, its government the executive, and its Supreme Court the judicial authorities. The provinces now had to have previous approval of the National Assembly to create changes, while their branches of government were within it, and the Executive Council.

Looking back on the first two decades of SFRY, its federal constitution was relatively stable. The first significant changes occurred near the end of the 1960's, and further with the changes enacted in the 1974 constitution. Between the years of 1968 and 1974, the province of Kosovo began to assume powers that would normally belong to a republic, while at the same time remaining a part of Serbia. With the change of the constitution at the end of the 1960's, the population of the province begins to increase dramatically.

Between 1946 and 1974, three constitutions were adopted, and three essential constitutional changes being made. By contrast, over the next fifteen years virtually no

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<sup>63</sup> Branislav Krstić-Brano, *Kosovo: Facing the Course of History*. (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 44.

<sup>64</sup> Jieli Li, "State Fragmentation: Toward a Theoretical Understanding of the Territorial Power of the State," *Sociological Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (July 2002), 150.

significant changes to the constitution occurred. The end result of the creation of the state was completely different from the basis of its creation in 1943. The reason behind the creating of Kosovo and Metohija as a separate region was summarized by Đilas, who had stated that the original postwar plan included the possibility of Albania joining Yugoslavia.<sup>65</sup> After the falling out with Albania, changes were made to reflect its position, such as transforming it into a province within the framework of Yugoslavia in which ethnic Albanians were considered Yugoslav citizens with Yugoslav rights.

After 1968, however, the minor constitutional of earlier years, along with the more efficiently enacted constitutional transformations basically led to a shift of essential powers of the state to the discretion of the province, practically eliminating the state's power in a part of its own republic. Serbia's fear therefore was that, despite the fact that rights were transferred to all citizens of the province, the Albanians were dominant in Kosovo, and by holding powers equal to that of the National Assembly, their new-found powers would be abused to the discretion of their own ethnic population. With the Provincial Assembly now holding the powers of usually exclusive to a state, the possibility that it would attempt to create a Kosovo republic was not impossible to predict, thus depriving Serbia of its historical, cultural and political roots.

It is herewith necessary to restate that the establishment of the province of Kosovo and Metohija was not done so in order to realize the rights of the Albanian national minority's rights within Yugoslavia. To further validate this, the rights of the Hungarian minorities living in Vojvodina are rarely called as a justification for that province's hypothetical desire for independence, especially poignant when one considers that they were once more numerous on the territories of Serbia than Albanians were. No refashioning of the constitution was ever initiated or carried out by top political leadership of province of Vojvodina.

Taking this position a step further, one would realize that Albanians as an ethnic minority are not limited to Kosovo and Metohija. A large part of Albanian Diaspora also lives in Montenegro, while its largest numbers are present in Macedonia-moreover; they make up a larger percentage of the Macedonian overall population than they do in Serbia (19.7% against 14% in 1981). There cannot be two different perspectives on the rights of

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<sup>65</sup> Krstić-Brano, 46.

the same national community, particularly dependent upon where exactly they live-while in Macedonia and Montenegro they are considered minority communities, within the territory of Serbia they have the rights of constitutive nations. This created grounds for the Albanian community's rights to be linked to Kosovo. The fact that the ethnic minority's national state is right next door eventually opens up the question for secession in the future. The number of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo and Metohija leaving the region after the 1960's increased threefold, and then fourfold, compared to the numbers from 1951-1960. It is necessary to look at the percentage in relation to the population to grasp the situation fairly. No conclusions were being made about the fact that up till 1960, four Serbs and Montenegrins left a year as compared to one newcomer, while from 1971 to 1980, that gap increased to twelve compared to one.<sup>66</sup> Almost half of the Slavic population ended up leaving Kosovo and Metohija. It would be naïve to assume that they had left for economic reasons, since that the area was rich in soil and minerals. The privileged families were the first to leave, followed by those from urban areas, creating a trickle-down effect. These migrations were described as 'departures under pressure,' and were noted in the media, in reports and petitions.<sup>67</sup> The forms of manipulation in order to persuade the Slavic peoples to leave their homes included threats, harassment, attacks-including rape, defiling of graveyards, burning of crops and killing of livestock, lack of protection from authorities and a general creation of hostile atmosphere and insecurity, with no sign from the powers of intention to stop it. With the transformation of the Albanian political structures from the old League of Communists into one whose drive was to push for an Albanian national movement, radicalization ensued of political trends in Serbia as well.

The jump in the numbers of the Albanian population in one period of time was highest between 1961 and 1971, whereas the highest drop in Serbian population occurred

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<sup>66</sup> Branislav Krstić-Brano, *Kosovo: Facing the Course of History*. (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 48.

<sup>67</sup> Bette Denich, "Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide" *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (May 1994), 371.

from 1961 to 1981.<sup>68</sup> This is significant in recognition of the evolution of the fragmentation of ancient borderlines between Christianity and Islam.<sup>69</sup>

Another essential change to note is the change of the population growths-although moderate levels were witnessed during the 1950's, the 1960's and 1970's were an entirely different matter. The 25.8% and 24.5% population increases finally became more moderate in the 1980's when they went down to 21%. This is accounted for by the extremely high rate of growth of almost exclusively the Albanian population. Data shows that live births of Serbs declined by three times, while that of Albanians by less than a half. The death rates of Serbs was cut in half, while for Albanians, it was by five. Since a drop in mortality includes a lower birth rate, this would not be seen as shocking an outcome if one did not overlook the fact that the Albanian death rates decreased by a factor of 5.7, but the birth rates only by a factor of 1.7. One must take into account that there has been a huge reduction of the younger Serbian population, seeing that its death rate grew higher than that of the Albanians since the 1980's. A comparison of the death rates of Albanians in Kosovo with the population of neighboring Albania shows that those in Albanian proper have witnessed a lower death rate along with fewer births, and thus, a drop in overall population increase. In contrast, the death rates in Kosovo have fallen more than in Albania, but the rate of birth is far greater.

The pattern has seen a reverse since 1961-the province has been developing more (industrialization is usually followed by a decline in birth rate), yet the size and numbers of households have increased. Take for example the average Albanian household in 1961, 1981, and 1991: 7.02, 7.69, and 7.51. A Serbian household according to those dates held on average 4.74, 4.62, and 4.51.<sup>70</sup>

The size of the average Albanian household in Kosovo and Metohija not only shows inconsistencies in comparison with the populations of the rest of Yugoslavia, it also differs from the size of a household in Albania proper. With the development of Albania, the size of families has shrunk as well. Thus, it is remarkable to hear the

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<sup>68</sup> Patrick, F. R. Artisien, "A Note on Kosovo and the Future of Yugoslav-Albanian Relations: A Balkan Perspective," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 36., No. 2 (April 1984), 269.

<sup>69</sup> Alexander Agadjanian, "Revising Pandora's Gifts: Religious and National Identity in the Post-Soviet Societal Fabric," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (May 2001): 484.

<sup>70</sup> Branislav Krstić-Brano, *Kosovo: Facing the Course of History*. (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 96-106.

testaments of foreigners who advocate more rights for Albanians in Kosovo who refuse to acknowledge the social aspects of the situation in an area whose population density has doubled, but disproportionately so between Serbs and Albanians.

They do not take into account that, of the nationalities in Yugoslavia, the Kosovo Albanians have the fewest mixed marriages. They have made the smallest attempts at assimilating in the country in which they live, by refusing to learn the language, by attending separate schools, and by migrating less to other regions in comparison with other minorities. This self-imposed isolation can be reflected as a sign of intolerance of other communities.<sup>71</sup>

It is also essential to treat the change in population as both 'high'-meaning a natural increase in population greater than 20%, as well as 'long'-lasting three quarters of a century. These two factors are rarely acknowledged together. More importantly, an ethnic homogenization began to take place in Kosovo. Whereas the 1961 census showed that settlements had existed where Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Roma, Turks, Croats and others had lived together, by 1981 they had disappeared. We can conclude that once the Albanian population grew to a certain size, the Slavic population was emptied out of the region. The province has moved towards becoming an ethnic territory. The fact that coexistence of ethnic communities-not merely living in harmony, but even existing at all-has become an exception as opposed to the norm is alarming in this day and age. These divisions, created on the base of ethnicity, are occurring on the lines of both religion and language. Two peoples, rather than living in a civilized fashion collectively, have completely grown apart as segregated communities. Settlements are now fully divided into 'ours' and 'theirs,' occurring in the span of just two decades. This manner of emptying out settlements on the basis of ethnicity is comparable to that occurring during the conditions of war during the 1940's.<sup>72</sup>

Therefore, it is necessary to perceive relations in Kosovo and Metohija as a civilizational crisis.<sup>73</sup> Because of the alterations in the settlements of Kosovo and

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<sup>71</sup> Branislav Krstić-Brano, *Kosovo: Facing the Course of History*. (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 116.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 224.

<sup>73</sup> Interestingly enough, the same argument for Armenia is offered in Ronald G. Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 192-193.

Metohija, the province is reflecting ethnic segregation. It is not occurring purely out of demographic expansion of the Albanians into Kosovo, it is also a result of the Serbian population emigrating under various types of pressure by Albanians. A third conclusive factor would be the further migration of Albanians leaving Albania for Kosovo.

Two interrelated trends include the expansion of the population over territories, and the increasing number of Kosovo Albanians who have become property owners. Obviously land is a finite variable. Although one population could double itself over twenty five years, and another could drop substantially, the amount of land cannot grow or shrink. The right to land is not endowed by population numbers. For the purposes of this study, land ownership is more important than the population numbers. Simply considering the fact that Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija are predominant in numbers is not an exceptional feature. Kosovo is historically a Serbian land, and it should not be forced to renounce its own heritage.

Until the breakup of the federation, however, all issues-provincial, state and federal-were a matter of concern of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia; whereas in 1940, the attitude towards Kosovo and Metohija was looked upon as a separate unit outside of Serbia.

This stance was used again in the 1974, when the legislative, executive and judicial authorities over Kosovo and Metohija, as well as of Vojvodina, were stripped away from Serbia. Interestingly, although the Albanian leaders took advantage of this change in the constitution as an opportunity to take control over the province, the partially Hungarian leadership in Vojvodina did not, even after the federal system disintegrated.

The 1974 constitution provided an opportunity for peoples to attempt independence on what they saw as their own territory, not only legally but ideologically as well. Accordingly, the nation, and consequently republics and provinces, was now a principle of constituting a state, defining citizens first as belonging to a nation-republic, and subsequently as individuals living in it. The claim was made that nations were allowed their own nationalities, and with the province having the same essential powers as a republic. The obvious conclusion would lead to dividing the country on the principle of nation-state. The de-centralization of the federal government in 1974 opened the door

for self-managing democratic socialism with the rule of nation-states. The dominant role of the Serbian leadership in the ‘revolution’ was being replaced by Albanian political leaders, who relied on their own nationality. The democratic rights of citizens were not at the forefront of their plans. The idea of a Kosovo Republic was beginning to take shape, and has over the past two decades grown into the view that it was a natural right. The homogenization of the Albanian community was already prevalent in political groups. Being a part of a unified federalist republic or Communist Party had lost its meaning.

The late 1980’s were characterized by revolts of Serbs living in Kosovo which were created by their own grasp of national consciousness, and in which they felt that Serbia was backing them. Manifestations of nationalism had previously been strictly denounced—it is assumingly the reason why Aleksandar Ranković’s party had been prevented from running the state back in 1966.<sup>74</sup> Several major cultural and political figures in Serbia who had been critical of state ideology in national politics, such as Dobrica Ćosić and Jovan Marjanović had earlier been condemned for their views.

According to Ćosić, writer and future politician, the primitive feelings of Serbianism, which included myths of history and a search for religion, were starting to come back to life.<sup>75</sup> To the Serbs, Kosovo and Metohija (like Jerusalem for the Jews) were both ancient and irreplaceable Serbian territories, and much of this is tied to the witnessing that its Christian Orthodoxy had sprung its roots there. The depth to which the Islamicized Albanian population identified with Turkish rule, however, was miscalculated.<sup>76</sup> It is because of identification with Islamic populations, specifically in Albania and in Bosnia, that the process of liberating the Balkans from Turkish occupiers was not a necessarily unifying process. Seeking further explanations from the past, it is because of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia which did not immediately take charge of rehabilitating Kosovo and Metohija as its rightful ancient land, along with the failure of the attempted Convention on Resettlement with Turkey, leading into the Albanian question remaining on the table.

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<sup>74</sup> Artisien cites Ranković’s dismissal as the time that relations began to open up between Albania and Yugoslavia again, 267.

<sup>75</sup> To learn more about the role of intellectuals and nationalism in Serbia, see Nicholas Miler’s “The Nonconformists: Dobrica Ćosić and Mića Popović Envision Serbia.”

<sup>76</sup> The same can be said for Azerbaijan, See Ronald G. Suny, “Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations,” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (December 2001), 877.

When the Second World War began, Italy and Germany were the new occupiers of Serbian lands. Since Albania was on the Axis side of the war, the idea of ‘Greater Albania’ was again visualized as Kosovo and Metohija were once more partitioned.

A landmark document from 1988 titled “The Immediate Tasks of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia” finally acknowledged the severity of the situation for Serbs in Kosovo who were exposed to pressure from Albanian nationalists, and acknowledged the danger that separatism represented for Yugoslavia as a whole. This was a political document that stated that the Central Committee believed the migration of Serbs should be halted, and that those who had left must return in order for the situation to become normalized, as well as to prevent a counterrevolutionary, ethnically cleansed Kosovo from becoming a reality.

When the new 1990 constitution passed, and the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina had been restored to the Republic of Serbia’s authority, articles 108 through 112 insisted upon the maintenance of regional and local authorities within the provinces so as to ensure their autonomy. With the reintegration of historic lands within the constitutional framework of Serbia, the expected result was to be a return of its population to the region, as well as halting its out-migration.

This naturally left Albanians feeling deprived of their autonomy. It is hard to understand why the government of Serbia did not automatically address the concern that the leaders of Albanian political parties refused to recognize the 1990 constitutional system of Serbia. It is likely that Serbia was preoccupied with other pressing matters, such as the wars that were being ravaged to its west. After the election of the democratic Yugoslav government and its president, Dobrica Ćosić, in 1992 and 1993 respectively, conditions were created in order to address the problem of Serbian-Albanian relations in Kosovo. Both the president and government of Kosovo, however, were removed from office after a falling-out with Milošević. The Albanian authorities of Kosovo then turned to the army and security forces. Emergency administration was introduced by the government of Serbia in most areas of Kosovo, and along with it came acts of repression. At this point, not only was the Serbian side compromised, but the Albanian side continued to stay strong.

It was to be expected that unless a solution was created, the Albanian separatist movement would eventually become an armed radical effort realized by the predominantly young, poor and unemployed population. Serbia had already become an international pariah by the Western dominated media who portrayed it as villainous state aimed at eliminating ethnic heterogeneity, despite Serbia's insistence on defending its original motives of protecting its populations outside of the state. The government calculated that it would have no support from the international community were it to enter another armed clash within its own borders. The conflict was put on hold for the time being, even while dénouement became imminent.

In 1981, the Albanian political formations were beginning to see a solution to their Serbian-Albanian relations in the province in the formation of an 'independent State of Kosovo.' The Albanian authorities were pursuing a two-dimensional policy by managing events on both a nationalist and a Yugoslav level. This led to tense incidents such as the March demonstrations by Albanian students and workers in Priština, soon spreading to other towns. A state of emergency was then imposed by the Federal Assembly, which was lifted in January of 1983.

Rather than assessing the situation for what it was-a movement of nationalism with the intention of separatism-the governments of both Serbia and Yugoslavia denounced the acts of Albanians in Kosovo as counterrevolutionary. This allowed the Albanian opposition parties to stifle the old party nomenclature, and to begin their evolution into a resilient and homogeneous national movement. The development of the Albanian national conscience doubtlessly assisted in this progression. It also led to the tying connections of national movements of Albanians in Kosovo to Albanians in Albania, signifying a problem of growing concern for the Balkans as a whole.<sup>77</sup>

The conditions were ripe for Albanians to declare secession from Serbia, and so they did by adopting a Constitutional Declaration of Independence in July of 1990. Since the autonomous territory held essentially the characteristics of a republic, and seeing that they held an absolute majority in its legislation, the Albanian delegates continued in their pursuit when they met secretly on August 7th when they proclaimed their republic and

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<sup>77</sup> Stephen M. Saideman, "Discrimination in International Relations: Analyzing External Support for Ethnic Groups," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2002), 32.

the adoption of their July Constitution. The basis of their republic was formed on ethnic principles. During the 1991 Coordinating Council of Albanian political parties, it was determined that were Yugoslavia's external borders to be changed, a general vote would be held by Albanians in Yugoslavia on territorial unification with Albania. This would thus create an integrated Albanian state in the Balkans on the foundation of ethnic ties. T

The Assembly of Serbia's reaction towards the disregard of its constitutional system within its own territory was the dissolution of the Provincial Assembly, as well as letting go those civil servants who refused to enforce the laws. The Albanian side responded by beginning to implement its own laws. What ensued included protests, company strikes, the refusal to study Serbian curricula in the schools, as well as a boycott of elections on republican, provincial and municipal levels.

The Albanian political parties were creating a situation in which their demands for an independent republic would be regarded as a desire in safeguarding their human and civil rights. It is important to recall that efforts at secession could be traced back to the 1968 demonstrations and the 1981 rebellions, during political phases in which they had essentially ruled the province, and had not been motivated by the supposed restrictions of their rights.

During the 1970s, the policies pursued by Albanian separatists flourished in the establishment of a sort of 'parallel administration' whereby it was relatively self-organized. They had the support of great powers, as well as the contributions of an economically lucrative Diaspora that generously donated to their nationalist movement. The great powers' opinion on the Albanian minority movement aspirations was hesitant. Because Kosovo is part of sovereign Serbia, they could not play a mediating role like they did with the ethnic conflicts of Croatia and Bosnia. At the same time, they demonstrated a high degree of tolerance for the demands put forth by the Albanians, and the U.S. had shown special interest in the status of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo due to their increasingly powerful lobbying efforts in U.S. political circles and administration.<sup>78</sup>

The significance of the Albanian populated territories during the Cold War as an area of geopolitical and strategic importance helps grasp the U.S. attitudes towards this

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<sup>78</sup> This achieved culmination in early 2008 when the U.S. recognized the illegal and nonexistent republic of Kosovo

corner of the Balkans, considering Albania's switch of alliances from the Soviet Union and then to China. The number of combined Albanians in the Balkans exceeds the population of several Balkan nations. A disgruntled group of that size can obviously be interpreted as a source of concern for the region's stability.

In order for Serbia to re-establish authority on its sovereign territory, it introduced certain repressive measures, while the Albanian community simultaneously created their own unconstitutional administration. A territorial war was unnecessary since the territories were Serbia's own, and the Albanian political formations would not dare start it without the support of external powers. Locked in the desire to satisfy their constituents, neither the Serbian government nor the leaders of the Albanian minorities demonstrated any desire to seek a compromise. In reality, no compromise can ever be made when both sides claim the entire territory. Assigning rights to one group would be the revoking of rights of the other. Making an already complicated situation even more complex, the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany and other major powers had been removed Yugoslavia's seat in the United Nations, imposed sanctions and threatened military invasion, thereby gaining the exact opposite of their supposed intentions of politically democratizing the country. What occurred in reaction was a Serbian government that was moving in the direction towards authoritarianism and extremism in its efforts at self-protection of its borders and citizens.

In order for Serbia to democratically transform, a solution has to be reached on relations in Kosovo, without which stability in the Balkans appears unlikely. The existence of secessionism and extreme nationalism are the building blocks of national ideologies. At their core, they also represent the barrier between the Christian and Islamic populations.

Kosovo and Metohija has played many roles in the twentieth century, and relatively few have been favorable for the Serbs. The solution to Serbian and Albanian questions in Kosovo will also represent a precedent in the relationship between the Macedonians and their own Albanian constituents. As an independent republic, it opens the door to a dangerous breeding ground for violence. Any changes that might be instituted would be not only legal and territorial, but civilizational, because they would be founded on the grounds of religion, culture and ethnicity. Bearing in mind that the

features of the Serbian theocratic state were monasteries, which had their foundations in Kosovo and Metohija, an Islamicized Kosovo would destroy any remnants of that history.

A new low point in relations occurred in February of 1998 when the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) units finally entered into open armed conflict with police units in Drenica (in Metohija). Then U.S. envoy to the Balkans Robert Gelbard arrived for talks with Milošević on the 23rd, at the time referring to the KLA as a terrorist organization. Serbian security forces launched an offensive in response to the KLA attacks on February 28th. A declaration was adopted in March reaffirming Kosovo and Metohija's territorial integrity as an autonomous territory and its sovereignty within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in addition to recognizing the rights of all minority communities. The autonomy was to be guaranteed by a bicameral assembly which included both citizens and national minorities in both the provinces and in its municipalities.

The international community itself was torn on how it should respond. The United States reprimanded Serbia for the violence going on in Kosovo, while Russia condemned the KLA for the terrorist attacks which led to the increasingly violent situation. Italy and Germany urged for diplomatic pressure designed to break down both parties. A concession was made by introducing economic sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and which were imposed by the Contact Group, which included England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the U.S., as well as the U.N. Security Council. The Contact Group's first stance was to demand a peaceful resolution, signifying that it did not support either a status quo or independence. In its place, the group contended that Kosovo's status should be a return to what it had been during Tito's era. As the violence continued, the Contact Group felt compelled to meet again at a London session on March 9<sup>th</sup> 1998, where the U.S. demanded that the international community back up its rhetoric with action. It decided to impose sanctions on the country by enforcing an arms embargo, denying visas and imposing a moratorium on trade and investment. Serbia had ten days to take measures in order to ease sanctions, such as allowing humanitarian groups to enter Kosovo and the withdrawal of its special police. On March 11th, Belgrade refused to allow international interference into what it considered a domestic concern.

When the Contact Group met again on March 25th in Bonn, it reaffirmed the existing sanctions because of the vagueness of the FRY's actions, which had allowed

humanitarian agencies further access to Kosovo but refused to remove its special police or begin concessions towards a resolution to the crisis. On March 31st, the UN Security Council passed UNSC 1160 which imposed the arms embargo on FRY, but clashes continued to occur. A proposed “Stabilization Package” for Kosovo was set on April 29th, with all members of the group excluding Russia agreeing to freeze FRY foreign assets.

A glimmer of hope appeared in May 1998, when on the 15th, President Milošević met with Rugova. Only days later, however, a military offensive was underway near the Albanian border. The North Atlantic Council decided to increase NATO’s military presence, and on May 28th, it announced it would conduct Partnership for Peace air and ground operations in Albania and Macedonia. UN and OSCE human rights monitors had already been operating in the region while NATO planned its preventive deployments. On June 1st, the OSCE decided it could no longer handle the monitoring of the humanitarian situation because of its continued deterioration. By the end of May, according to a June 4th UN report, there were already about 200 civilian casualties and 42,000 internally displaced persons since February. The June 5th scheduled talk between Milošević and Rugova never happened.

During the Contact Group meeting on June 12th 1998, Madeline Albright, then U.S. Secretary of State, declared that ethnic cleansing was occurring and that it must be stopped. She believed that the conflict threatened the region’s security, and that the time was right to use force. President Chirac of France disagreed, and said that in order for a military intervention to occur they would need the support of both the Contact Group and the UN Security Council-which would be very unlikely without Russia’s backing. UN General Secretary Kofi Annan also shared this view. NATO nevertheless conducted an air power display over Albania and Macedonia as a show of the threat of a military alliance on June 15th. On June 16th, the Russian and Yugoslav governments together pronounced that Serbia would continue talks with Kosovo Albanians, allow the Red Cross and the UN Human Rights Commission access, start negotiating with the OSCE so it might continue human rights monitoring and possibly withdraw security forces, pending on the moves of the KLA. On July 2nd, a UN report showed no progress since the announcement.

By July, the Contact Group realized that sanctions alone would not be enough to pressure the Yugoslav government, and it met again on the 8th to decide on their next step. This step meant to bring in a UN Security Council Resolution to restate their stipulations for a cease-fire, recommencement of negotiations, admittance for humanitarian aid workers and the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Two days earlier the U.S. and Russia had announced that they would form the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission comprising of unarmed diplomats from the Contact Group, OSCE and EU countries. The mission of the KDOM would be to report on the security conditions from non-intrusive observations. U.S. ambassador Gelbert then stated in a July 23rd testimony before the House International Relations Committee that planning for a NATO Military action was nearly complete. The U.S. believed that Yugoslavia had not done enough to meet with any of the Contact Group demands. By August, casualties had only increased, and KDOM was not being given full access to areas of conflict. UN Secretary-General Annan claimed that the FRY forces were adopting a 'scorched earth policy' to some parts of Kosovo. FRY in turn defended itself by stating that they were only responding militarily to KLA terrorist attacks. The international community did not take these justifications seriously, and continued to increase pressure on FRY. NATO began conducting military exercises in Albania. A new negotiating team was created on August 13th with Rugova at its head, and the Security Council demanded that Serbia enter negotiations into an immediate cease-fire. Finally a UN report claimed that the region was headed towards disaster, stating that between April and August of 1998, the number of displaced persons had grown to 230,000.

By early fall of 1998, the international community became concerned that the fighting would continue into the winter, and that the hundreds of thousands of civilians would not have access to food or shelter. The UN Security Council Resolution 1199 was passed on September 23rd as an attempt to avert this catastrophe. It called for both sides to once again implement an immediate cease-fire, and asked for FRY to withdraw forces from Kosovo, in addition to its earlier demands. The U.S. understood the UNSC 1199 as a valid international threat to FRY with the promise of military intervention an obvious response, if the latter did not comply. Russia, on the other hand, interpreted the resolution as a calling to resolve the crisis completely by peaceful and political measures.

On September 28th, twenty civilians died at the hands of Serbian security forces in Gornje Obrinje, for which the UN Secretary General blamed the FRY government, accusing it of backing the violence. Stating that “NATO is prepared to act,” on October 1st and 6th, the U.S. reiterated its stance. Ambassador Holbrooke was sent on behalf of President Clinton to Belgrade to warn the government that serious consequences would be faced if Serbs continued to ignore its warnings. The U.S. also suggested an air campaign in order to force the FRY into submission, but was careful not to include a ground presence. Holbrooke returned to the U.S. satisfied, stating that Belgrade agreed to UNSC 1199. NATO decided to implement two Activation Orders of which the first authorized limited air strikes and the second allowed a longer air campaign. The air strikes would occur within four days if Serbian forces did not conform to their demands. Several steps had to be taken before the October agreement could be put in place. OSCE offered ground personnel to confirm the agreement on the 15th, and NATO and the FRY verified a NATO air agreement to be implemented with OSCE endeavor on the ground. NATO combat planes would be allowed unobstructed airspace of the FRY which would let them observe the events and sustain ground verifiers if need be. Two thousand unarmed verifiers were situated in Kosovo as part of the Kosovo Verification Mission on October 16th. NATO extended its deadline for complete Serb compliance to October 27th, while on October 24th the UNSC 1209 was passed by the UN on the NATO-FRY agreement. About 4,000 Serbian troops were being withdrawn before the NATO deadline expired. Because of this act, the U.S. maintained that FRY was in compliance with UNSC 1199. The threat of the force remained, but it would not have to be implemented at the moment. The ACTORD’s-activation orders-were still to be maintained. NATO also began planning an extraction force which was stationed in Macedonia, to help or evacuate KVM personnel if it became imperative.

Conditions for the refugees and internally displaced persons did not improve significantly, and consequentially some political questions behind the conflict were brought up. One of these questions concerned the jurisdiction of the ICTY. UN Resolution 1207 was passed on November 17<sup>th</sup>, which asked all states to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. It emphasized the lack of effort on the Serbs to arrest warrants who were indicted by The Hague. It was noted on

December 8th that the FRY had still not complied with UNSC 1207. Another issue was the jurisdiction of the KVM and the NATO Extraction Force. The KVM was meant to have access to all of Kosovo, but on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, FRY rejected attempts by the international community to influence its domestic affairs. Milošević also stated in December that Serbia would never give up Kosovo, nor allow foreign troops on its soil, including the NATO Extraction Force. On December 17<sup>th</sup>, NATO proclaimed that it would continue with the Extraction Force deployment in Macedonia and its air verification procedure.

As the violence increased in December 1998, the international community became more and more worried. In violation of the October agreement, some Serbian security units began to return to Kosovo. January 1999 represented a turning point when on the 9<sup>th</sup> a KLA ambush killed, injured and took prisoner several Serbs. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, 45 civilians were killed in the village of Račak, which the U.S. Ambassador Walker, as head of the KVM mission, claimed was the doing of Serbian forces. ICTY forensic experts were denied access by Belgrade. Serbian forces then went to Račak where they came under fire by KLA troops. The North Atlantic Council called the Račak killings a gross violation of international law, and cautioned Belgrade, stating that the ACTORD's were still valid. Several prominent members of the alliance were sent to deliver NATO's warning in person to the FRY capital. Serbia claimed that its actions in Račak were done in response to KLA's attacks, and that the KVM was attempting to fool the world in the KLA's name. Belgrade then proclaimed Ambassador Walker as a persona non grata, demanded that he leave the country, and reiterated that the ICTY lacked jurisdiction in Kosovo and thus would not be granted the right to inspect Račak.

The international community's reaction was unified. The OSCE stood by the KVM findings that the Račak massacre was entirely the Serbs' fault. The UN Security Council concurred, and condemned Belgrade's responses. The United States now declared that Serbia was in violation of the UNSC's 1199, 1203 and 1207.

On January 29th, the Contact Group advised direct negotiations between Serbs and ethnic Albanians under international sponsorship and with Contact Group participation. This would become known as the now infamous Rambouillet negotiations. They were to be held in France beginning on February 6th, lasting one week, with the

possibility of extension by another if the need appeared. NATO brought up the threat of air strikes to make sure the FRY would take part in Rambouillet. Although at first the Serbian reaction was that NATO's stance was one of aggression, on February 4<sup>th</sup> it decided to comply and join in the talks.

Madeline Albright had her own ideas on the possible outcomes of Rambouillet.<sup>79</sup> One was that the Serbs would reject the negotiations and that the KLA would agree to them. In the case of this happening, the NATO air strikes would be launched immediately. Another possibility was that the KLA would reject the accords in which case the international community could not be expected to assist them, and NATO air strikes would not commence. The final prediction would be that if both sides agreed to the negotiations, then the Contact Group could start working on the particulars of the cooperation. If this best-case scenario were to occur, a NATO-led implementation force would be necessary for the talks' success.

These talks represented the first serious political contact between the FRY and the Kosovo Albanians, although the Yugoslavs were still outraged with being forced to comply with what they continued to call a terrorist organization, and which the U.S. itself had described it as, not too long ago up until 1998. During the period from February 6<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the negotiations unraveled with the two parties in question agreeing to maintain the political and military principles that had been set forth by the Contact Group. The idea was that a draft agreement would allow substantial autonomy to the Kosovo Albanians, with the intent of keeping Kosovo within the political framework of Yugoslavia. It also allowed for NATO peacekeeping forces to ensure security of Kosovo Albanians.

In the end, neither side accepted the framework. By the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, it was clear that the KLA delegation would not sign unless the Serbs first agreed to allow the NATO peacekeeping forces. It was this part of the Rambouillet agreement that the Serbs could not allow-NATO-led military forces on their soil.

This left the Contact Group in a predicament. It could not begin the air strikes against the FRY unless the KLA would back the position held by the Contact Group. For

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<sup>79</sup> Mike Weller, "The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* Vo. 75, No. 2 (April 1999), 233.

the next three weeks, the Contact Group bided its time until it could gather support from the KLA. NATO meanwhile reaffirmed to Belgrade that if the latter began a military offensive on Kosovo, it would be responded to with substantial air strikes. With this thought in mind, the U.S. began to estimate the amount of troops that would be required from its nation, approximating the number to be in the range of 4,000 to 7,000 out of the recommended 25,000 to 50,000 total NATO troops to be deployed in Kosovo. President Clinton, in an effort to smooth out internal opposition in Congress, repeated that U.S. troops would not be involved in active combat. With that in mind, the House of Representatives passed a resolution that would allow the U.S. participation in a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, as long as the troops would be involved in a non-combative environment.

On March 15th, the ethnic Albanians ended up agreeing to both parts of the Rambouillet agreement, but the Serbs still steadfastly refused to allow NATO forces into their country. Instead, the government authorized for both military and special police to enter into Kosovo to protect the few Serbs that had not yet fled the area. The March 15th session in Paris was cut off after four days, and Ambassador Holbrooke left Belgrade after another two days of failed negotiation, during which he pleaded that the Serbs sign the Rambouillet agreement. The U.S. Senate meanwhile decided to authorize a resolution on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, which would allow the president to allow military air strikes and missile attacks against the FRY. The British and French governments also agreed to allow the NATO threat to become a reality.

‘Operation Allied Force’ began on March 24th, 1999. It had three goals. One of them was to show the power of NATO’s combined force. Another was an attempt to stop the escalation of violence against Kosovo civilians. The third was to demolish the Serbs’ military capacity.<sup>80</sup> The first step of the bombing campaign, however, was intended to destroy the FRY air defense system. NATO’s hopes that Serbia would give in relatively quickly dashed as a predicted two to three day campaign gave way to a war of attrition. Western relations became strained with Russia and China early on. President Yeltsin cut off military cooperation with NATO and even asked for Russia’s prime minister to turn

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<sup>80</sup> Ivo H. Daalder. and Michael E. O’Hanlon, “Unlearning the Lessons of Kosovo.” *Foreign Policy*, No. 116 (Autumn 1999), 130.

his jet around, as it was en route to the U.S. in a move to urge the Security Council to end the conflict. China sided with Russia. Only 3 of the 15 members of the Security Council disagreed with NATO's move, inciting the U.S. to attempt to explain NATO's reasoning to the world.

The NATO air campaign soon grew into its 'phase two' whose targets included bridges, rail lines, military fuel supplies and ammunition depots. The U.S. and Britain were the most insistent on expanding the target lists beyond its initial 'phase one.' At one point, the FRY shot down a U.S. F-117, but its pilot was soon saved.

Critics and supporters alike drew international attention towards the complexity of the NATO air campaign. Some believed that the mission would be impossible to fulfill without ground troops. People who shared the view of Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) were convinced that NATO should begin to actively prepare for Kosovo occupation and attack the FRY government infrastructure. NATO leaders responded that the air campaign was becoming more effective, and emphasized that it was becoming successful in achieving its goals with a minimal loss of life.

While NATO member countries increased their border troop presence and strike aircraft, Serbian forces continued to fight back. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, they captured three U.S. soldiers who were caught at the border and announced that they would be criminally prosecuted. The U.S. government claimed that to do so would be against international law. On the Russian side, the Duma argued that if NATO was likely to go to war over internal affairs in Kosovo, that it might do the same to other countries. As a sign of protest, Russia cancelled future plans of the START II nuclear arms treaty.

NATO's targets continued to hit both FRY military infrastructure and troops in the field. The organization also increased its ground presence in bordering states by approving Operation Allied Harbor to help relief agencies handle the growing number of refugees exiting Kosovo.

During the month of April, NATO ran into another set of problems from which it could not escape. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, a bomber a passenger train, and on the 13<sup>th</sup>, a pilot attacked a civilian convoy. In both instances there were dozens of civilian casualties. Arguments over NATO's strategy ensued, specifically over its minimum air range, which made it difficult to identify targets. Concerns over the future of the stability of the region also

loomed heavy on the NATO strategists. The U.S. administration was adamant in its insistence that NATO presence would be necessary to ensure safety in the Balkans. It also believed that only in a democratic Serbia could stability be ensured with far more assurance than if Kosovo were to be divided into Serbian and ethnic Albanian entities.

Congressional approval of an additional \$6 billion as supplemental funding for the air campaign and refugee relief, appeared as if confirmation that what had started out intending to last only a couple of days had no visible sign of ending anytime soon.

Several important events unfolded at NATO's 50th anniversary summit. A new group of former communist countries had entered the organization, giving renewed support for the bombing campaign. Rumors over an upcoming ground deployment in Kosovo circled in the meetings, but were quickly dispelled. NATO remained undeterred from its stance that the only way ground troops would enter would be as peacekeepers, and nothing else.

With the anniversary summit behind them, the NATO alliance upped its campaign a notch by targeting more military and non-military units. The hitting of the Yugoslav national television building was one of the most controversial moves on NATO's part, as well as its refusal to apologize for the ensuing deaths of civilian workers who were trapped in its ruins.

Meanwhile in the United States, there were mixed opinions on possible resolutions. Arguments flared over possible resolutions concerning the entrance of ground troops, declaring war and even debate over granting authority to the president to by any means necessary. In the international arena, Russia seemed to once again be on board at the May 6<sup>th</sup> G-8 meeting, even agreeing on becoming a part of the peacekeeping force, something it had steadfastly refused to offer in the past.

In May, three important events occurred that kept international diplomats busy. The first was the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. The second was preoccupation with the eventual end of the Kosovo campaign, and the third was the ICTY's indictment of president Milošević.

The May 8<sup>th</sup> bombing of the Chinese embassy had messy repercussions for the United States. Chinese protests and rioting in Beijing in front of the U.S. embassy were just some of the implications, but what was more disturbing was how this might affect the

Chinese vote as one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Veto power from any of the five permanent members would be enough to overturn any sort of resolution that might be put on the table. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, however, Serbia stated it would remove half of its troops and special police units outside of Kosovo. Over the next several days, the possibility appeared that the air campaigns might be put on pause as FRY began to comply with NATO's demands. This was not to be. NATO reiterated that only when ALL of the G-8 demands were met, would the air strikes stop.

The implications of Milošević's May 27<sup>th</sup> charge on crimes against humanity (and those of four other Serbian leaders) were two-fold. These indictments allowed NATO countries to feel as if the air campaign was legitimized, particularly in those that had held more passive opinions since its beginning. The second was a reinforced opinion that the only path towards democracy in Serbia would be one without Milošević.

On May 29<sup>th</sup>, the FRY declared that it accepted the 'general principles' of the G-8 initiative. Although NATO recognized this as a step towards the right direction, it wanted verification that Serbian forces would leave Kosovo and allow international peacekeeping forces in. Until this happened, the air campaign would continue.

A month earlier, the FRY had filed a motion with the International Court of Justice to accuse NATO's air campaign as a crime against humanity by violating international law. By June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Court would dismiss the case, stating that it did not have jurisdiction, since the United States was not a consenting participant of the ICJ. The next day, after a meeting with Moscow's representative in Belgrade indicated that G-8 had the backing of Russia, FRY accepted the peace plan unconditionally. A phased withdrawal of Serbia's forces took nearly a week, during which time the air campaign continued to inflict damage. The Military Technical Agreement of June 9<sup>th</sup> divided Kosovo into three separate enclaves and created a schedule which Serbian troops were to follow by leaving those areas and allowing KFOR troops to replace them. A 25 km air and a 5 km ground safety zone were created as well. The G-8 plan was being prepared simultaneously to include a draft resolution for the UN. This was done so that Serbia would accept peacekeeping forces for KFOR under the auspices of the United Nations rather than NATO. On June 10<sup>th</sup>, UN Security Council Resolution 1244 was passed, allowing a security presence in Kosovo with participation for NATO. While Serbian

forces withdrew from the area, KFOR deployment began to enter Kosovo, and the NATO air strikes were finally suspended. The final approximated number of KFOR troops would be 50,000, with the U.S. contributing 7,000 soldiers. All troops were to be under NATO command, which meant that Russian soldiers would not be able to administer themselves. Russian troops ended up working both under NATO command and under the orders of the Russian government.

June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999 signified the birth of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, sponsored by the European Union and other participating nations. The idea was to design a series of diplomatic and economic proposals in order to lessen the regional tension, to promote democratization, to incite economic reform and investment, as well as to help fund the enormous cost of reconstruction. Most of the funds pledged for this endeavor came from European nations. Reconstruction aid, however, would not be handed out while Milošević remained in power.

When Milošević was ousted from power in October 2000, the new president Vojislav Koštunica-considered a favorable leader by the West for his lack of involvement in political parties-announced Yugoslavia's desire to progress diplomatically and eventually join the European Union. The following month, the country rejoined both the United Nations and the OSCE. In January of 2001, Yugoslavia and Albania re-establish relations that had been previously broken off in 1999. In April, Milošević was arrested on the charge of war crimes, and in November, Rugova became the president of Kosovo. Political chaos continued to ravage the country, however, as many top politicians were arrested for war crimes, while others, such as Serbia's Prime Minister, are assassinated. By defeating his top nationalist opponent in a run off of the presidential elections in June 2004, today's president Boris Tadić continues to pledge support for the territorial integrity of Kosovo, while simultaneously working towards establishing the country's legitimacy for the international community. The name of the country "Yugoslavia" is forever relegated to history in 2003 with the replacement 'Serbia and Montenegro,' although there are some who claim that 'the main gravedigger of Yugoslavia was the West.'<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ray Taras and Rajat Ganguly, *Understanding Ethnic Conflict: The International Dimension*, (Longman, 2001), 260.

The two states officially separated in 2006 when Montenegro held a general referendum and, by a close vote, opted for secession in May. That same year, Rugova died of lung cancer in January, and a couple months later, Milošević was found dead in his cell in The Hague while awaiting his trial. Since 2006, heavy negotiations on the future status of Kosovo have continued to be at the forefront of international organizations. Accordingly, nationalism has not disappeared from Serbian politics, and remains influential in assessing the programs of politicians and their parties.

*Lodged between rival empires and faced often with persecution or outright massacre, the Armenians sustained themselves for millennia on the feeling that they were a single, unique people with a common language, religion and historical experience.*<sup>82</sup>

### CHAPTER 3: THE CONFLICT OVER NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Since the earliest of times, Transcaucasia's geographic position as a bridge between continents has made it a crossroads for the movement of migrating peoples. Some of these wanderers eventually settled in the area, while others were merely passing through. Still others had been displaced by warfare or other upheavals. A gradual process of cultural evolution occurred over time, where particular aspects of the migrants' identities, ranging from religion to language and culture, were adopted to varying degrees by the indigenous peoples of Transcaucasia. These have traits made Transcaucasia one of the most ethnically and culturally heterogeneous areas of the world.<sup>83</sup> Regional geography has also influenced the area's historical evolution in another significant way. In light of its strategic location, the Transcaucasus has been coveted continuously by external powers throughout history. Foreigners have eyed the region not only for the potential overland access it offers between Europe and Asia, but also for its position as a buffer zone between rival empires. The historical progression of migration and the intermingling of populations also made it inevitable that surrounding powers would share certain ethno-linguistic or cultural links with the people of Transcaucasia, often causing their interests in the region to transcend imperialistic motives. On countless occasions throughout history, these events have made the Transcaucasus the locus of competition, and often battle, between surrounding powers.

The area has been somewhat of a 'magnet' over the course of time. Situated strategically between Europe and Asia, it has attracted countless waves of human migrants and been the locus of almost continuous expansionism and competition between surrounding states. Inevitably, this reality has had a great impact upon the historical development of the region. In addition to being subjected to centuries of foreign conquest

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<sup>82</sup> Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998): 1.

<sup>83</sup> Ronald G. Suny, "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (December 2001): 863. Van Evera points out that only ex-Yugoslavia has a 'mosaic more tangled and complex' on page 19.

and fragmented internally along ethnic and cultural lines, the peoples of the Transcaucasus have been virtual hostages to external dynamics throughout the region's long history of human habitation. Nation-states in the modern sense did not arise in the area until the early part of the twentieth century; for millennia before that, the region's inhabitants were merely vassals of their larger and more powerful neighbors. Unavoidably, such a state of affairs had a great impact upon the development of perceptions of self-identity and historical experience on the part of the Transcaucasian peoples.

Armenians trace their origins to Indo-European peoples who migrated from modern-day eastern Turkey and Transcaucasia in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. They were distinguished by their common language and identified themselves as a 'unique, identifiable ethno-religious community'<sup>84</sup> upon adopting their own form of Monophysite Christianity in the fourth century AD.<sup>85</sup> Over the course of the next several centuries, the Armenians began to claim a commonality based upon the uniqueness of their religion and language which formed their collective identity, an essential trait for nationalism.<sup>86</sup> Because of Armenia's strategic location, the country was frequently exposed to invasion. This fear of vulnerability has shaped the Armenian national character over the past 2,600 years. Although it had experienced relatively prosperous times during the medieval era and several short periods of unification, for the majority of Armenia's history, the country and its peoples lived under the rule of others.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a mountainous 4,800 square kilometer terrain whose ethnic makeup consisted of 140,000 Armenians and 48,000 Azeris during the later Soviet era.<sup>87</sup> Despite its physical borders being within Azerbaijan, Armenians maintain that Nagorno-Karabakh is historically and culturally a part of Armenia, dating it as part of the foundation of the country seven in the seventh century B.C. In the sixth century B.C., the

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<sup>84</sup> Ronald G. Suny. *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), ?.

<sup>85</sup> Michael P. Croissant. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 4.

<sup>86</sup> Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond "Identity"," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (February 2000), 5.

<sup>87</sup> Michael P. Croissant. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998),10.

area was annexed by the Persians, and Armenia did not gain control of the area until four centuries later.

In 387 A.D., Armenia was partitioned by the Byzantine Empire and the Sassanid Empire of Iran. The area today known as Nagorno-Karabakh had been renamed into a province called Artsakh several centuries earlier, and under the Iranian Empire the name was changed into the Province of [Caucasian] Albania. Armenians living in the now-Iranian province of “Albania” were still able to maintain a certain degree of autonomy, as opposed to those living on the Byzantine side.

After 461 A.D., however, Iran began a campaign of assimilation of the Armenians, despite having previously tolerated its Christianity for a century. A resistance movement was coordinated between the Armenian princes, who were successful in reestablishing autonomy through the early sixth century A.D. Semi-autonomy continued to prevail for the Armenians in Karabakh even while the Arabs took control over the rest of the peoples of Transcaucasia in the seventh century. Nagorno-Karabakh’s sovereignty remained untainted over the next millennia, which Hovannisian elaborates upon: “while the rest of Armenia was submerged under foreign control, a flicker of freedom was maintained in Karabakh.”<sup>88</sup> By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Shah of Persia granted five Armenian princes the recognition as local administrators, and they were given the freedom to mind domestic matters including defense, cultural preservation and taxation. A lack of unity between the Armenian princes led to the weakened control over the area, which made the area vulnerable to invasion by Turkic tribes, who began to enter Karabakh sometime around 1750. This marked a turning point in the region’s history because during the previous seven hundred years, the Turks had only been living in the plains of the Transcaucasus. These Turkish tribes came to call themselves Azerbaijanis, and it is only from this time forward that the Armenians cite Turkish/Azerbaijani presence in the area.

This is a contested viewpoint, not in accordance with that of the Azerbaijanis who maintain that Karabakh has been long been an essential part of their country. The Azeri view is that, of the three major peoples of Caucasia (Armenians, Georgians and

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<sup>88</sup> Richard G. Hovannisian, “Nationalist Ferment in Armenia.” *Freedom at Issue*, No. 105 (November-December 1988), 29.

Albanians) they are the descendents of the ancient Caucasian Albanians. Although the Azeris had initially been adherents of Christianity, they had converted to Islam in the seventh century, and their language became essentially Turkified another four centuries later. Azeris claim that it is the Armenians who forced assimilation of religion, culture and language upon the Albanian inhabitants of Karabakh in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century. They therefore argue that the modern-day Armenians living in Karabakh are actually Armenianized Albanians, i.e., in reality Azerbaijanis. This sort of interpretation, based off of the 1965 monograph by Ziia Buniatov called “Azerbaijan in the Seventh-Ninth Centuries” is, according to Patrick Donabedian, an attempt to deny the legitimacy of the “Armenianness” of Karabakh, and to dismiss it as a myth.<sup>89</sup> Whichever version one might choose as valid, it is important to emphasize that many different ethnic groups lived in the Transcaucasus. The fact that both nations claim historical ties to Nagorno-Karabakh shows that there are strong feelings of nationalism, which often supersede pragmatism, that have led to violent clashes in the area that continue to this day.

In the modern era, the Ottomans and the Russians/Soviets were the most significant foreign powers that helped shape Armenia’s national character. The Ottoman rule happened first, in 1520, and the country remained under its rule for the next 400 years. Armenians lived in relative peace while the empire was still strong, despite being considered second-class citizens and subjugation to special taxes within their own national boundaries. Their skills as artisans and merchants made them vital to the Sultan, but intolerance ensued starting from the seventeenth century. The Turks began to view Armenians as pro-Westerners, and persecuted them because of it, leading to the massacres of 1895-1896. These events were followed by the ‘destruction of Turkish Armenia’ with the forced deportation of Armenians living within the borders of Turkey. Some scholars estimate that these events led to the deaths a million people.<sup>90</sup> This massive-scale genocide, coupled with the lack of expected aid and support from fellow Christian European powers led the Armenian people to feel vulnerable and become self-reliant.

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<sup>89</sup> Van Evera, in pages 26-33, entirely dismisses national myths to the ranks of elite chauvinism, but is fair in noting that ignoring shared historical experiences that have become myths are malignant to the future of states’ relations

<sup>90</sup> Gary K. Bertschand others, *Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, (New York: Rutledge, 2000), 30.

Between the years 1828 and 1878 Russia annexed Armenia. While they were certainly not happy with it, many Armenians welcomed the Russian annexation, as Russia was seen as their hope for protection against Islam (Russia being a fellow Orthodox Christian nation).<sup>91</sup> But with that country's fluctuating policies, Armenia continued to feel insecure. By late nineteenth century, the Armenians had formed a nationalist movement focused on promoting individuality based upon language and religion, while at the same time de-emphasizing cultural and spiritual ties with Russia. The czarist authorities' response was to regard the Armenians as revolutionaries. The Russian government seized Armenian Church properties and closed their schools. The Armenians began to feel that their treatment by the Russian czar was no different than the way it had been under other conquerors, and thus hardened their resolve to maintain their distinctiveness when the czar's policies moved towards Russification.

The contested area of Nagorno-Karabakh is located within the borders of Azerbaijan, therefore the status of the Azeri peoples becomes an important consideration in this study. The Azeris' perception of self-identity is more difficult to pinpoint than that of the Armenians. The Azeris did not have a common language or religion, and their sense of identification developed in accordance with the two powers that had ruled them off and on: Turkey and Iran. The name Azerbaijan itself is a relatively new concept born out of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (the people themselves had previously been labeled Tatars).

The roots of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict can be traced back to the days of the Russian Empire. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, economic and social developments led to a growing division along class lines between the two nationalities. Armenians had been successful in rising to high economic and political positions in the major cities of Transcaucasia. The Azeris, on the other hand, were unable to climb the social ladder as easily, as their population was overwhelmingly poor, unskilled and rural. In response, the rise of Pan-Turkism began to take hold amongst educated Azerbaijanis in the late 1870's, largely due to the czarist Russification policies, and anti-Armenian sentiments began to spread. According to former Armenian leader Levon Ter-Petrossian, this national consciousness of the Azeris was not focused so much against the Russian colonizers as

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<sup>91</sup> Gary K. Bertschand others, *Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, (New York: Rutledge, 2000), 30.

much as against Armenians. The Armenians were not on good terms with Azerbaijanis either, due to the pogroms of 1895-6 and the massacres of 1915-1916 at the hands of the Turkish Empire.<sup>92</sup> Alongside the intensification of the Armenian nationalist movement during the late nineteenth century grew anti-Turkish sentiment and, by default, anti-Azerbaijani as well. The czarist policy of “divide and rule” was created in order to promote jealousy and division amongst neighboring ethnic groups, thus ensuring the monarchy’s firm grip over its territories. The growth of Armenian irredentism also contributed to the rise of Azerbaijani nationalism. The Azeris viewed the Armenians as ‘privileged’ and thus enjoying favoritism from the Russians, in addition to worrying about the Armenians’ claim to what they regarded as ‘rightfully and historically Azerbaijani lands.’ The nationalist movements of both peoples grew side by side in Nagorno-Karabakh.

During the first Russo-Iranian war in 1805, Russia was able to annex Nagorno-Karabakh from Iran. The rest of Armenia, however, was still under Iranian rule until 1826. The Russian Empire also dissolved the five previously existing principalities of Armenia, thus ending Armenia’s tradition of semi-autonomy over Karabakh. Over time, the Russians expanded the geographic area of the mountains to include the plains to the east which were inhabited by the partially nomadic Azeri herders. The growing transportation connections and economy became an important rationalization for the inclusion of the region in the future Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan. There were, of course, other factors that contributed to the importance of Nagorno-Karabakh for the Azeris, such as the fact that many of their celebrated poets, writers and composers came from there, and that their aristocracy had developed in that region as well. The aristocracy pushed for Azerbaijani nationalism in 1905 during a time when Armenians and Azerbaijanis clashed.

Tensions exploded into violence during an incident in 1905 when an Armenian policeman killed an Azeri. For over a month after the event, Azeris rampaged the Armenian quarter of Baku, resulting in the deaths of over 900 Armenians and 600 Azeris. A thousand of the sixteen hundred oil wells were destroyed in the aftermath. Peace

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<sup>92</sup> Graham Usher, “The Fate of Small Nations: The Karabakh Conflict Ten Years Later,” *Middle East Journal*, No. 213, Millennial Middle East: Changing Orders, Shifting Borders (Winter 1999), 20.

returned only through the failure of a revolutionary movement in Russia and order was only somewhat reestablished in 1907.

After the violence the Armenians experienced from the Azerbaijani Turks in 1905, as well as the lack of response from Russia, the Armenians reaffirmed their desire for self-reliance. This sentiment was reflected by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutjun). The ARF felt a need for the autonomy of areas regarded as historically Armenian. Two areas that ‘stirred significant irredentist feelings’ were Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan-both of which were located within the borders of Azerbaijan, and under the governmental rule of Russia.

Because the area holds such significance for both peoples in their national consciousness, it remains a huge dividing point in their modern-day relations. In the spring of 1918, the Turks took advantage of Russia’s pulling out of World War I by attacking eastern Armenia with the assistance of Azerbaijanis, who were collectively referred to as the ‘Army of Islam.’<sup>93</sup> The Armenians were successful in resisting the Turks’ advance. On May 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of 1918, Georgia and Azerbaijan declared their independence, and three days later, Armenia did as well. Although Armenia was able to stop the Turks in one battle, its people were aware that they would not be able to fight them off indefinitely, and thus conceded, losing a part of its territory in the process.

Along with the losses of territory forced by the March 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the beginning of Armenia’s independent experience was not off to a good start. Neither, for that matter, was Azerbaijan’s. Its capital Baku was the location of the “March Days” where Armenians banded together with the Bolsheviks against the pan-Turkic party as revenge for the genocide suffered in 1916 by the Turks. When Ottoman Turkey was finally defeated in October 1918, the situation worsened. Territorial disputes between Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis exploded, with Nagorno-Karabakh at the forefront of all the issues. During the upheavals of 1918 and the ensuing departure of Azerbaijan’s ally, Turkey, in November, Armenia felt that the time was ripe to re-incorporate Nagorno-Karabakh into its borders. This time another international force stepped in to shake things up.

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<sup>93</sup> Michael P. Croissant. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 14.

Great Britain had not been ignorant of the strategic and economic factors connected with a pro-Azerbaijani policy. The combination of access to the oil reserves of Baku and the country's convenient geographic location of Azerbaijan as a barrier against the British colonies of India and in the Middle East provided more than enough of an excuse to support the Azeris over the Armenians. Maintaining Azerbaijan as its ally meant supporting Azerbaijan's position on Nagorno-Karabakh. This came as a slap in the face to the Armenians, who had sided with the Allies during the First World War, and who felt assured that the British would back them up in return on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the Karabakh-Armenians decided that they would resist Azerbaijani sovereignty and fight against them. Violence broke out in August when British soldiers pulled out of Karabakh, and an estimated 600 Armenians were killed.<sup>94</sup> Armenians finally relinquished to a 26-point document, which essentially endowed Baku with authority over Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijanis considered it a national triumph, believing that provisional rule was merely the first step towards lasting power over the region. Armenians, although obviously dissatisfied with having to acquiesce, were convinced that Azerbaijan's administration would be short-lived.

The friction began to loosen up soon afterwards, when several Armenians were chosen to serve on the Nagorno-Karabakh council. However, hostilities did not disappear entirely. With the British gone from the Transcaucasus, the Azerbaijanis felt strong enough to send an ultimatum in February of 1920, demanding that Nagorno Karabakh be incorporated unconditionally into Azerbaijan. Upon rejecting the ultimatum, the Armenians began an uprising in the disputed region on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Azerbaijan moved most of its forces to Nagorno-Karabakh, essentially demolishing the Armenian strongholds there. Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks took advantage of the fact that Azerbaijan's borders were undefended, and entered Baku.

By April 28<sup>th</sup>, Azerbaijan had become the first Soviet Socialist Republic of Transcaucasia. One of the first orders of the new Soviet government of Baku was to demand that Armenian forces leave Karabakh, which the latter was forced to comply. The region became Sovietized by the end of May. On August 10<sup>th</sup>, an agreement was

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 16.

signed between Moscow and Armenia, allowing the Soviets to occupy Karabakh until a final solution could be determined.

In the meantime, however, Armenia found itself at war with Turkey. Losing even more of its territory to Turkey threw Armenia into a political upheaval. The Bolsheviks took advantage of this opportunity as well, and Armenia became a Soviet Socialist Republic on December 1<sup>st</sup>. The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh had now become a Soviet concern. A series of peculiar events unfolded over the next few months, when a telegram was sent out declaring that the border disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan were resolved in Armenia's favor. This move has been interpreted as an effort to gain Armenian favor by portraying the Red Army as its savior. This resolution was refuted by Azerbaijan, with Stalin's backing. The Caucasian Bureau of the Communist Party then decided to again proclaim Karabakh as Armenian territory on June 12<sup>th</sup> of 1921, to which Nariman Narimanov, the Bolshevik leader of Azerbaijan, warned that changing the status of the territory would be construed as anti-Soviet activity. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, with Narimanov and Stalin present, the Bureau decided by a majority vote to transfer Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. The next day, and without explanation, the Bureau's decision was yet again reversed. Scholars have inferred Stalin's decisions in several ways. A major factor of his indecision was assumed by some to be the economic link between Karabakh and eastern Transcaucasia, while others implied it to be the importance of the region's only industrial center (Baku). Croissant maintains that the real reason behind Stalin's backing of Azerbaijan was to uphold his rule of divide-and-rule.<sup>95</sup>

By 1923, the borders were drawn over the "Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh" in a way that it would be physically separated from Armenia. In 1937, the name was yet again changed, to the "Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast". The antagonism between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not end there, and in 1964 and 1965, Armenia tried once again to take up the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh by sending a signed petition to Khrushchev. Neither of these attempts was able to produce the desired results. The next time the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh would come to the Soviet forefront would be in the late 1980's.

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<sup>95</sup> Michael P. Croissant. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 9.

One of the results of Gorbachev's reform policies was the reawakening of nationalism. With the Russian leader's policy of openness, or 'glasnost,' becoming more present in the public arena and in the media, the objections of the previously hushed ethnic groups began to surface. Armenian nationalism began to arise again in 1987, coinciding with the environmentally problematic political situation that exploded.<sup>96</sup> Demonstrations in Yerevan and Stepanakert (the capital of the NKAO) were held by thousands to espouse a peaceful unification between the two majority-Armenian populated areas. An additional petition was signed by some 75,000 Armenians and sent to Gorbachev. Another protest was held in October, this time to declare disapproval of the beating of those NKAO villagers who had objected to the nomination of an Azerbaijani as president of a locality. As the rallies became more and more frequent, passions on both sides became heated. On February 20<sup>th</sup> 1988, the Soviet of People's Deputies of Nagorno-Karabakh passed a 110-17 resolution, asking for the Oblast's reassignment to Armenia. After several days without response from Moscow, a reply finally came the 23<sup>rd</sup>, one that Yerevan had not hoped to hear. The Central Committee reasoned that by revising the existing territorial structure, the only outcome would be harmful to inter-ethnic relations, and thus, denied Armenia's request once again.

In light of Moscow's rejection, mass demonstrations ensued in Yerevan and Stepanakert once more, and Gorbachev felt it was necessary to help smooth out the situation on the 26<sup>th</sup>, by promising to find a 'just solution' to the territorial question. Armenians in turn promised to put mass demonstrations on pause for a month, and for the moment, the Azeris were the only ones holding protests, this time over the killings of two of their youths at the edge of the NKAO. From February 27<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> 1988, violence escalated in Sumgait leading to a death toll of 32, of whom the majority were Armenian victims. After almost 70 years of relative peace, conflict had broken out again.

The first obvious consequence of the Sumgait bloodshed was the number of refugees coming from both Armenia and Azerbaijan, tens of thousands on both sides. Unfortunately, upon leaving areas of ethnic hostility they were only welcomed by unemployment and an unreceptive atmosphere. These refugees would later on become

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<sup>96</sup> Ronald G. Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 196.

the rallying force for future clashes. Another effect of Sumgait was Armenia's realization that Moscow's promises of resolving the Karabakh situation were half-hearted.

According to Article 78 of the Soviet constitution, changing the borders of a U.S.S. republic could not be done without that country's sanction, and Azerbaijan was not about to allow Nagorno-Karabakh to secede on its own. Gorbachev himself, although willing to hear out the complaints of the republics, had no sympathy for separatists, which was exasperating for the Armenian inhabitants of NKAO, because this meant that he would never take their grievances fully to heart. By labeling the growing number of demonstrations in the area as examples of extremism, it became painfully obvious to the Armenians that the Gorbachev regime would not be sensitive to their concerns.

In March of 1988, Gorbachev attempted to appease the Armenians as a consolation for not keeping with his promises for finding a solution to NKAO, by offering an increase in investment approved by the Central Committee and Supreme Soviet in the areas of housing, industry, social services and more media to be available in the Armenian language. Although these steps toward upgrading the quality of life were both desired and appreciated, they weren't enough to placate the Armenian people, nor allow them to disregard the matter at hand, i.e. the growing nationalist movement. The Armenians thereby rejected Gorbachev's proposed reforms in whole, and in doing so, symbolically rejected support for Gorbachev's leadership as well. From there on, they decided to take matters into their own hands by forming a group called the 'Karabakh Committee' in early 1988, which was initially comprised of eleven nationalist intellectuals.<sup>97</sup>

The Karabakh Committee became an opposition to the Armenian Communist Party by default, by adopting a program that was devoted, first and foremost, to re-unifying the NKAO with Armenia proper, along with other programs for democratization and economic reform. The Karabakh Committee became the first viable force to be reckoned with since 1921, and the Armenian Communist Party was slowly forced to share its leadership.

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<sup>97</sup> Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, U.S.A., Transaction Publishers, 2004), 203.

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, after several hours of heated debate, Armenia's Supreme Soviet passed a resolution demanding that the USSR Supreme Soviet approve its annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh, in keeping with the NKAO request of earlier in February. As expected, Azerbaijan's Supreme Soviet reacted two days later with its own resolution, declaring that such a move would be in violation of the Soviet Constitution. Moscow and Gorbachev repeated their earlier response at the Nineteenth Party Congress, stating that any change in its republics' borders would be considered an abuse of glasnost.

The Karabakh Committee ignored both Moscow and Baku, and called for a demonstration at the Yerevan airport, which resulted in the deaths of two as well as over forty injuries at the hands of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs troops. This latest set of events led Armenia to distance itself even further from Moscow.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians made one final attempt at peaceful negotiations through constitutional means by voting on July 12<sup>th</sup> to unilaterally secede from Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan automatically labeled this action as unlawful, and tension kept building, as a general strike was momentarily put on hold by the Karabakh Committee. As both parties anxiously awaited Moscow's response, the Presidium finally reiterated its stance that the NKAO would remain a part of Azerbaijan, while assuring that the development programs would be hastened. Again, the NKAO and Armenia rejected Moscow's directive, and a quiet storm began to brew. In mid-September, a week-long general strike was held in NKAO in light of the recent influx of Azeri refugees from Armenia proper, with the assertion that the strike would not end until they left for Azerbaijan.

Violence broke out in the town of Kholajy on the 18<sup>th</sup>, claiming several lives on both sides. The Soviet's leadership decided to call the area into a state of emergency, and deployed troops to Armenia's capital. In response to the NKAO's year of attempts to reunite with Armenia, Azerbaijani forces began to mobilize for defense of their territory. They were particularly displeased with Moscow's new development plans for Nagorno-Karabakh, which essentially gave Russian officials the authority to administer the programs, believing it to be an encroachment on their sovereignty. The Azeris' growing displeasure with the Communists in Moscow also began to intensify as they began to believe that the USSR leadership was paying too much attention to secessionist claims,

and not enough to upholding territorial integrity, which was clearly indicated by the Soviet constitution. Armenian nationalism itself was particularly worrisome to the Azeris. They began to realize that one way to combat the Armenian nationalist movement was to build up their own nationalist awareness movement. This began to manifest itself between November 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, as hundreds of thousands of Azeris gathered in Baku to demonstrate for issues they believed were of importance to the people, ranging from environmental concerns to corruption amongst local party officials. The focal point of interest was still, of course, that of keeping Nagorno-Karabakh within its borders. These protests became even more intensified when the Supreme Soviet sentenced an Azeri to death for his involvement in the Sumgait clashes of February.

On December 7<sup>th</sup> 1988, however, another destructive occurrence arose, and for once, it was not politically motivated. An earthquake hit northwest Armenia, causing the deaths of a many thousands, and leaving hundreds of thousands of others homeless. Gorbachev arrived to the country to comfort the Armenian citizens, but was only greeted with resentment for the USSR's lack of rescue efforts in the disaster area.<sup>98</sup> The animosity was further exacerbated when the administration decided to arrest the all of the Karabakh Committee leaders and other Armenian activists, on the charges of inciting public disorder. Rather than bowing down to the Soviet leadership, Armenia increased its resistance to its superior, particularly in light of the fact that the arrested were not granted the ability to defend themselves in a trial.

Realizing that he had to act fast to mend relations with Armenia, Gorbachev and the USSR Presidium passed a decree on January 12<sup>th</sup> of 1989 which allowed the NKAO to have 'special administrative status,' essentially putting the region into the hands of a six-person committee that would answer directly to Moscow. The motives behind this move were to satisfy the demands of the Karabakh Armenians who refused to be under the rule of Azerbaijan, while simultaneously assuaging Azeri fears that its borders were being tampered. While both Armenia and Azerbaijan officially approved of this rearrangement of leadership control, the move proved to be unpopular with the masses.

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<sup>98</sup> Ronald G. Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 192-3.

With the more pressing concerns of earthquakes relief efforts, the Armenian peoples' focus temporarily shifted away from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. With the rather slow progress of the recovery efforts dampening their mood, the people once again took to the streets for the independence of Armenians in NKAO. The marking of the anniversary of the Turkish genocide on April 24<sup>th</sup> snowballed into a mass protest with the demand that the Karabakh Committee members be released. Soviet leadership caved in, and liberated them on May 31<sup>st</sup>, even providing for the Committee's legitimacy when it revamped itself the next month as the "Armenian National Movement."

Now as an officially-recognized organization, the ANM's first move was to topple the interim Moscow-led committee that had been administering NKAO since the beginning of 1989. Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians held illicit elections, backed by the ANM, on August 16<sup>th</sup> with the intention of creating a 78 member National Council which would overthrow Moscow's appointees. Armenia's Supreme Soviet responded by passing a resolution the next month which recognized this newly founded National Council as the single and legal representative of the NKAO's Armenian citizens.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan had not remained idle. In March of 1989, the Azerbaijani Popular Front rose to prominence, much like the Karabakh Committee had done a year prior. Its leadership was comprised of a small group of nationalist intellectuals, and like its Armenian counterpart, promoted an agenda calling for greater Azerbaijani sovereignty. Azerbaijan felt that it had given up its lawful command over its own territory when Moscow had stepped in, and in 1988 allowed 'special status' to the NKAO. Gorbachev's appointee Volskiy's leadership was seen as a domestic interference in the republic's governing, and while the Azerbaijani Communist Party continued to support it, the Azerbaijani Popular Front (or APF) grew in popularity despite its existence as a non-authorized political force.

The APF began to organize several industrial strikes in August with the attempt of seeking official sanctioning from the Azerbaijani Communist Party as well as an effort to regain Azerbaijani control over NKAO. Although rather unsuccessful in the beginning, the Front slowly began to illustrate its influence in September when it pulled off a rail blockade of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia almost immediately felt the effects of the blockade, taking into account the need for post-earthquake recovery efforts,

and the fact that the railway communications through Azerbaijan provided some 85% of its fuel and provision needs.<sup>99</sup> The situation predicted the possibility of a crisis in the country, and a high possibility that Armenians would try to even the score.

In October, in reaction to Moscow's finger-wagging over its lack of success at stopping the rail blockade, the Azerbaijani Communist Party unwillingly entered into negotiations with the APF. The APF would agree to end the railway obstruction, while the Communist Party would allow the Front to become a legally recognized organization, and end its support of Moscow's administration over Nagorno-Karabakh. Buoyed by its success, the APF managed to assemble a session of the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet on October 5<sup>th</sup> when a law on the 'sovereignty of the republic' was passed.

This law was to extend Azerbaijani sovereignty to include Nagorno-Karabakh, and, what was even more noteworthy, allowed Azerbaijan the freedom to 'withdraw freely from the USSR,' providing there was popular support for it. This move in effect not only defied Moscow's leadership in Nagorno-Karabakh, but the Soviet system overall. As 1989 drew to a close, Moscow was now facing legitimate and sanctioned highly popular nationalist movements, which threatened the stability of the entire USSR. With the mobilization of troops on both sides of the Transcaucasian borders, the likelihood of violent conflict grew exponentially. Moscow moved to once again intervene politically in the area with the intentions of settling the dispute, and yet again, managed to only inflame rather than pacify the situation.

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, the Supreme Soviet voted on returning NKAO's administration to Azerbaijani rule, by appointing Azeris to once more administer the area. This move was interpreted as a shift to relenting to Azerbaijan's authority yet again. The capitulation was met with rapture in Baku, and the response was anger and offense in Yerevan and Stepanakert. With the ANM as the dominant political force of Armenia, an extraordinary session was called between the Armenian Supreme Soviet and the National Council of Nagorno-Karabakh. The outcome of this meeting was a move towards an even further distancing of relations with Moscow and Baku. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, a 'United Armenian Republic,' comprised of Armenia's Soviet Republic and Nagorno-Karabakh's

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<sup>99</sup> Michael P. Croissant. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 34.

National Council was declared. Azerbaijan automatically condemned the Republic as illicit and the declaration only furthered animosity between the two nations.

A joint session of Armenia's Supreme Soviet and the NKAO's National Council proposed a budget on January 9<sup>th</sup> of 1990 that would, for the first time, include economic aid for Nagorno-Karabakh. The expected response from Azerbaijan's Supreme Soviet was that such an act represented intentional interference within its borders. The Supreme Soviet agreed, and the next day it too passed a resolution that effectively terminated the existence of both the budgetary proposal and the earlier December proclamation of a United Armenia. As Moscow produced nothing to physically implement its own resolution, its actions were perceived as hollow and base-less.

Seeing for themselves that Moscow's resolution proved ineffective, the Azeris took matters into their own hands by attacking three Armenian villages in Nagorno-Karabakh on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Two days later, the violence swelled to the point of breaking out in Baku, thus setting off the so-called "Black January." That same day, a mass demonstration was held in Azerbaijan's capital, protesting Armenia's motives in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the lack of initiative from Moscow and the Azerbaijan Communist Party to prevent them. What set off the violence was the killing of an Azeri at the hands of an Armenian who had defended his family from eviction in Baku. Azerbaijanis rallied together, and later broke off to seek revenge on the Armenian part of the city. Many of the provocateurs were refugees, who were up in arms about their poor living conditions after being expelled from Armenia. Over the next two days, more than 70 people were killed, mainly Armenians, in spite of the 12,000 Soviet troops that had been stationed in Baku. On January 15<sup>th</sup>, Moscow declared a state of emergency in Nagorno-Karabakh and its neighboring areas. Five days later, Baku was also included in this state of emergency, although by then anti-Armenian action had mostly died down. In the meantime, however, an additional 11,000 troops were sent to Baku, and the effects of "Black January" began to intensify. The Soviet special troops entered between January 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and took control over Azerbaijan's capital within 5 hours, during which time telephone and radio lines were cut off, the central television station was demolished, and hundred Azeris were killed, with another thousand wounded.

The outcome of the Moscow-enforced violence was a national day of mourning as decreed by the APF, as well as another call to strike, this time on the Baku harbor. A special night session of the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet was called between January 21st and 22<sup>nd</sup> 1990, ending with a resolution commanding the immediate removal of Soviet troops from the country, as well as threatening secession from the USSR if the soldiers were to remain in place. The Supreme Soviet not only ignored the Azerbaijani resolution, but also arrested several APF leaders, and forcefully ended the Baku harbor blockade. Baku's state of emergency was replaced with a Soviet-troop enforced martial law.

The Soviets' violent actions in Azerbaijan were unsuccessful in eradicating Azerbaijan's nationalist movement. They were, instead, the catalyst in the severing of relations between Moscow and Baku. They were also triumphant in restoring Azerbaijan's Communist Party authority, despite the populace's disillusionment and lack of trust in the party. Moscow also appointed a new First Secretary for the party, Mutalibov, who promptly became aware that in order to gain public support, he would have to coalesce the Azerbaijanis over common issues that ignited their passions. Some of his goals included reestablishing unequivocal authority over Nagorno-Karabakh, the lifting of the state of emergency in Baku, the pulling out of Soviet troops in the country and the removal of "unprincipled" members of the party. It was apparent, however, that the Azerbaijani Communist Party's success in remaining in power was due to the sustained presence of Soviet troops, and as such, in practice, its policies in practice remained in line with Moscow's.

In neighboring Armenia, resentment and disillusion with the Supreme Soviet grew in light of the lack of effort on the part of the Soviet troops to stop the violence aimed at Armenians in Baku during "Black January." This was eclipsed by their anger at the fact that the Soviet soldiers intervened only after most of the damage had already been done. When combined with their sentiments over the course of the outcomes of Sumgait and at the Yerevan airport in 1988, Armenian faith in the Soviet military began to noticeably wane. By the end of January 1990, Armenians felt the time was right to end

their reliance on the Soviet troops for protection and to create their own defense militias.<sup>100</sup>

Over the next few months, several of these militias began to grow, with the largest being the 5,000 member ‘Armenian National Army,’ which laid the foundations for the need to create an independent Armenian national army. By March, several of these militias came into direct conflict with Azeris on the border of Nagorno-Karabakh, leading to several more deaths.

Gorbachev decreed the disbanding of these militias, particularly sparked by the fact that they were acquiring many of their weapons by attacking the local Soviet conveyers. His protests fell on deaf ears. On August 5<sup>th</sup> 1990, the first non-Communist Armenian government came to power with the election of Levon Ter-Petrossian, one of the founding members of the Karabakh Committee, who was also the head of the ANM. His leadership as chairman of the Armenian Supreme Soviet began with a rough start, as he attempted to restore order to the country by getting the militias to give up their arms. When this did not happen, he was forced to declare a state of emergency on August 29<sup>th</sup>. The ANA was eventually disbanded, its leader arrested, and its headquarters shut down. Fearing Soviet occupation in Baku might be replicated in Yerevan; the Armenian leadership began to plan for its separation from the USSR. Just a few days before Ter-Petrossian commenced his leadership of the Armenian Supreme Soviet, the country pronounced the end of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the birth of the Armenian republic. Only Armenian laws were to apply within the country, and the formation of independent troops and police units began to appear. As its final cut from outside authority, Armenia also proclaimed that Nagorno-Karabakh was to be included as territory of the new Armenian Republic. Gorbachev, preoccupied with problems in other Soviet republics, tried to appease the area by granting greater autonomy to the republics. This merely spurred the two republics into eventual open warfare. The next year brought even more turmoil. By the time the USSR formally dissolved by the end of 1991, Armenia and Azerbaijan were at the edge of war.

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<sup>100</sup> Shale Horowitz, “War After Communism: Effects on Political and Economic Reform in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (January 2003), 38.

During the last few months of 1990 and the beginning of 1991, the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute had been overshadowed by the question on the future of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev had planned for March 17<sup>th</sup> 1991 to be the date of the referendum for all of the republics on whether to draft a new treaty that would allow them greater autonomy. The Supreme Soviets of both Azerbaijan and Armenia bided their time by deliberating whether to actually participate in the vote. Azerbaijan had been witness to an election earlier in September, in which the Communists had won with a significant part of the vote, and which the opposition perceived as rigged. Inevitably, on March 7<sup>th</sup>, the Azerbaijani Communist Party voted to take part in the elections. Armenia's Supreme Soviet, on the other hand, voted on January 31<sup>st</sup> to boycott the Soviet Union elections, and on March 1<sup>st</sup> decided that the results of the election would have no legal bearing upon its territory. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, the results were in, with 75% in favor of the new Union treaty. Although disputed statistics show that three-fourths of Azerbaijan's population voted in the referendum, Armenia, as well as several other republics, did in fact boycott it.

In a seeming effort to punish Armenia for its non-participation in the referendum and take a stab at its endeavors at independence, Moscow pressed Baku to take action against Armenians outside of Armenia's borders-namely, those living in Azerbaijan. During late 1990, Azerbaijani militia forces began a series of attacks on Armenia villages in Nagorno-Karabakh, seemingly to force them to leave for Armenia. Clashes occurred between Armenian and Azerbaijani militias, and in early 1991, Soviet troops were soon wedged in the middle of the violence. A rifle division of the Red Army was introduced at the border of the two countries in early April. Eventually, however, they found themselves actively involved in the skirmishes. It is suspected that the head of the Azerbaijani Communist Party, Mutalibov, had contacted the Soviet forces sometime in April to propose an alliance between the Soviet and the Azeri forces at the border and around Nagorno-Karabakh. The plan behind this combined effort was, for Azeris, to up its success at harassing NKAO Armenians to the point where they would leave the region, while for Moscow, an amplification of military action held the possibility of

discouraging Armenia from taking more steps towards independence. Consequentially, the infamous ‘Operation Ring’ was founded.<sup>101</sup>

‘Operation Ring’s first actions took place on April 30<sup>th</sup> 1991, when the Azerbaijani militias and Soviet forces jointly attacked two Armenian villages 25 kilometers north of Nagorno-Karabakh. True to its name, the operation conducted its sweeping assaults on the villages by surrounding them before running through them. As the troops entered the Armenian enclaves under the pretext of searching for guerillas and removing their access to weapons, they also interrogated, beat and arrested many of the citizens. Finally, the two villages of Getashen and Martunashen were emptied of their Armenian inhabitants, and replaced by Azeri refugees from Armenia. The forces rationalized their procedures by defending Gorbachev’s decree from the previous July, which had outlawed the Armenian militias.

‘Operation Ring’ continued through May when Soviet and Azeri forces entered three towns in Armenia, this time with tanks and helicopters, under the guise that the Armenians were harboring illicit militias. These atrocities continued to become commonplace throughout the summer in the NKAO, as entire villages were emptied. Moscow had, in fact, managed to create the opposite scenario of what it had originally planned out with the birth of Operation Ring-instead of hindering Armenia’s drive towards independence, it instead managed to goad their resolve even further. Ter-Petrossian dubbed the Soviet’s actions as an ‘undeclared war’ on Armenia, whose intention was to discipline the wayward republic’s boycott of the March referendum. The outcome of the operation also proved fruitless for the Azerbaijanis, who were unsuccessful at aborting Karabakh Armenians’ desire to unify with Armenia proper. Anti-Azeri and anti-Armenian attitudes were at an all-time low, and Armenia threatened to use whatever means necessary to end Azerbaijan’s forceful deportations of NKAO Armenians. The tipping point finally arose in August of 1991, with the failed coup in Moscow sparking the dissolution of the U.S.S.R.<sup>102</sup>

After the attempted August coup of 1991, Armenia and Azerbaijan became de facto independent for the first time since 1918. The two republics no longer felt hindered

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<sup>101</sup> Michael P. Croissant. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 42.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid*

by the umbrella authority of the Supreme Soviet to continue forced relations. On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, Armenia officially became an independent republic after over 99% of the population voted in its favor. Azerbaijan on the other hand, initially supported Gorbachev's removal, and its militia was brought in to quell a rally's support over the coup's failure. Realizing that he was once again out of favor of the masses, Mutalibov and his government now denied their support for the Moscow putsch, and began to implement their own declaration of independence on August 30<sup>th</sup>. In a tactic to induce nationalist support, the government reiterated its concentrated effort on cutting off Nagorno-Karabakh's separatism. Despite the fact that 'Operation Ring's measures had ultimately proved unsuccessful, it continued to function, even through the attempted August coup Moscow. The ensuing chaos and upheaval in the Soviet capital proved to be an increasingly difficult matter to resolve, and was the turning point that ended the Soviet-Azeri military collaboration.

Despite no longer actively participating in the operation, Soviet troops remained in the area, an issue remaining part of the cause of the continued violence through late 1991. Owing to the disorder arising out of the failed coup, Soviet military discipline in the Transcaucasus slowly began to diminish, and both Armenians and Azerbaijanis took advantage of their states by seizing weapons and ammunition. An increase in weaponry doubtlessly played a part in the growing escalation and possibly devastating consequences of warfare. Just before war would break out, the presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan called upon an attempt at intervention and hopeful mediation. Presidents Yeltsin and Nazarbayev attempted to find a diplomatic solution in September 1991 with the precondition that Azerbaijan's territorial integrity would be upheld. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, Armenia's unanticipated response was the relinquishing of all territorial claims on Azerbaijan. A cease-fire was to occur, along with the withdrawal of all armed forces, excepting those from the Soviet Interior and the Defense Ministry. Hostages were to be released, and deported persons were to be allowed a safe return. In addition, both sides were to begin bilateral talks with the ultimate goal of achieving a final resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh question.

Although representing a milestone in the two countries' relations, violence continued in the area. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, only a day after the signing of the cease-fire,

Azerbaijani militia entered a village in the NKAO, and five Armenians were killed. Armenian guerillas reacted by continuing their own militia operations in Azerbaijani villages. In another attempt to end the conflict, a follow-up meeting was held on October 25<sup>th</sup>, but the only outcome was the beseeching to fighters on both sides to put down their arms and enter into diplomatic negotiations. Unsurprisingly, the militias and guerillas paid no heed, and the violence was nowhere near halting. Attacks on villages and deportations persisted.

A full-out crisis emerged on November 4<sup>th</sup>, when Azerbaijan shut down a pipeline that had allowed natural gas to flow into Armenia from Russia. Within only a couple of weeks, living conditions in Yerevan plummeted, and the Armenian delegates walked out of the still-ongoing talks led by Russia and Kazakhstan. The Armenian militias returned to fighting the Azerbaijanis, and were able to retake several of the villages that had been emptied earlier during ‘Operation Ring.’ On November 20<sup>th</sup>, an Azerbaijani helicopter was shot down by Armenia, symbolizing the beginning an even more dangerous phase of the violence. A full-scale rail blockade of Armenia was announced by Azerbaijan five days later, which essentially cut off all transportation and communication ties with Stepanakert. Power and water supplies were destroyed in the area as well. On November 27<sup>th</sup>, The Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet voted to annul NKAO’s autonomous status, and took control over the territory under its designated new capital, Hankendi. Ten days later, Mutalibov began mobilizing for war by drafting all citizens over the age of eighteen for military service. USSR’s Interior Ministry forces began their withdrawal on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, citing the dissolution of the Soviet Union as confirmation that it was no longer legally allowed to be present. The legacy of the Soviet forces left several thousand troops as well as an ample amount of arms and weaponry, which were later to be nationalized by the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Now for the first time in seventy years, hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan were no longer a matter of internal dispute within the Soviet Union, but a conflict between two independent countries, whose regional alliances and rivalries-specifically Russia, Turkey and Iran-would come into play in the international arena. These three major powers soon rushed to fill their own geopolitical interests in the vacuum the Soviet Union left behind. Azerbaijan’s position on Nagorno-Karabakh had not changed following the breakup of the Soviet Union, and continued to

regard it as an integral part of its sovereignty, especially now since the USSR would have no legal authorization to step in militarily. Notwithstanding the predominantly Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan was also the home to three other major ethnic groups. With such diverse ethno-linguistic groups of people living in Azerbaijan, it proved difficult to impose a coherent sense of national identity. Were the government to take Nagorno-Karabakh's secessionist tendencies seriously, it would set a precedent for future irredentism in other areas of the country, and incite separatism amongst its other ethnic minorities.<sup>103</sup> In the post-Soviet atmosphere, Armenia's official position also underwent a certain amount of change. On January 18<sup>th</sup> 1992, a 99% popular vote upheld the desire for the independence of the 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic;' a significant modification from its previous attempts to unify the territory with Armenia. Adding to the ambiguity, Armenia then refused to be the first state to recognize the NKR, knowing that to do so would appear as an infringement of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

By taking this stance, Armenia would be able to refute allegations that it was directly involved in the hostilities occurring in Azerbaijan, and would instead attribute the fighting to the 'self defense forces of Nagorno-Karabakh,' that were, of course, situated inside Azerbaijan. The NKR leaders echoed Armenia's position, in claiming that the violence was occurring as a result of Azerbaijan's refusal to acknowledge Karabakh Armenians' right to self-determination. Yet all the while as the "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" began to carve itself into an independent state by holding elections and forming various ministries, not a single country would officially recognize its existence.

Meanwhile, Yerevan also had to deal with other inopportune consequences of independence, such as creating a foreign policy strategy. This would prove to be difficult because Armenia was not only the smallest of the former Soviet republics; it was also geographically located between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Forging pragmatic, mutually-advantageous with Azerbaijan was unrealistic, and memories of the 1915-16 genocide at the hands of the Ottomans had not vanished. Under Ter-Petrossian, who argued that Turkey had transformed itself over the last 70 years, Armenia sought to pursue improved relations with its former occupier. Forming a relationship with another neighbor, Iran

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<sup>103</sup> Michael P. Croissant. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 67.

appeared strategically advantageous because of the trade opportunities and access to energy resources. Issues over the Karabakh conflict have made this task difficult. Relations with Russia, however, have been the focal point of Armenia's foreign policy since its inception. In spite of the repression Armenia suffered under its legacy of the czarist and later communist empire, Yerevan has acknowledged Russia as its Christian protector in a world where it found itself surrounded by its often hostile Islamic neighbors.

At its core, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had not been altered by the dissolution of the USSR. The crucial differences between the positions of both sides were in how the situation was perceived. To Azerbaijan, it was evidence of Armenian provocation with the intent of tampering with its territorial sovereignty. To Armenia, it was a struggle for liberation and self-determination. For both, the tiny piece of land represented an important part of its history.

On January 31<sup>st</sup> 1992, Azerbaijan responded to Nagorno-Karabakh's declaration of independence by launching a military operation against Stepanakert, with the intention of driving Armenian forces out of the area. After its large-scale ground assault failed in forcing out the Armenian military, violence on both sides intensified. The ethnic Armenian success in capturing Kholajy, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Azeri enclave in Karabakh proved a psychological and military blow to Azerbaijan. The Azeris demanded Mutalibov's resignation, who stepped down on March 5<sup>th</sup> in favor of the speaker of the parliament Mamedov, until elections could take place in June. It was then that Iran stepped in as a mediator to both sides, at the request of the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers. From the Iranian perspective, it found the opportunity beneficial to take advantage of the opportunity to gain influence in the region of Turkey. It soon realized that any attempts to resolve the situation would prove difficult. A tripartite meeting was agreed upon by the governments of Baku, Yerevan and Tehran to occur from March 14-16. It was determined that a plan would be drafted to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. A cease-fire was observed for over a week, but fighting resumed in Stepanakert on March 29<sup>th</sup>. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, the Karabakh Armenians took over Shusha, the last Azeri stronghold in the area, which had also been their staging point for operations against Stepanakert. An even greater blow to Azerbaijan than the loss of Kholajy, political upheaval once again ignited

in Baku, which the Karabakh Armenians used to their advantage in taking control of even more ground. The fall of Lachin on May 18<sup>th</sup>, the town to which the Azeris had fled in light of their other losses, created a physical link between Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia. By the end of May, Nagorno-Karabakh appeared to be virtually in the hands of Armenians. Russia's official inaction, but whose military participation on the Armenian side was acknowledged, was both noted and criticized by Azerbaijan. Turkey, on the other hand, approached the issue cautiously. It feared that by taking Azerbaijan's side unambiguously in the conflict, it might face repercussions from its NATO allies. At the same time, by not fully supporting its 'Turkic cousins,' it gave the opportunity for Azerbaijan to choose Iran as its ally over Turkey. The need to determine its stance swiftly came to the forefront when Armenia attacked Nakhichevan in May. Nakhichevan is an autonomous province of Azerbaijan which happens to be geographically contiguous with Turkey. The Turkish government pledged economic assistance to the area, and issued a warning to Armenia. This in turn sparked a reaction from Russia, who recognized that the Armenia-Azerbaijan dispute could eventually escalate a major war. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, the Treaty on Collective Security was signed in Tashkent by Russia, Armenia, and four other former Soviet Central Asian Republics. In the treaty it was stated that if one of the signatories of the treaty were under aggression, the others would defend it by necessary means, which included military assistance. The geopolitical rivalries of the past had begun to reawaken.

Azerbaijan's June elections showed a change in the country's foreign policy direction, with the new president Elchibey removing Azerbaijan's consideration of joining the Commonwealth of Independent States. He also shifted Azerbaijan's focus onto Turkey as its primary ally in international relations for several reasons, which included the pro-Turkic stance of the APF, the ethno-linguistic ties the two shared, Turkey's secular state and market, as well as its Western ties. At the same time, Elchibey encouraged Azeris in Iran to break away and join Azerbaijan, which naturally produced tension between the two countries. Elchibey's other main concern was to liberate Nagorno-Karabakh, and launched an offensive in the area a mere five days after his election. The suddenness and strength of the Azeri forces took the Karabakh Armenians by surprise, and as they found themselves unable to withstand them, they were forced to

abandon several villages they had gained earlier. There appeared to be a shift in the control of the area. The fierce fighting that ensued in mid-September was focused on the Lachin corridor, which was crucial as a geographic link of the region with Armenia. Meanwhile, another attempt at mediation was proposed by Russia and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). It had initially been formed to promote dialogue between the East and the West in 1973, but now it took on the role of conflict prevention and resolution. The multilateral talks were assembled in Minsk in June of 1992, to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. A multi-country delegation which included the United States, Russia, Turkey and others, came together to negotiate possible resolutions. Two obstacles stood in the way. The first was that Armenia insisted that the Karabakh Armenians be recognized as a separate negotiating entity, which Azerbaijani officials rebuffed, claiming that such recognition would mean recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh's sovereignty. The second problem was in establishing a timetable for the discussions. Armenia claimed that in order to discuss the possible future status of Nagorno-Karabakh, it would be necessary to deploy international peacekeepers into the area in order to prevent further hostilities. Azerbaijan's response was that the presence of peacekeepers would diminish its own sovereignty over the region. These uncompromising positions led to a standstill in the negotiations. Both countries withdrew from the talks on June 21<sup>st</sup>, seeing little reason for their presence beyond the need to end the fighting. Neither side would concede over the next few months, despite continuous efforts by the CSCE to convene the talks. Russia stepped in, and was able to get both sides to sign a five-month cease-fire on September 19<sup>th</sup>, but was careful not to bring in the question of Nagorno-Karabakh's status. As with the other attempts at a cease-fire, it too was ignored.

During 1993, the attacks became increasingly more violent, with Armenian troops capturing more and more strategic areas, unleashing a humanitarian crisis and driving scores of refugees from their homes. In April, they managed to nearly cut off southwest Azerbaijan from Baku, prompting an international outcry. The loudest protests came from Turkey and Iran. Turkey attempted to intimidate Armenia with threats of invasion, while Iran, flooded with Azerbaijani refugees, now spoke up against Armenia openly, and demanded its forces leave Azerbaijani territory. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, the UN Security

Council passed a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire as well as the withdrawal of occupying forces in Azerbaijan. The resolution cited the principle of inviolability of international borders. In light of the passage of UNSCR 822, Turkey, Russia and the U.S. proposed a tripartite peace plan in late April, calling for a cease-fire, the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territories outside of Nagorno-Karabakh, and the preparation of a peace settlement. All sides eventually accepted the proposal, yet once again, the political instability of Baku prevented further progress. On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Azerbaijan's government was again rearranged, this time to power sharing between the military leader Huseinov, and former distinguished member of the Communist Party Aliyev. In a series of complicated events that involved disputes over economic ties, particularly concerning oil, the outcome on September 7<sup>th</sup> was a restoration of Azerbaijani ties with Russia, along with the announcement of its intent to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Meanwhile, Armenia achieved new gains by capturing several towns outside the border of the NKAO, in violation of the UN Security Council resolution 822. UNSCR 853 was adopted on July 29<sup>th</sup>, repeating much of the earlier resolution but adding to it by calling the Republic of Armenia to 'continue to exert its influence to achieve compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh region.' Ethnic Armenian forces continued to take control over other areas in Azerbaijan, sparking hundreds of thousands of Azeris to take refuge in Iran. This forced Iran to create dozens of refugee camps its northern border, thus the conflict became internationalized. On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, armed Iranian military units crossed into Azerbaijan to create a buffer zone for humanitarian relief. In turn, Turkey reinforced military units along its border with Armenia, in a move which it explained as necessary to defend its own territorial integrity. Unlike Iran, however, Turkey stopped short of crossing any borders. Russia was also dissatisfied by Iran's territorial encroachment. On October 14<sup>th</sup>, UNSCR 874 was adopted which, yet again repeated the positions of the two earlier resolutions, but also urged the states in the region to not intervene in ways that could incite further conflict and undermine its already shaky stability. This was put to the test on October 21<sup>st</sup> when the Azerbaijani government hired several hundred Afghan mujaheddin fighters, although their assistance did not eventually prove fruitful. The ethnic Armenian units continued their assaults with more and more

success, gradually gaining control of 160 kilometers Azerbaijan shared with Iran. November 12<sup>th</sup> marked the adoption of UNSCR 884, primarily restating what it had already noted in the previous three resolutions. By the end of 1993, the Karabakh Armenians appeared to be in full control of Nagorno-Karabakh. They had driven out the Azeris and the Azerbaijani army, and the two land corridors to Armenia were opened. They also held a fifth of Azerbaijani territory under their control. Aliyev decided to launch a large-scale offensive on December 10<sup>th</sup>, and achieved some gains such as forcing Armenian troops to abandon several of their strategic captures. The Azeri forces even managed to reportedly get within 18 km of Nagorno-Karabakh's capital, Stepanakert. Its successes began to slow down in February, as Azerbaijan suffered the loss of several thousand troops and a large number of military vehicles. Despite its defeats, it did manage to regain several important territories. These achievements owed in part some thanks to president Aliyev's decree in late 1993, which stated that deserters were to be executed immediately, as well as the contributions of foreign mercenaries. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, both parties agreed to a cease-fire, and minus a few smaller violations, it has kept up ever since.

The time had come to mediate the conditions of the cease-fire. With the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh insisting for the right to self-determination, and Azerbaijan claiming its right to territorial integrity, the peace talks remained at a deadlock. Because of the CSCE's earlier unsuccessful attempts at mediation, Russia had seized the opportunity to spearhead the negotiations. At the October 8<sup>th</sup> 1993 summit held in Moscow, Yeltsin offered Russian soldiers as an addition to the border troops along the Azerbaijan-Iran border. Azerbaijan was in no hurry to greet Russian troops again, and denied the offer. Armenia, on the other hand, welcomed the idea of deploying Russian troops as peacekeepers, even the establishment of Russian military bases in Transcaucasia. As Azerbaijan continued to defy Russia's pushes for a cease-fire, Russia changed its stance in April of 1994. It now offered international peacekeepers from other CIS countries as well. This idea seemed a more acceptable compromise, and a protocol was proposed calling for a cease-fire to begin May 8<sup>th</sup>. The Bishkek Protocol that came out of these negotiations in Kyrgyzstan contained several aspects that did not appeal to the Azerbaijanis. It did not state that Armenian units were to leave all of Azerbaijan, and

the proposed CIS peacekeeping force remained predominantly Russian. Aliyev ended up signing it regardless. The CSCE began to rekindle its interest in mediating the Karabakh conflict in mid-May, by challenging Russia's dominant role in the negotiations that had been unraveling under the umbrella of the CIS. Azerbaijan held off on allowing Russian troops to enter the country. In contrast, Armenia signed an agreement on June 9<sup>th</sup>, which permitted Russian military bases to be present in the country for a 25-year period.

A wide-ranging draft plan was beginning to emerge by late July. There were several contentions of dispute that needed to be resolved. The fates of Lachin and Shusha, which were under Armenian control, continued to be disputed-Lachin for its strategic significance, and Shusha (which was located within the borders of Nagorno Karabakh) because of it represented a historical center of Azeri culture and nationalism.

Azerbaijan continued to reject the deployment of Russian-dominated forces. The talks ended without an agreement. Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia all sanctioned the presence of international peacekeepers, but disagreed upon the size and ethnic makeup of the forces.

CSCE representatives joined the next round of peace talks in Moscow on September 1<sup>st</sup>. It was obvious that Russia had its own designs in the region, with a particular emphasis on retaining its access to oil in the region; while at the same time, Azerbaijan flirted with other foreign investors, and eventually signed 'The Contract of the Century' with a number of powerful countries (an over seven billion dollar investment in oil reserves). The CSCE was not unaware of Moscow's intentions, and tried to minimize Russia's role in the negotiations. This led to further tensions in the mediation process that, for once, were not spawned by Azerbaijani-Armenian hostilities.

By the end of 1994, the Azerbaijani-CSCE determination to prevent Russia's plans to be the only mediator and enforcer of the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement dispute finally proved successful. The CSCE met once more in Budapest on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Russia backed down from its earlier stance on taking on the leading role in the resolve. An agreement was brokered that the 3000 peacekeeping forces would be under CSCE auspices, of which no country's participants were to exceed 30%. It was at this meeting that the CSCE officially changed its name to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, by which it is still known today. The document concerning

Armenia and Azerbaijan's conflict expressed support for the four UNSCR's, which called for the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Azerbaijani territory, and urged negotiations for a peace settlement. It also called for the deployment of OSCE international peacekeepers. A year after the cease-fire, tensions still remained. Azerbaijan continued to deny acknowledgement to Nagorno-Karabakh representatives as equal party to negotiations, and the explosion of a Georgian pipeline was blamed on Azerbaijani agents by Russia, leading to more strained relations.

When in 1995 Gorbachev appointed his close advisor Primakov as the country's foreign minister, Russia began to renew its interest in mediating the Karabakh question over the next year. Negotiations were nearly thrown aside at the OSCE summit in Lisbon in December 1996, when Azerbaijan at the last minute called for a resolution to be based on restoring its territorial integrity. Ter-Petrosian claimed that this would prejudice future talks on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, and Armenia ended up being the only OSCE member not to sign the summit declaration. Tensions grew in February of 1997 when the transfer of military vehicles and weapons to Armenia from the Russian Defense Ministry was called out by Azerbaijan as a threat to its security. Armenia retorted that Azerbaijan was preparing its own arms buildup for a military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In another unexpected move, in late March, Ter-Petrosian appointed NKR's President Robert Kocharian as the new Prime Minister. This act was construed as an attempt to appeal to nationalist sentiments, as well as appease the opposition that arose in light of the 1996 rigged elections. It also signified Armenia's tougher stance on Karabakh. Azerbaijan recognized Kocharian's appointment as a provocation, and Kocharian himself spoke to Armenia's parliament about giving serious attention to incorporating Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia's borders.

On top of everything else, fighting revived both in Nagorno-Karabakh and at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in April. Although the violence subsided by May, the two countries once again found themselves at internationally-mediated talks. A new Karabakh proposal was set up, which designated that Armenian forces were to leave Azerbaijani territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as Shusha, and that OSCE peacekeepers would enter the formerly occupied areas. OSCE presence would also be necessary to

assure safe return for refugees, and to witness the down-sizing of the Karabakh Armenian military. Lachin, although returned to Azerbaijan, would be leased to OSCE to guarantee that communication lines would remain open between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. This time, both Azerbaijan and Armenia accepted the initial proposal, but Nagorno-Karabakh balked. NKR Foreign Minister Gukasyan became elected president a week after Nagorno-Karabakh rejected the peace plan. He promised to expand Karabakh's military and increase economic integration with Armenia, while proclaiming that "any status within Azerbaijan" was impossible.

Realizing that any single document that had been proposed had ultimately proved unsuccessful in resolving the conflict, OSCE negotiators now tried a phased approach in September 1997. The first step would be to withdraw Armenian forces outside Nagorno-Karabakh, followed by the removal of forces from Lachin and Shusha, and the deployment of international peacekeeping troops, as well as the return of refugees. Until these first steps could be made, discussion of Nagorno-Karabakh's future status would be put on hold. Ter-Petrossian asserted Armenia's support of the new approach to the settlement. His opposition parties were not in agreement, and condemned his support as treason. On October 21<sup>st</sup>, ten Armenian deputies defected from the parliament, which left pro-government factions the majority by only a hair.

Armenia's Foreign Minister Oskanyan also voiced his opposition to the phased approach on October 6<sup>th</sup>, which compelled the Foreign Ministry to publicly declare that differences did not exist within the Armenian ministry. Defense Minister Sarkissian alleged that 'certain people' should not be allowed to make decision on the Karabakh question in the name of the entire Armenian nation, and that both Armenia and the "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" should prepare themselves for extended conflict by annexing Lachin and Shusha. Even Prime Minister Kocharian challenged the president's authority by maintaining that a package deal provided stronger security for Nagorno-Karabakh over a step by step tactic. He also advised that no decisions over Karabakh's fate should be determined without its consent, regardless of who was running Yerevan.

Antagonisms spread through the Armenian military, the intelligentsia, and the Armenian Diaspora.<sup>104</sup>

Tensions were further heightened in January of 1998 at a meeting of the Armenian Security Council, where Kocharian threatened to resign over Ter-Petrosian's acceptance of the phased proposal. Two weeks later, when three of Ter-Petrosian's officials were fired upon, accusations flew from both sides. In the first week of February, the mayor of Yerevan and the country's Foreign Minister, both allies of Ter-Petrosian, resigned. Forty of the 96 deputies on the ruling side of the parliament then defected to the opposition. A new National Council comprised of intellectuals and members of public-political organization was formed, with the goal of combating the 'heavy moral and socio-economic crises in the country. Heaviness loomed over the country as 25 militiamen were arrested on the charges of taking part in the three shootings of Ter-Petrosian's officials, and an uncorroborated report was published asserting a plot to overthrow the Armenian government was being hatched by Karabakh officials.

It is particularly interesting to note that it was Defense Minister Sarkissian who had saved Ter-Petrosian by dispatching troops to Yerevan after the dispute following the September 1996 elections. The same Sarkissian grew disillusioned by Ter-Petrosian when the latter conceded to the phased approach on Karabakh. Adding the backing of the 50,000 Armenian military, the opposition had a great deal of leverage. Ter-Petrosian finally caved into the pressure on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1998, and resigned from the presidential office. Kocharian assumed the post of acting president until elections could be held in March. The now President Kocharian authorized the re-legalization of the Dashnak party, which had previously been banned by Ter-Petrosian in 1994 because of its assumed participation in subversive activities. The Dashnak party was also Armenia's oldest political movement, and had long supported Nagorno-Karabakh's separation from Azerbaijan. Its re-admittance into the political sphere was welcomed as a step towards restoring national unity.<sup>105</sup> In light of the recent parliamentary defections, the Union of Yerkrpah (volunteers), which represented 6,000 Karabakh war veterans and was led by Sarkissian, grew in power. The reputation of the Armenian National Movement was now

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<sup>104</sup> Graham Usher, "The Fate of Small Nations: The Karabakh Conflict Ten Years Later," *Middle East Journal*, No. 213, Millennial Middle East: Changing Orders, Shifting Borders (Winter 1999), 20.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*

in shambles, and its future as a viable political force hung uneasy. With Ter-Petrosian's resignation and the deterioration of the ANM, no leaders of significance remained that would advocate conceding to Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Kocharian won the presidential election on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1998. He was noteworthy as being the only individual to be elected as president of both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. His opponents were unsuccessful in disputing his presidency because of the constitutional requirement that required a presidential candidate to be a citizen of Armenia for at least ten years. In essence, his ascendance to the presidential post also meant conceding that Karabakh Armenians are also Armenian citizens.

Over the course of the next decade, his presidency has been heavily criticized. He has been accused of election fraud, both in 1998, and at his reelection in 2003. In 2002 he shut off Armenia's main television station, thus drawing objection from international watchdogs that were carefully monitoring Armenia's fragile democracy.<sup>106</sup> He continues to meet with the leaders of Azerbaijan for negotiations on the status of Karabakh, and recently suggested that referendums be held in Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan regarding its future. In September 2006, he gave a congratulatory speech on the fifteenth anniversary of Karabakh's de facto independence, where he praised the area for achieving independence and called on its citizens to now continue working towards international recognition.

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<sup>106</sup> Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, U.S.A., Transaction Publishers, 2004), 204.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the previous analysis of the effects of nationalism on territorial integrity among Armenians and the Serbs, the following conclusions could be drawn:

Nationalism is a very powerful force in many areas, but especially in the attitude toward the territorial integrity. It has the ability to give a people hope, as well as to break them apart. Because of this, nationalism has played a strong role in the history of almost every nation. In that respect, the cases of Armenians and the Serbs are not particularly special.<sup>107</sup>

Due to the geographically strategic positions of both Armenia and Serbia, the effects of nationalism in those countries are hard to understand without proper consideration of the international factors and their influences upon the behavior of small countries. One interesting element that these two countries have in common is that out of three important superpowers influencing Armenia and Serbia on each side (Russia, Turkey and Iran in case of Armenia and Russia, Turkey and Austria/Austro-Hungary in case of Serbia). Two of the powers (Russia and Turkey) had especially strong effects in how these two nations have developed today.

From the point of view of timing, both Armenia and Serbia, belong to the group of latecomers as far as formation of modern nation is concerned. This is in spite of the fact that both are nations with long histories of existence as distinct ethnies. The two also struggled towards democratization in the aftermath of communism, because resources have been overstrained in the name of nationalism.

In their efforts to establish and secure their territorial integrity as shown by the case of Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo, the two are facing not only the problems of dealing with different nations, but with people of the different cultural structure and civilization. It is not a simple as an issue of Azeris against Armenians or Albanians against Serbs, but also Christianity (Armenians and Serbs) versus Islam (Azeris and Albanians). Needless to say, national differences are imposing strong enough problems. Adding the cultural and civilizational differences makes the issue even more complex.

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<sup>107</sup> Branislav Krstić-Brano, *Kosovo: Facing the Course of History*. (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2004),16.

In the case of Serbia, the nationalist drive is fueled by the danger that great powers could take away part of the Serbian territory (Kosovo). Therefore, Serbia faces not only the problems with the Albanian minority in Serbia concentrated in Kosovo, where they are regional majority, but also problems of relations with the United States and European Union. The two strongly support the Albanian minority in Serbia to have the independent state of Kosovo, thereby taking away territory, which is an integral part of Serbia. The fact that Albanians are majority in Kosovo does not deny the fact that they are minority in Serbia. To put the issue of Kosovo in a nut-shell, it is enough to state that for every Serb, Kosovo has the main emotional effect as the Jerusalem has for the Jews. The Serbian demand for hegemony over its territory is based on the same principle on maintaining cultural and historic norms of the state, which are to be assured by the state holding sovereignty, and in which the rights of the minority communities are guaranteed. The internationalization of Nagorno-Karabakh has been attributed to the strong Armenian Diaspora, particularly in the United States, and in France (in the latter country, legislation recently passed a law criminalizing denial of the 1915-1916 Armenian genocide).<sup>108</sup>

Nationalistic drive and motivation in the case of Armenia is based on the fact that due to decision of foreign power(s) part of the Armenian territory has been “given” other country (Azerbaijan). Since Armenia is an independent state, it is the feeling of the population that Nagorno-Karabakh must be “returned” to the mother country.

The way out of the deadlock has to be found through the process of negotiations and compromise. There is no quick and easy method to peacefully achieve solutions. There will never be an answer that could satisfy nationalistic appetites of any participating parties, but providing a workable agreement for the countries involved and the international community is the second best solution. The most crucial part of this would be guaranteeing the rights of the minority citizens in any territory, and working towards assimilating them by ensuring their full participation in civil society. This cannot be done at the expense of culture, however, as suppressing traditional values and customs will inevitably lead to the rise of nationalism.

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<sup>108</sup> Gary K. Bertschand others, *Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, (New York: Rutledge, 2000), 33.

The importance of understanding how nationalism developed must be done utilizing *longue duree*. Delving into the history of the contending regions cannot be stressed enough if we are to understand how nationalism developed.

Beyond the effects of history, the most influential factor in the conflicts has been the many changes in legal status of each territory. Affording or denying legitimacy over terrain, be it by the Russian Empire, Ottoman Empire, Persian Empire, the U.S.S.R., the Kingdom of Serbia, the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia-has given all contending parties the opportunity to question or uphold the legality of their rule over the area.

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