

KARABAKH: THE BIG DEBATE

Part 1

The views of Armenian Political Parties on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and conflict resolution process

This study was conducted by LINKS in the framework of the European Partnership for the peaceful settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh

with the support of the European Union

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Introduction by the Executive Director of LINKS

LINKS is pleased to present the first part of our study on the views of Armenian and Azerbaijani political parties and public organisations on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its resolution. This first part summarises the views of Armenian political parties.

The study launches our programme: “Karabakh: the big debate”. In 2011 the programme will aim to contribute to creating the space and the right environment for a comprehensive debate on the Karabakh conflict and its resolution amongst and between political forces in Armenia and Azerbaijan, at home and in the diaspora.

Methodology

A team from LINKS conducted face to face interviews with leaders of political parties and public organisations in Yerevan during June 2010 and in Baku during July 2010. Twenty three Armenian political parties and six public organisations were surveyed in Armenia and twenty two political parties and sixteen public organisations were surveyed in Azerbaijan.

The short essays that form part of this first part of the survey summarise the views of the twenty three Armenian political parties, and the English versions have been double checked with the interviewees for accuracy. An informal Russian translation is also available. The rest of the study will be released over the course of the next weeks.

This study maps out the declared positions of the political parties. It helps the reader to understand the domestic political context in which the Karabakh negotiations are taking place. Despite the fact that neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan are perfect democracies the leaders of the two countries cannot ignore the views of the politically active part of society on this issue, which all agree is of vital importance for both countries.

LINKS will shortly also release a similar study on the views of Armenian politicians in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as Azerbaijanis from Nagorno-Karabakh displaced by the conflict.

General impressions on the views of Armenian political parties on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and conflict resolution process.

In many aspects the survey confirms the many entrenched and established views on the issues in question. Politicians in all countries tend to take refuge in well used slogans and clichés as a precaution against criticism. However the survey also brings out many interesting views of the Armenian political elite on both the nature of the conflict, as well as the conflict resolution process. Particularly interesting is the broad support of Armenian politicians for civil society contribution to the peace process.

An interesting factor which emerges from the study is that many of the current leaders of Armenian political parties actually fought in the 1989-94 conflict. This makes the issue a very personal matter for these leaders, who also feel that they have a stake in its outcome.

There is broad consensus amongst Armenian politicians that any settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict needs first and foremost take into account the views and the welfare of the Armenian population of the territory. Most parties say that this can only be achieved through independence for Nagorno-Karabakh. Some call for immediate recognition of the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. However, there is little consideration given to the place, if any, of the Azerbaijani population of Nagorno-Karabakh displaced by the conflict.

The survey shows broad, though not unanimous, support for the Minsk Process as the best available format for negotiations of the settlement of the conflict. Most political parties see no alternative to the Minsk process. The views expressed, on the role of individual countries or groups of countries, vary considerably, with a broad consensus that Turkey could not play a role because of its outright support for Azerbaijan. There is in contrast wide support for Iran's role, considered by many to have been balanced and nuanced. Several political leaders want more EU engagement with the conflict settlement process and some expressed disappointment at the lack of proper EU engagement with the process. Many parties express the view that the authorities in Stepanakert should be a party to the negotiating process.

Most political leaders were positive towards civil society engagement with the conflict settlement process; some expressed a desire to be part of a broad dialogue process with Azerbaijani counterparts. A few however remained cynical to this type of activity. Many blamed the Azerbaijan government for hindering their civil society engagement with confidence building measures.

The twenty three short essays, based on interviews with Armenian politicians will make interesting reading for all those who are interested in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its settlement. The views expressed in them, of course, do not necessarily reflect the views of LINKS.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those Armenian politicians who have agreed to be interviewed for this survey.

I want to thank our interviewing team in Armenia: Elin Kinnander and Hovhannes Nikoghosyan, and Josh Bird who edited the essays. I am also grateful to Peter Maghdashyan for preparing the Russian translation of the text.

LINKS is grateful to the European Union for supporting this project in the framework of the European Partnership for the peaceful settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK).

Dennis Sammut

Oxford, 1 December 2010.

About LINKS

LINKS – The London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building was established in London in July 1997 to contribute to the peaceful resolution and the prevention of conflicts and the advancement of democratic values in societies in transition. LINKS currently also works on issues related to dialogue between Europe and the Islamic world based on mutual respect.

LINKS engagement in support of the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been consistent for more than a decade. In 2003 LINKS helped establish the Consortium initiative, an NGO coalition working for the settlement of the conflict, and since 2009 it has been a founding member of the European Partnership. From 2002 to 2008 LINKS facilitated the South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative, a dialogue process between the parliaments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

About EPNK

The European Partnership for the peaceful settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK) is a partnership between five European civil society organisations: Conciliation Resources, Conflict Management Initiative, International Alert, Kvinna till Kvinna, the London Information Network on Conflicts and State Building (LINKS) and a range of local partners working together to support a peaceful settlement of the conflict over Nagorno Karabakh.

EPNK is funded by the European Union's Instrument for Stability.

List of Armenian Political Parties interviewed

Armenian Aryan Order (Party),
Armenian Democratic Liberal (Ramkavar) Party,
Armenian National Congress Republic Party of Armenia,
Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun)
Christian Democratic Union
Communist Party of Armenia,
Conservative Party of Armenia,
Constitutional Rights Union (party),
Democratic Party of Armenia,
Heritage Party,
Labour Socialist Party of Armenia (HASK),
Liberal Party of Armenia,
National Conciliation Party
National Democratic Union
New Times Party,
Peoples' Party,
Prosperous Armenia Party,
Republican Party of Armenia
“Sardrapat” Movement
Social Democratic (Hnchakyan) Party,
Union for National Self-Determination Party,
United Labour Party,
United Liberal National Party (MIAK)

ARMENIAN ARYAN ORDER



The Armenian Aryan Order was established in 1998 and is led by Armen Avetisyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position from the party's creation.

www.hayary.org

ARMENIAN ARYAN ORDER

ARMENIA

The position of the Armenian Aryan Order (AAO) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the AAO, Armen Avetisyan, held in Yerevan on 15th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party recognizes the overriding legitimacy of the 20th February 1988 resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh assembly to be reunited with Armenia. The party maintains that its members have considered Nagorno-Karabakh and the Armenian Republic as of joint statehood for the past twenty years, and urges all other Armenian political parties to also recognize joint statehood.

For resolution of the conflict the party attaches significant importance to international law. The party cites the relevant conventions and resolutions issued by the UN that recognize the right for nations that have historically been residing on specific territory to form independent statehoods on those territories. The party maintains this as a strong argument for an approach to the conflict based in international law. However the party considers the convention, although issued by the UN, as not widely enough recognized by the international community. It therefore also promotes the right to self determination as a stronger international legal basis for independence. The party also criticizes Turkey for entering historically Armenian territory and therefore making comprehensive claims of nation-statehood more difficult.

The party contests that Azerbaijan has never had any defined state borders according to international law pre-dating Nagorno-Karabakh's 1988 resolution for secession. The party maintains that Zionists and pan-Turkic ideology were behind the formulation of the Azeri state in 1918 as part of a wider scheme of international revolution. Furthermore, in 1917 after the October revolution in Russia, Azerbaijan was created by the Ottoman Empire in a territory where it had no precedent. In short, the Azeri nation was created out of nothing, and is merely the product of Turkish efforts.

The party maintains that Bolshevik Russia created the independent Republic of Azerbaijan,

and its creation therefore cannot be considered as based in international law, highlighting the historic refusal of the League of Nations to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, in 1922 a League of Nations document recognized the established borders of Nagorno-Karabakh (the Nagorno-Karabakh oblast) but failed to recognize the borders of Azerbaijan. The party believes that Nagorno-Karabakh was forcefully given to Azerbaijan by the Bolsheviks, and was therefore the decision of a political party, enjoying no legal international basis, something also claimed for the Nakhijevan territory.

In short, the party maintains that Nagorno-Karabakh has never been part of independent Azerbaijan and independence for the Nagorno-Karabakh region therefore cannot be considered as a matter of Azeri territorial integrity. The party also considers Nagorno-Karabakh's struggle for independence as totally legal, stressing that it has a 90 % ethnically Armenian population and should have the right to self determination. The party is committed to the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh reestablished through what is considered the liberation war of 1988.

The party was actively involved in the hostilities of 1988-1994, including the interviewee (who was Commander in Chief of the Armenian National Army (Volunteers) in 1990) and around 100 other members. These members participated in the war up until the cease-fire of 1994.

The party claims to have collaborations with all veterans' organizations from the conflict. This is in preparation for inevitable future Azeri aggression, which the party would consider an opportunity to liberate more territory. However the party stressed that they will not initiate conflict, as they are wary of criticism from the international community. The party furthermore claims that more of the territory surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh could have been liberated during the hostilities had it not been for the later involvement of Russian forces.

Regarding the movement of IDPs, the party was actively involved in managing the flow of refugees into Armenia, 1989-1994. The party claims to have helped hundreds of thousands of refugees, the majority of whom are today citizens of Armenia, but still hope to be able to return. Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the party has relations with political parties and authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh, including a sister party, and collaborations with the people that are still living in the liberated regions.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party concedes that the OSCE Minsk Group is responsible for the major international efforts in resolution of the conflict. However, regarding the Madrid principles there are several points that they do not support. Firstly, what the party perceives as significant

ambiguity regarding the right of refugees and IDPs to return back to their places of origin. For example the party maintains that no international security guarantee would in reality be enough for troubled victims of the war who suffered personal traumas and fled their homes. Secondly, regarding territorial integrity – the party maintains that Nagorno-Karabakh has never been part of Azerbaijan, and therefore is not an issue to be discussed. The party also expresses its surprise at the lack of discussion of the ethnic cleansing and genocide it claims was committed by the Azeris.

Regarding foreign involvement, due to the high levels of mistrust between Armenia and Azerbaijan the party considers the OSCE Minsk Group (specifically its co-chairs U.S, Russia and France) as the best qualified and most legitimate body to deal with the situation. The party considers Iran, as an Islamic state and Armenian neighbour, as a neutral actor and possible mediator due to their regional position. Turkey however could have no such role as Ankara and Baku have the same policy. As Armenia is situated in a core transit region, the party suggests that other Asian countries such as Iran, India and China join the effort for peace.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party is extremely hostile to people contacts and civil society activity, claiming that the nations of the region are fundamentally hostile towards one other and are enemies. The party further maintains that according to historical maps of the region's territories, only Armenia exists with no accommodation for Turkey and Azerbaijan. The party maintains therefore that there is nothing to discuss with these nations and is against any possibility of cooperation, adamantly excluding any opportunity to work with them.

Regarding the free movement of people the party would consider this a right for enemies of the state to freely enter Armenian territory. The party has made public declarations that ethnic Armenians and ethnic Turks cannot live together, claiming that since co-habitation in the region 600 years ago there has not been peace.

■ Other information

The AAO contested the parliamentary elections in 1996, 2003 and 2007 and claims to have 3800 members of which around 85% are men and 15% women. It currently has no members of parliament. The party has its own media outlet at www.hayary.org and publishes a monthly journal named "Armenian Aryans".

ARMENIAN DEMOCRATIC LIBERAL (RAMKAVAR) PARTY



The Armenian Democratic
Liberal (Ramkavar) Party
was established in 1991
and is led by Harutyun
Arakelian (Party Chairman)
since 2003.
www.hrak.am

Armenian Democratic Liberal (Ramkavar) Party

ARMENIA

The position of the Armenian Democratic Liberal (Ramkavar) Party (ADLP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the ADLP, Harutyun Arakelian, held in Yerevan on 15th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The ADLP believes that Azerbaijan is preoccupied with lobbying the international community to regard Armenia as the aggressor in this conflict. The party laments that the conflict is now very much politicized, with the main goal no longer being to find a solution, and considers international law as the only means to a resolution. Formulated over the last seven years, the position of the ADLP is that the conflict of 1988-1994 was genocide against Armenians, starting in several cities of Azerbaijan, where entire Armenian populations were killed by Azeris (both the authorities and militia gangs). These killings were progressing towards Nagorno-Karabakh in early 1990s, and the conflict was therefore started as one of self-defence to prevent similar atrocities in Nagorno-Karabakh. This effort was supported by native Armenians and the international diaspora alike, who were essential in ensuring the victory of the war and prevention of further genocide. Neither the party nor any of its senior leaders were directly involved in armed hostilities between 1988-94 and the party does not have any official links with veteran organizations from the war. However, some party members are veterans, and the party provides for families of veterans and veterans themselves with humanitarian aid.

Regarding resolution, the ADLP highlights the future intention of both counties to join EU, and the practice that all disputes between union countries must be solved by the international court, which they are confident will see the issue resolved with those guilty being brought to justice for the genocide committed against Armenians. Evidence of this genocide is claimed by both eye witness accounts and legal documents. The party notes however that if the solution is to be found in international law, it will only be done at the expense of the national interests of all the great powers. The ADLP also believes that the liberated lands around Nagorno-Karabakh should be retained by Nagorno-Karabakh as a “payment” for all the suffering that Azerbaijan has put Armenians through. Further

elaboration on the party's position is to be found on its web-site (www.hrak.am).

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The ADLP is critical of the OSCE Minsk Group, claiming that it has not achieved any serious results on Nagorno-Karabakh over the last 16 years, and blames the national self-interest of the co-chairs of the group for this. Furthermore, it is the ADLP's belief that both the Armenian and Azeri authorities lack the democratic legitimacy to push for the peace process, which is further undermined by the exclusion of the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities from the process. The authority of the president of Armenia is limited only to the borders of the republic of Armenia – as is written in the constitution, and therefore he does not have the credentials to compromise on any land swap involving third countries outside the borders of his state.

The party itself only has semi-official contact with the authorities and the president in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The ADLP criticizes the “secret” nature of the Minsk group, noting that publications of their work are only released *ad hoc* through the international, Azeri and Armenian media. This undermines their credibility. In regard to the Madrid principles the ADLP reserves judgment, as the party has not seen the official document itself and therefore cannot make any statements about it. The ADLP considers other parties which express their position on the principles “agents” to several groups that are trying to impose a solution on the conflict, citing their access to information as suspicious given that nothing has been officially published.

With regard to the involvement of outside powers the ADLP stresses the importance of international law. The ADLP believes the EU should be mandated by the UN to carry out the peace process and conflict resolution, and that the issues should be settled in the international court at the Hague. The EU would be an influential actor as all three South Caucasian countries wish to join the EU, and the EU has already gained experience in dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The ADLP believe that since both Armenia and Azerbaijan are not democratic states, the conditions for NGOs to succeed in their work is not very high. Although NGOs receive their grants and funds from international organisations, their access is controlled by the government, which limits their ability to work freely.

The ADLP believes that NGO level contributions cannot have any success since they are not

working freely. They believe that although NGOs maintain to their financiers that that are totally free, in reality, since they are subject to government pressure they cannot operate freely. The ADLP does concede however that there are exceptions, however these exceptions are not getting funding and do not have much needed access to the mass media. All spheres of society are already monopolized with little room for NGO manoeuvre.

In terms of people to people confidence building the ADLP considers this primarily an economic question. As the South Caucasian countries' economies are too small to be significant on the world market individually, they should create a common market to attract international investors. The ADLP is confident that this will happen in the future, however recognises the current obstacles to such a union due to poor regional relations (Georgia-Russia; Azerbaijan-Armenia and Iran; Armenia-Turkey and Azerbaijan). Although there is much potential in the region as a transit region, economic integration will be impossible in the near future as peace remains elusive. The ADLP maintains hope however that in the future the three countries will be forced to sit down and discuss their common future together, since the conflicts that are present now are not beneficial for any of them.

■ Other information

The ADLP has contested all parliamentary elections of the last twenty years. It claims to have around 2000 members of which 50% are men and 50% women. It currently has no members of parliament. Media outlets www.louysworld.com, www.7or.am, www.yeshay.am, www.armor.am, are considered friendly to the party.

ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS



The Armenian National Congress has no legal status, and describes itself as a political force was established in 2008 during a mass demonstration. It is led by Levon Ter-Petrossian, first President of Armenia, who assumed the position with the alliance's inception.

www.anc.am

Armenian National Congress

ARMENIA

The position of the Armenian National Congress (ANC) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with leader Levon Ter-Petrossian held in Yerevan, June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The ANC's position is that there should be a balanced solution, and that as the main party in the conflict is the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic itself, whatever agreement its authorities accept the alliance will also support. However, since the mediation effort is secret (such as the 2007 Madrid Principles and its updated version) the ANC cannot comment on whether the proposed solution for Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh is acceptable. What has been revealed of the principles unofficially however the ANC considers unbalanced and therefore has concerns regarding them. It maintains that the peace resolution should include mutual concessions from all sides.

The ANC has made several declarations and statements on its position which are available on its webpage (www.anc.am), and also has a foreign relations commission, which often comments on the negotiation process.

Regarding the hostilities of 1989-94 many representatives from the ANC took part in the war, and some of them are members in the veterans union "Yerkrapah", that was formed after the cease-fire agreement was signed in 1994. As the veterans organizations are not political entities, the ANC does not have official relations with them only maintaining unofficial contact through its members who are part of these organizations. It does not have any special relationships with organizations, parties, the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh or the refugees from the conflict.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The ANC believes that the OSCE Minsk Group is doing a quite useful job, but is concerned by what it perceives as a stall in their progress since January 2010, (up to June 2010) there

have been no presidential or foreign ministerial meetings between the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents and foreign ministers, suggesting that the Group has been less active. The ANC is also concerned about statements from the Azerbaijani leadership sceptical about the role of the co-chairs with regards to attaining a settlement, remaining devoted to the Minsk process as the only viable format for the conflict resolution.

Regarding the Madrid principles the ANC has not outlined its position, since the principles have not been officially published and therefore the alliance cannot comment on their content based on reliable sources.

Regarding the involvement of international actors, the ANC believes that only the co-chairs of the Minsk Group are the right ones to handle the conflict resolution. It maintains that Turkey cannot play a constructive role in the conflict settlement, since their position is very similar to the one that Azerbaijan holds, and believes that Turkey's closure of the border with Armenia was a hostile act by international law.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The ANC believes that the contributions of NGOs are very useful, and that the two nations are benefitting from more NGO level contributions which are positively shaping the environment for the parties involved in the conflict. The ANC also believes however that NGOs and their initiatives could be more active in promoting people to people contacts between the peoples living in Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, and in highlighting for the people what kind of benefits and advantages they stand to gain after the conflict is settled. NGOs may also play an important role by organizing conferences which include think-tanks and specialists on conflict resolution.

Regarding the free movement of people, the ANC has no specific position and has not considered the issue seriously before, as Azerbaijan continues to say that there cannot be any form of contact, cooperation or open borders before a final agreement. In principle however the ANC is supportive, but considers it impossible due to the Azeri position.

■ Other information

The ANC claims to have 80,000 members of which around 60% are men and 40% women. Internationally the alliance has a branch in the US in Los Angeles, California.

ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION - DASHNAKTSUTYUN



The Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnaktsutyun, was established in 1890 as part of the national liberation struggle against the Ottoman and Russian Empires. It was banned in Armenia during the 1990s but later emerged as part of a coalition government. The party left the coalition in 2009 over disagreements with the governing coalition on foreign policy. It has 16 members of parliament. www.arfd.am

Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnaktsutyun

ARMENIA

The Position of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), popularly known as Dashnaks, on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with Bureau member Vahan Hovhannissyan MP, held in Yerevan on 14th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The ARF believes that Nagorno-Karabakh is a historical part of Armenia and has belonged to Armenia for at least 3000 years. It has never been a part of independent Azerbaijan because such a state did not exist before 1918. Even after Azerbaijan emerged as an independent state it was only after one and a half years that the Bolsheviks gave Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan along with other Armenian territories as a way of punishing Armenia for continuing to fight against the Turkish Army and for resisting Bolshevism. Other territories were also given to Turkey. The bolsheviks carved the borders in such a way that no republic in the South Caucasus could move towards independence without the agreement of the others, thus laying the basis for the internal conflicts, one of which is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Compared to other Armenian territories that were given to Azerbaijan, where Armenians were cleared out, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh were more resilient, and since they had a tradition of their own statehood were anxious to keep their borders. The borders were consciously created in a way so that Armenia did not share borders with Nagorno-Karabakh. When the Karabakhi Armenians peacefully started campaigning to improve their social and economic rights, their financial situation and for developing their autonomous rights the answer from Azerbaijan was a classic Turkish response, namely bloodshed and attacks on Armenians in Azerbaijan – not only in Nagorno-Karabakh but in other parts of Azerbaijan too.

Stepanakert was bombed and destroyed. The Karabakhi Armenians had no other choice but to liberate themselves and the territories around them. Some people call them occupied

territories but the ARF thinks this is a security belt of territories that have always been Armenian and populated by Armenians who are the owners of these lands.

The ARF understands that resolving the disagreements with Azerbaijan must be based on mutual concessions and cannot be one sided. The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic can never be part of the Azerbaijani state. It can never have a subordinated relationship with Azerbaijan. Furthermore the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic must have a border with Armenia – not a corridor, but a wide common border. The status of Nagorno-Karabakh must include the possibility of self defence and sovereignty.

The ARF was mobilised during the Karabakh conflict which it considers a national liberation war. One in eight of its members died in the war, and whoever could carry arms was there. The ARF Nagorno-Karabakh branch lost many of its members.

The ARF has a special commission that works with veterans, but this work is mainly in the social sphere, not political. The party does not believe that veterans as a category should have a special involvement in politics. They can exert a moral influence but not a political one. The ARF is a federation and it has an affiliate in Nagorno-Karabakh which is autonomous.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The ARF evaluates the work of the OSCE Minsk Group relatively highly, because in the last sixteen years they have collected a fantastic amount of material. The process is long but this is to be expected. The problem with the Minsk Group is that they are under pressure and sometimes they forget that one needs to not only deal with the consequences of the conflict. The OSCE Minsk Group should not only deal with the consequences of the conflict, by for example saying that Azerbaijan has lost territory and so we must give Azerbaijan territory and everything will be ok. The Minsk Group should deal with the root causes of the conflict, the reasons for why it happened. However the OSCE Minsk Group is working in the right direction, which is why Azerbaijan continuously talks about moving the negotiations to other fora, for example the United Nations. However the ARF believes that the Madrid Principals are very dangerous to the Armenian national interest and to Armenian security.

Russia, Iran, the US and the European Union have no fixed position on the issue but they have different interests. Some are interested in routes, some in railroads, some in hydrocarbons and some in democracy. These difficult interests create a difficult and complicated picture. It is difficult to separate them from each other since all the interests of the different political parties are interconnected. It is not possible to please only one side, so maybe it is not such a good thing to have so many different players.

As regards Turkey, the ARF states categorically that Turkey can never have a part in the peace process or have any role in this matter.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The ARF is no longer convinced that NGOs could play an important role in terms of creating contacts between civil society in Armenia and Azerbaijan and to weaken the confrontation and hatred between the two nations. Despite shortcomings in Armenian democracy NGOs are relatively free. However in Azerbaijan, as well as in Turkey, NGOs are under direct government control and do the bidding of their government. Armenian and Azerbaijani NGOs therefore do not stand equally.

All the sides are in a difficult position and the Karabakh problem cannot be resolved in the near future. The ARF is in favour of small steps which are not connected to territory or war, environmental issues for example. It is in favour of border trading, as well as of the removal of sniper posts in the border area. It is also in favour of Armenia selling electricity to Azerbaijani regions which lack it.

The ARF supports people to people interaction that can change people's perceptions of one other. In Azerbaijan they even have fairy tales for children that portray Armenians as monsters. In that environment NGOs can do very little, but they can try! The ARF has no official position on free movement of people between Armenia and Azerbaijan prior to the signing of a peace agreement.

■ Other information

The ARF is a long standing member of the Socialist International, the global platform of centre-left parties. The Party has contested all elections since 1991. It claims to have 7000 members in its Armenia branch and an active youth branch.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION PARTY



The Christian Democratic Union Party was established in 1991 and is led by Khosrov Harutyunyan (Party Chairman) who was Prime Minister of Armenia from 30 July 1992 to 2 February 1993.

Christian Democratic Union Party

ARMENIA

The position of the Christian Democratic Union Party (CDUP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the CDUP, Khosrov Harutyunyan held in Yerevan on 14th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The CDUP expects that any conflict settlement will be based on solutions that will give a guarantee that the conflict will not start again. This means firm guarantees for the security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and for the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. This will require concessions from all sides in the conflict. The opinion of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh that they should not be subordinated to the republic of Azerbaijan needs to be taken into account. Nagorno-Karabakh has never been a part of an independent Azerbaijani state, but was given to the Azerbaijan SSR during the Soviet era by order of Stalin. This was Stalin's way of keeping both Armenia and Azerbaijan under control.

During the seventy years of Soviet rule the Azerbaijani authorities tried their best to push the Armenians in both Nagorno-Karabakh and in Nakhichevan out of the territory. In 1988 the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, peacefully and within the legal framework of the Soviet Union, addressed the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the central authorities in Moscow, informing them that they wanted to be part of Armenia. The response from Azerbaijan was armed intervention in several cities. It was Azerbaijan's provocations that led to the start of the war: their armed response to the peaceful call for self-determination and their expulsion of Armenians from Azerbaijan, as well as from their historic home, Nagorno-

Karabakh. The 1988 peaceful appeal of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh remains until this day unanswered.

The CDUP believes that the most important issue is to ensure the safety of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and this can be achieved only if the international community recognizes the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh for self-determination.

CDUP believes that there is great mistrust between Azerbaijanis and the people in Nagorno-Karabakh – the people in Azerbaijan do not care about the people in Nagorno-Karabakh and the people in Nagorno-Karabakh distrust the Azerbaijanis. The lack of care comes from both the Azerbaijani authorities, as well as the Azerbaijani NGOs. They do not feel a need to engage with the people in Nagorno-Karabakh and they believe the matter will eventually be solved through military means.

The leadership and members of the CDUP were directly involved in the conflict, including in the fighting.

The CDUP has a sister party in Nagorno-Karabakh and keeps informal relations with veterans organizations and other political forces in Nagorno-Karabakh.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The CDUP attaches great importance to the OSCE Minsk process that is the only international platform that is able to deal with the conflict professionally. The party has a very positive attitude towards the Minsk process (the current CDUP Chairman was involved in the initial establishment of the Minsk Group during OSCE meetings in the early nineties). The CDUP believes that were it not for the Minsk process regional security would have been much worse off. Whilst others criticize the Minsk Group for not having delivered results for sixteen years, the CDUP believes that they have managed to keep the peace.

There is no official CDUP position on the Madrid Principles but the party Chairman has stated his position in a number of statements and interviews. His position is that the points underlying the Madrid principles have been at the heart of the negotiations over the last decade. The Madrid principles as articulated since 2007 are now the basis for the continuing negotiations. The most important element is that as a result the international community now recognizes the importance of the participation of Nagorno-Karabakh in the process. In this regard the proposal to hold a referendum is a positive development.

Regarding the involvement of external actors in the conflict and conflict settlement process, the CDUP believes that Russia, the US and France , as co-Chair of the Minsk process have strategic interests in the region and that by ensuring the security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh they are making the conflict resolution process more stable. The same cannot be

said about Turkey. Turkey in 1992, when the Minsk Group was being formed, pledged to be an impartial mediator in the conflict, but a year later it closed its borders with Armenia, an act which in international law is considered as aggression. Turkey is therefore absolutely incapable of playing a positive and unbiased role in the conflict. When Turkey recently expressed a wish to participate actively in the peace process, there was also a reaction from Iran, which also offered to play a similar role. The OSCE Minsk Group as it is presently composed is the best option.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The CDUP believes that informal contacts through civil society are the best way towards the resolution of the conflict. There should be a parallel process to the Minsk Group framework, a process of civil society activities as a means to develop confidence building between the two nations. Peace will only be viable and long lasting if these two parallel processes move together.

The CDUP is totally positive towards the idea of free movement of Armenians and Azerbaijanis between the two countries. However Azerbaijani society is totally controlled by the authorities who continuously depict Armenia as an aggressor and an enemy making Azerbaijani attitude towards Armenians very negative. In a recent poll in Azerbaijan 85% of all respondents, most of them young people, said that their main enemies were Armenians. Under these circumstances civil society work is very difficult. Part of the problem is that the Azerbaijan Government has not done anything to help the refugees and IDPs that were displaced by the conflict and has housed them in ghettos. The refugees in Azerbaijan are now political tools and this has also created a lot of hatred towards Armenians. In Armenia, the government had also to deal with around 400,000 refugees, but these were given a lot of assistance and help to rebuild their lives so there is not a similar problem.

■ Other information

The CDUP contested the parliamentary elections in 1995, 2003 and 2007 and claims to have 2000 members of which around 65% are men and 35% women. It currently has no members of parliament. Since June 2008 the party is affiliated to the European Christian Political movement - ECPM, www.ecpm.info.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF ARMENIA



The Communist Party of Armenia was established November 1920, at first as an underground party, before later being registered according to the law. It is currently led by Ruben Tovmasyan (Secretary-General) who assumed the position in August 2003.

Communist Party of Armenia

ARMENIA

The position of the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Secretary-General of the CPA, Ruben Tovmasyan held in Yerevan on 22nd June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party maintains that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh have defended their own lands, homes and families during a war that was imposed by Azerbaijan, and that the bloodshed was started because of the provocations and the ethnic cleansing which began in the different cities and villages in both Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The CPA believes that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh have already exercised their right to self-determination and that this is the right way for all nations in legal terms to gain their independence. The party maintains that according to the terms and rules of democracy and the rights of nations, the right to self-determination is the basic right for the peoples and nations of the world to live in freedom. The party believes that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are without fault, and will therefore continue to support whatever they have done and will do.

The party also highlights that Nagorno-Karabakh possesses the core institutions for democratic rule, with a President and an acting parliament which have been voted in by elections overseen by external observers and deemed democratic. The party is surprised and disappointed that the Council of Europe does not recognize these elections, which are both very competitive and democratic.

The party is furthermore unpleasantly surprised by the resolutions adopted by the Council of Europe, since it considers them not aimed at finding a final peaceful settlement and a viable peace in Nagorno-Karabakh, but at pushing Azerbaijan to start a new war. The CPA considers the most important aim to be keeping the peace, and calls therefore for the three sides to immediately sign a peace agreement prior to any final settlement.

The CPA has always supported the existence of Nagorno-Karabakh and its right of self-determination, and condemns the aggressive policy of Azerbaijan, something it has stated

clearly in different declarations and statements.

Regarding the hostilities of 1989-94, the party does not outline clearly whether members of the senior leadership were directly involved in the hostilities but maintains that all Armenians (across the world) that could participate or contribute, regardless of their political affiliation, participated and contributed in the war in the best way that they could, in defence of Azeri aggression. The party claims however that the leaders of the self-defence of Nagorno-Karabakh (from the late 1980s to early 1990s) were also at the time the leaders of the regional entities of the Communist parties both in Armenia and in Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

The CPA enjoys close collaborations with the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) Communist Party and has been holding different events with them. In all the events that are held in either Stepanakert or in Armenia by the Communist Party, the CPA invites the leaders from the Communist Party in Artsakh to Armenia, and the leaders from the CPA are in turn invited to Stepanakert. Without the participation of the Artsakh Communist Party the CPA would not hold any events in Nagorno-Karabakh, and their collaboration is very wide and touches upon every possible aspect. Regarding veteran organizations, the party is involved with the “Union of Soviet Officers” based in Armenia which is actively cooperating with similar organizations in Nagorno-Karabakh.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party believes that the work of the OSCE Minsk Group does not have a specific approach towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Regarding the EU the party cannot understand the resolution adopted by the EU parliament which it considers very much one sided – blaming only Armenia as the aggressor and occupier, and not recognizing the history of the conflict.

The party is also sceptical of the role of the Council of Europe which it claims is going to re-establish their commission on Nagorno-Karabakh, which will be chaired by the Turkish speaker of the Council. The party completely rejects this considering the Turkish chair to have been very rude on a visit to Armenia and believes that he will be very biased due to the historical baggage between the two countries. In contrast to this the party believes that the OSCE Minsk Group is doing a good job and that a new European commission is therefore the wrong way to go and will not contribute to peace.

The party supports the Armenian President’s position in regards to the Madrid principles.

The CPA maintains that Russia is the only actor that can play a major role in resolving the conflict, since according to historical perspective the region has not always been in line with

the liberal approaches of the international community and other great powers. Due to this, the party believes that Russia is the only country that may be trusted to carry out its role satisfactorily.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

Regarding the role of NGOs, as the party believes that the conflict has been internationalized (gaining greater saliency in the wider international perspective) and become so much more complex and difficult, informal NGO level contributions and people to people contacts cannot have significant benefits for the peace process. The party complains that aggressive military statements and cease-fire violations by the Azeri side are occurring on a daily basis, and therefore it is difficult to see how NGOs can do anything to contribute to the peace process.

Regarding the free movement of people, the party believes it necessary to look at the historical background, which illustrates the different experience between Armenians and Azeris as more advantageous for the Azeris. The party maintains that although all Armenians in Azerbaijan lost their properties and many also lost their lives as a result of ethnic cleansing, the Azeris in Armenia exchanged houses with Armenians in Azerbaijan, or sold their houses. Furthermore, as Armenians lived successful lives in the cities of Azerbaijan, compared to the Azeris who lived in villages in Armenia, this exchange of houses was more advantageous for the Azeris. Free-movement of people would not correct this injustice and therefore should not be permitted until a final solution to the conflict is reached and the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is established legally.

■ Other information

The CPA has contested all parliamentary elections since 1990 and claims to have 20,000 members of which around 65% are men and 35% women. It currently holds no seats in parliament. Internationally it is affiliated to the Union of Communist Parties, and actively participates in Communist Party events all around the world.

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF ARMENIA



The Conservative Party of Armenia was established in 1990 and is led by Mikayel Hayrapetyan (Party Chairman) who assumed the position in 1998.

www.conservative.am

Conservative Party of Armenia

ARMENIA

The position of the Conservative Party of Armenia (CPA) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the CPA, Mikayel Hayrapetyan held in Yerevan on 18th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party maintains that after the collapse of Soviet Union the Nagorno-Karabakh issue should have been settled according to the principles of territorial integrity and the right to self determination. The party believes that the Russian empire negatively contributed to the conflict and thinks that negative Russian influence is still being exercised in the South Caucasus and in all the former USSR regions. The party holds that if Russian influence were to leave the region the conflict will be much easier to solve under the basic principles of “Caucasian house”.

The party believes that to resolve the conflict all the KGB archives of the three South Caucasian states should be opened, as this will make it obvious who is in power in the South Caucasus – revealing that all three states are totally dependent on Russia. The party maintains therefore that if all the corrupt authorities of all three states are removed, the conflict will be easier to resolve.

The party does not have any specific statements about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and what the party has published about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is available on its webpage (www.conservative.am)

Regarding the hostilities of 1989-94, none of the senior leadership actively participated, but many of the party’s members did, some of whom were killed. The party does not have any special relationship with veteran’s organizations but the Chairman was the editor in chief of newspaper “Yerkrpah”, before joining the party, which is the official newspaper of the Yerkrpah veteran’s organization. The party does not have any special relations with organizations, parties or the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party bases its evaluation of the OSCE Minsk process in terms of Christian values, quoting Luke 6:44 that as “the tree should be recognized by its fruit”, the process should be evaluated by the results that it has brought. The party believes that thus far it has not borne any results, and therefore it cannot evaluate the process itself. Despite this however the party generally supports the process, recognizing that without the efforts of the group there would still be ongoing hostilities.

Regarding the Madrid principles the party is unwilling to offer any official statements, since the principles are still classified.

Regarding the role of the international community, the party maintains that their efforts should be to try to eliminate the borders in the South Caucasus. The party points to the hostilities between Georgia and Russia in 2008, which it believes showed that Russian imperialism still plays a big role in the region, and that this is something the international community must recognize. The party however believes that short of Russian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, the international community will not accept that the conflict is imposed by Russian imperialism, and is not the product of a dispute between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. The party considers both Azerbaijan and Armenia to be victims of Russian imperialism as well as victims of their respective nationalisms.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party believes that people to people contacts are the most efficient ones for achieving a lasting solution to the conflict, because both the authorities in Armenia and in Azerbaijan are agents of the Russian secret service (which is still the same as the Soviet-era KGB and has not changed) and are delivering their services to the Russian empire and not to their own nations.

The party has not made any official declarations about cross-border initiatives and interactions, but is supportive towards them and is confident that they will provide the best benefits for both nations.

■ Other information

The CPA contested the parliamentary elections in 1990, 1999 and 2007 and claims to have 3000 members of which around 60% are men and 40% women.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS UNION



The Constitutional Rights Union was established from a civil society group by party convention in 1989, and is led by Hayk Babukhanyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position from 2006.

www.iravunq.com

Constitutional Rights Union

ARMENIA

The position of the Constitutional Rights Union (CRU) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the CRU, Hayk Babukhanyan held in Yerevan on 18th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party's position on the conflict was made clear at the very outset of the conflict (1988), and the party has been actively involved in the process with the party Chairman a member of the Independence Commission. The party considers the resolution of 1st December 1989 on the reunion of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as one of its successes. The resolution was adopted at a joint session of the Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian parliaments in 1989 during the Soviet era and the resolution was included in the Armenian declaration of independence in 1990.

The party's general position is that Nagorno-Karabakh should be independent from Azerbaijan as well as from Armenia – something the party considers a concession from the side of Armenia, and a necessity given the difficult climate in the region. The party views claims for Nagorno-Karabakh's independence as in concurrence with the wave of quests for independence among all break away states in the region.

The party draws parallels to the case of Kosovo, where Kosovo and Albania wanted to be reunified into the state of Albania but the international community's approach was that it should be an independent state and should not be reunited with Albania. It furthermore refers to the case of South Ossetia, which the party believes should be reunited with North Ossetia, but recognizes the international community's view that breakaway regions should be independent entities and not parts of recognized states. Following from this, the party maintains that Nagorno-Karabakh (which it considers a region of Armenia, according to the resolution of 1989) should be independent, since this seems to be the current international norm and considers this again to be a concession from the Armenian side which should be appreciated by Azerbaijan.

Since 1989 the party has been publishing the bi-weekly newspaper "*Iravunq*" ("Rights") which is the party's official media outlet, and has produced all the party's statements and

declarations regarding the conflict. This material is also available on the party's webpage (www.iravunq.com)

The party was actively involved in the hostilities of 1989-94 establishing Brigades that participated in the defence of Armenia's borders. A lot of the party membership, including board members, actively participated in the war and ran supply routes delivering different cargos to Nagorno-Karabakh during the war. Board member Mr. Vardan Astvatsatryan in particular participated very actively in these kinds of activities, and the party's Chief Editor was an officer in the Armenian army. The party has good relations with all the veteran organizations from the war and is actively cooperating with them, both officially and unofficially.

The party also maintains official relations with all the refugee organizations, and deals a lot with refugee issues, one of its main activities being to help refugees get back their lost properties or seek compensation, as well as offer general support and aid. The party also has official relations with the elected authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh and supports them very much.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party sees the logic behind the OSCE Minsk process, and is looking forward to and supporting the Group's work and its aim of reaching a final settlement to the conflict. The party also supports the Group's efforts to find multilateral peace agreements between the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Azerbaijan and Armenia, however it has been disappointed by the length of time required for them to finalize the settlement.

Regarding the Madrid principles, the party stresses that as long as they are taken purely as principles, they may act as a basis for negotiations. However when the principles are being referred to not purely as principles but as a roadmap for conflict resolution, and talk about removing Armenian troops from the territory and postponing the status of Nagorno-Karabakh - the party is totally against them, and strongly opposes making a roadmap out of the Madrid principles. Instead the party maintains that the first step towards a final settlement should rather be recognition of the interim status of Nagorno-Karabakh's elected authorities, which will enable them to participate in the peace process and negotiations. All other issues - such as the issue of IDPs and refugees' right to return, the withdrawal of troops of both sides from any territory (since there are also Armenian territories which are being controlled by Azeri troops), and the issue of recognition of the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh - should all be resolved in a single legal package.

Regarding the role of other international actors the party believes that Turkey has proved itself to be directly involved on one side of the conflict with all the consequences which

follow from this. Turkey will continue to be considered biased until they open their borders and re-establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Armenia. Regarding Iran the party recognises that they have a role to play (out of national interest) but does not think that they are capable of performing on the same level that the OSCE co-chair countries do. The party does not have any other specific opinions about any other countries.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party of course recognises and appreciates any positive contribution to the peace process at any level. However it believes that the efforts being carried out by civil society are being abused by the Azeri leadership which influences such work negatively.

Regarding the free movement of people before a final peace agreement the party has a positive attitude, but maintains that both countries must guarantee full security. The party claims that there are no negative attitudes amongst the Armenian public towards Azeris and they feel very much secure in Armenia. This is the result of a very tolerant and positive “propaganda” about Azeris coming from the Armenian media. However this cannot be said of Azerbaijan, where the media produces negative propaganda with elements of intolerance, and propaganda of hatred is being produced by the Azeri authority, creating an overwhelming intolerance amongst the public in Azerbaijan towards Armenians. This has unfortunately on occasion resulted in casualties and the loss of human life. The party cites the example of an Armenian military officer who was killed whilst asleep in Hungary in 2005 by an Azeri officer, which was subsequently portrayed as an act of heroism in Azerbaijan.

■ Other information

The CRU has contested the parliamentary elections from 1990 onwards and claims to have 5000 members of which around 60% are men and 40% women. It currently has no members of parliament.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ARMENIA



The Democratic Party of Armenia was established in 1991 and is led by Aram G. Sargsyan (Party Chairman) who assumed the position with the party's creation.

Democratic Party of Armenia

ARMENIA

The position of the Democratic Party of Armenia (DPA) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the DPA, Aram G. Sargsyan held in Yerevan on 16th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party considers an exact position difficult to outline, however it maintains that the fundamental principles of conflict resolution are that it should be peaceful and based on mutual concession. The principle of mutual concession should apply primarily to the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, a status which it considers has been reached in a highly legal way according to the internal legislation of the Soviet Union and under international law. The party considers the establishment of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and its statehood as very much in line with international norms.

As the party has attentively followed the process for many years, it has issued over this time numerous speeches and declarations regarding the matter. The party established a committee in defense of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1996 that included around 25 political parties and NGOs, which contributed to the process by making resolutions and declarations for the settlement of the conflict.

The party has been actively organizing and participating in meetings in Moscow with political parties from Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan and Armenia. This was part of a joint Russian-American project established by the US State Department and Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a result of six years of these meetings the party has issued a comprehensive package of solutions to the conflict, named the 'Framework Agreement', which was presented to all parties of the conflict. This met with limited success as although the first group of representatives from Azerbaijan which participated agreed to the package, the second group (during the process Azerbaijan decided to send a new group to the negotiations) did not.

Regarding the hostilities of 1989-94 many of the party members participated in the war, but not any of the senior leadership, which contributed to the process in non-combat roles. The Chairman of the party was for example an adviser to the Armenian president from 1998-1999 and therefore involved in the conflict at a strategic policy level. Regarding veteran

organizations the party has no official relationships, but does enjoy good private relations with them.

The party also has friendly relations with the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh as well as with many of the NGOs in the territory, maintaining both official and unofficial relations with them. Senior members of the party have on several occasions held meetings with the government officials from Nagorno-Karabakh, with the exception of the Prime Minister.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party considers the work of the Minsk Group as a necessity and regards the efforts put forward by it as priceless. The party credits the group with having very much contributed to the process by maintaining the cease-fire between the parties. The DPA however objects strongly to what it considers the Minsk Group working beyond its remit, seeking to resolve the whole matter comprehensively rather than working to its mandate of only resolving the conflict. The party considers them two very specific and different issues, one a problem with Nagorno-Karabakh in a wider regional perspective and the other a problem between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. The party also believes the conflict a product of unresolved issues, something it criticizes the Minsk Group for not discussing as the core reasons for the conflict. The DPA believes that the issue must be discussed in international legal terms and not only within a political framework.

The party considers a political solution impossible, since the Azeris regard the region as theirs, while Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh fundamentally disagree with them, and therefore an impartial jury is required to decide on a legally binding decision regarding Nagorno-Karabakh. The party believes that there are only six possible solutions to the conflict (1) Legal, (2) Political, (3) Economic integration, (4) War, (5) Preservation of the status quo, and (6) Possible union of the states in South Caucasus, including the unrecognized regions, to begin an integration process with the European Union.

The party is unsupportive of the Madrid principles and calls for their abandonment, as it believes that they can never be realized. The party considers the principles unrealistic as on a daily basis Azerbaijan is making military statements claiming that they are going to start a war to regain the territories of Nagorno-Karabakh and its surrounding areas.

The party is also skeptical of the possibility of peacekeepers which would alter the balance of power in an already problematic region. Iran for example has very difficult relations with both the EU and the US and would never agree to the presence of peace keepers (including NATO troops) in the region. The DPA also objects to the Madrid principles as it considers them as biased, assuming that only the Armenian side should make concessions, with the withdraw of their troops from Nagorno-Karabakh and its surrounding regions. The party considers the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as the primary issue and does not agree with the

principle that it should be considered secondary, and has called on the prime minister of Nagorno-Karabakh to withdraw his initial agreement to the principles.

Regarding the role of international actors, the party maintains that the co-chairs within the Minsk Group are the most appropriate for the job and fully adequate, as all the international bodies are presented through France, Russia and the US. Turkey, however, cannot participate in any capacity, as they are considered the defenders of Azerbaijan. The DPA believes that when Turkey closed its borders with Armenia this was a sign of aggression according to international law, something however the international community does not criticize Turkey for, and highlights the irony that whilst Turkey is criticizing Israel for blockading Gaza, they are doing just the same to Armenia.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party believes that confidence building measures are very important for finding a final and comprehensive solution and insuring that trust can emerge between the parties before the final settlement. The party is involved in such work, arranging on an annual basis an international conference in Yerevan which Azeris are invited to with security guarantees, unfortunately however they do not always participate. The party believes that the people of Armenia are very friendly towards Azeris, but unfortunately this cannot be said for Armenians travelling to Azerbaijan.

Regarding free movement the party maintains it is already contributing to this, and is ready to receive and invite Azeris to Armenia. However the party believes that the reluctance of Azeris to visit Armenia is due to the fact that they are demoralized and consider themselves a defeated nation, and cannot accept the fact that the Nagorno-Karabakh people can sustain a statehood and national life independent of Azerbaijan. The party however advocates that the borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan should be reopened and that the border regions should be renovated, something which is in both nation's interest. However, for this to happen President Aliyev must cease from repeating or making any aggressive military statements.

■ Other information

The DPA contested the parliamentary elections in 1995, 1999 and 2003 and claims to have 3750 members of which around 75% are men and 25% women. It currently has no members of parliament.

HERITAGE PARTY



The Heritage Party was established in 2002 and is led by Raffi Hovhannisyan (Party Chairman) who assumed the position in 2003.

www.heritage.am

Heritage Party

ARMENIA

The position of the Heritage Party (HP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with Senior MP Stepan Safaryan held in Yerevan on 15th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party insists that Nagorno-Karabakh should be recognized as an independent state, believing that it has declared its independence according to the Soviet legislation as well as under international law, and has moreover strengthened its own internal democratic institutions over the last 19 years. The HP notes that Nagorno-Karabakh had a president before Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and therefore deserves to be diplomatically recognized. The party maintains this position not only as Armenians or nationalists, but because both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia paid a high price and suffered greatly during the war, and that now after two decades it would be impossible to reincorporate Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan. Though the party believes that there are topics for negotiation with Azerbaijan, the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh identity and sovereignty is non-negotiable and non-revisable due to the history of the conflict. The historical memories of discrimination during the Soviet era and the memories of genocide and occupation over hundreds of years, make it impossible to incorporate Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan.

The party has outlined its position on the conflict fully in its party program – Resolutions 3, 4 and 5 at the last Party Congress. The HP has also put into circulation in the parliament a draft of a law that refers to the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, arguing that the Republic of Armenia should recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

None of the party was directly involved in the armed hostilities of 1989-94, but some members (including senior members) assisted with the distribution and administration of humanitarian aid during the war. The party notes that as the veteran organizations and unions are not political entities it does not maintain official relations, only unofficial ones with some, wishing to keep intact the un-politicized nature of these organizations.

Regarding refugees from the conflict one senior member (secretary fraction) was actively involved in prisoner exchange and their organization is still working with refugees, enjoying

strong links with refugee organizations. This member has also been active in parliament, circulating a draft that highlights refugees often forgotten in the negotiations. The main purpose of this draft however was to bring attention to the subject of ethnic cleansing in Azerbaijan (Baku) against Armenians, and to create a legal basis for compensation of lost properties. The party however laments what it considers a monocular focus on Azerbaijani refugees in negotiations, and neglect of those from Armenia.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The HP considers the OSCE Minsk process as the optimal framework for the peace process and negotiations. The party appreciates that the conflict is very complicated to deal with, and applauds the OSCE's efforts in managing the conflict and ongoing situation. The party however highlights that they have off course not been successful in ultimately solving the conflict. Despite this the HP maintains in general a positive attitude towards the Minsk Group, but is critical towards its terminology and the absence of Nagorno-Karabakh from its negotiations. The party is furthermore critical of the principle that the Group does not take into consideration the historical and legal background to the conflict.

The HP maintains a wholly negative attitude towards the Madrid Principles, considering them as invalid since Nagorno-Karabakh has not participated in the negotiations since 1998, and as Armenia and Azerbaijan do not have the right to negotiate for them. The party considers issues of territorial integrity problematic as they remain highly disputable, it will not for example be drawn into discussion on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan as this would facilitate a need to discuss the territorial integrity of Nagorno-Karabakh as well. It maintains that it is difficult to discuss questions of territorial integrity since the countries of the region gained their borders during the Soviet period - arguing therefore that Azeri claims on Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be maintained as the territory was awarded to Azerbaijan by the Bolsheviks, an act lacking legitimacy.

The party also objects to the Group's label of Armenia as the aggressor and occupier, as Azerbaijan started the war and the reaction of Nagorno-Karabakh can only be regarded as self defence. The HP also criticizes the change in language and tone from the European side in the early 1990s, as though during the Soviet era Nagorno-Karabakh's quest for self-determination was welcomed by the Europeans, when the Soviet Union collapsed this quest was condemned – the party considers this a double standard. The party believes that fully comprehensive approach towards the conflict is needed, including consideration of all legal aspects.

Regarding international involvement the party believes that all actors play both negative and positive roles. For example, though Russian influence in the Caucasus cannot be ignored

for obvious historical and strategic reasons, they are not interested in a conflict settlement, since the current situation is favourable for them. Russia uses the conflict in order to maintain influence over the region. Although all the international actors want to have some kind of settlement, they use the conflict as leverage to keep control over the region, sharing the same logic. The party however believes that there is a distinction as Europe and the US are more interested in a change in the region compared to Russia which wishes to maintain the status quo. The party considers Turkey very openly biased on the Azerbaijani side – something Turkey never hides – and that it operates according to the principle of ‘two states one nation’ with Azerbaijan, having assisted the Azeri’s in the conflict in numerous ways from 1991 up until the present. Furthermore as Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 due to the conflict, and will not reopen it until the conflict is resolved, Turkey’s involvement in the negotiations or in the OSCE Minsk group is unacceptable. The party however believes that Iran has managed to maintain a degree of neutrality.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party believes that civil society organisations should be strongly and actively involved in the peace process. The HP notes that under the rule of Heydar Aliyev NGOs were allowed to work and cooperate with Armenians (taking part in regional and bilateral projects), contributing significantly to confidence building. However in the Ilham Aliyev era it is forbidden for Azerbaijani NGOs to participate in projects aimed at confidence building. The party prefers the period of Heydar Aliyev, as it considers contact between the two nations as very important with a large role to play in mutual trust and confidence building. The party believes these kinds of activities to be very important and is in favour of them and increased interaction.

Regarding the free movement of people though the party believes that it would be nice, but it is not sure to what extent it would be possible before a final peace agreement. The party believes it would be more beneficial to start building communications between Azerbaijani and Armenian parliamentarians, something not done since 2001 when the last group of Azerbaijani parliamentarians visited under Heydar Aliyev’s rule. Regarding such initiatives however the party is wary that they are negatively manipulated both in Armenia and Azerbaijan in different forms and different ways. Despite this however it remains committed to continued contact, visits and hearing different views both in Yerevan and Baku as essential for both sides to understanding one another.

■ Other information

The HP contested the parliamentary elections in 2007 currently has 7 members of parliament. It claims to have a membership of 5000 people.

LABOUR SOCIALIST PARTY OF ARMENIA



The Labour Socialist Party of Armenia was established in January 1996 and is led by Movses Shahverdyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position since the party's inception.

Labour Socialist Party of Armenia (HASK)

ARMENIA

The position of the Labour Socialist Party of Armenia (LSPA) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the LSPA, Movses Shahverdyan held in Yerevan on 17th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party is keenly aware of the history of Nagorno-Karabakh, and maintains that the conflict should be settled by taking the historical justifications into consideration, as the conflict remains a very specific historical issue.

The party believes that the conflict remains centered on the two fundamental principles of territorial integrity and self-determination, but maintains that the principle of historical justice should also be taken into consideration. The party's position on the conflict is based out of consideration for the following historiography of the territory.

The party notes that in 1918 Turkish efforts to establish three independent states in the South Caucasus led to first the emergence of the state of Azerbaijan. At the time the South Caucasus was part of the Russian empire and was divided into five regions (Baku, Yerevan, Yelizavetopol, Tbilisi and Kutaisi). Azeris declared that Azerbaijan should include Baku and Yelizavetopol, nothing more. Georgians claimed their sovereignty over Tbilisi and Kutias. For Armenians the region of Yerevan remained which constituted parts of the Nakhijevan autonomous republic and some parts of present Armenia. The Yelizavetopol region included Nagorno-Karabakh and the Armenian region Zangezur. The party believes that this was an unjust composition for Armenia, since the majority of their historical land was claimed by other states with no historical justification.

Between 1918 and 1920 however these states remained independent entities, and many territorial conflicts emerged between these three republics. After the establishment of the Soviet Union it became less important which state had control over which territory, as when

Soviet rule was established in those territories, Armenians could not object to their land being part of the Azeri state. After the breakup of the Soviet Union however, and the independence of these three states, these historical grievances were reawakened when Nagorno-Karabakh became part of Azerbaijan.

The party furthermore maintains that Nagorno-Karabakh is the only historically Armenian territory where Armenians have been successful in keeping the majority of the population Armenian, out of a total land area of 300,000 km². Given this historical basis, the party believes it impossible that anyone can agree to have Nagorno-Karabakh as part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The party views the origins of the conflict in Azerbaijan's rejection of the right to self-determination for the Nagorno-Karabakh people, and as a result of the war Armenians were successful not only in maintaining Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state but also in liberating the surrounding areas which it considers Armenian's historical lands.

In short the party maintains that with regards to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and settlement, there must be due consideration for the historical truths and acceptance of the de facto situation that Armenia has control over Nagorno-Karabakh and its surrounding areas. The party has declared this position several times and on several occasions since 1998.

Regarding involvement in the hostilities of 1989-94 the Chairman was Deputy Chief of a battalion in the Armenian army and is a retired officer with the rank of Major, and many of the party membership also took part in the conflict. The party maintains friendly but unofficial relations with the veteran organizations from the war, and has close collaborations with refugee organizations working with Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, however it does not enjoy special relations with the elected authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party is quite supportive towards the OSCE Minsk Group, considering it very professional and holds a positive attitude towards their work. The party attentively follows the process and remains interested in seeing its result.

The party has expressed its position on the Madrid principles directly to the incumbent president of Armenia during a meeting he held with all the leaders of the political parties on the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process. The party considers the most disturbing issue regarding the principles the fact that they have not been made public and are not circulating in the Republic of Armenia. The party looks forward to their official publication and distribution, at which point it will make an official statement regarding them.

Regarding the involvement of international actors the party is concerned that when conflict erupts between minor states and unimportant actors in the international system, great powers which become involved are quite capable of imposing solutions on the parties and forcing them to agree on things. The party believes that if the major powers reach a consensus on what should happen with the conflict resolution, neither Azerbaijan, Armenia nor Nagorno-Karabakh would have the luxury to decide on or reject the solution being presented to them.

The party opposes the position of Russia - which claims that the solution is to be found by consensus between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh - as unrealistic since the positions of these three are irreconcilable and as long as they are not forced to accept a position by external actors it will be impossible to get them to agree on common ground.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party believes that even in the long term, NGOs cannot assume that they will be able to play the same role in the South Caucasus as they do in Europe, as the region is comprised of quite different nations with different destinies, principles, cultures, histories and values. The party maintains that considering this reality, the conflict settlement should be delivered by the authorities and not through civil society.

The party however is concerned that the propaganda which is being presented from both sides is not supportive towards the peaceful settlement of the conflict. It notes that when President Aliyev of Azerbaijan is talking about a military solution on a daily basis it is impossible to see how civil society can be successful in efforts of track-two diplomacy.

Regarding the free movement of people the party believes that this is totally dependent on the approaches and positions of the two country's leaders. If there exists goodwill between all the authorities (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh) it will be possible to start cross-border initiatives, since the people living in the border regions have no problems with this. The party recognises that the two nations have been living side by side for a very long time, and must therefore look forward to finding a solution to the issue. However the main responsibility for solving these issues lies on the shoulders of the authorities.

■ Other information

The LSPA has not contested any of the parliamentary elections in the last 20 years and therefore has no members in parliament. It claims to have 2700 members of which around 70% are men and 30% women.

LIBERAL PARTY OF ARMENIA



The Liberal Party of Armenia was established in 2004 and is led by Hovhannes Hovhannisyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position since February 2004.

Liberal Party of Armenia

ARMENIA

The position of the Liberal Party of Armenia (LPA) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the LPA, Hovhannes Hovhannisyan held in Yerevan on 16th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party's position is based on the assumption that if left unresolved in the longer term the conflict may develop into an active war. The party supports the peace process and thinks that the conflict should be settled through peaceful negotiations, but believes that a resolution to the conflict must come from the Armenian and Azeri authorities, and is skeptical of the role of the OSCE Minsk Group in the peace process.

The party claims that during the last number of years the Minsk Group has lost authority in the eyes of Armenians and Azeris, and blames the group for the inactive and nonproductive work of the process, considering this likely to lead to a new war.

The party also feels that the Armenian and the Azeri authorities are not committed to finding a final and comprehensive solution, and it believes that for the incumbent Armenian authorities the unresolved situation of the conflict presents an opportunity to hold onto power indefinitely. The party considers the authority of Armenia to be corrupt and accuses it of creating a monopolistic and undemocratic system of power in Armenia, considering the system of government totally criminalized.

The party therefore believes that none of the parties have a genuine willingness to solve the problem, and that under these circumstances there are only two ways to solve the conflict, either through a new war or employing the method for solving the Yugoslavian crisis in 1995 (the Dayton accords)

The party however maintains that the conflict should be resolved through the following four principles (1) Common borders with Armenia; (2) A peaceful resolution of the conflict based on mutual concessions; (3) Recognition of the right to self-determination for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, which should be recognized by the international community; (4) The provision of security guarantees by the international community for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Regarding the hostilities of 1989-94 the senior leadership was not involved in the armed conflict, but was involved in the delivery of humanitarian aid to refugees. The party Chairman visited Nagorno-Karabakh during the war on several occasions and therefore gained firsthand knowledge of the circumstances on the ground. The party however does

not enjoy any official relations with veteran organizations of the conflict, only unofficial ones, and though the party had good relations with the previous authorities (up to Presidential level) it does not maintain good contacts with the current authorities.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party's objections to the role of the OSCE Minsk Group have developed from the Chairman's previous experience of working with the OSCE co-chairs, during which time he observed the lack of consensus amongst the Group, and therefore is skeptical about their ability to push for a final and viable peace settlement to the conflict.

The party maintains that over the last 18 years of the conflict, every time there has been progress and the opportunity to solve the conflict in a short time frame, at least one of the co-chairs has done its best to break the agreement, with at least one of the co-chairs blocking the parties from finalizing the agreement. The party believes that this is due to the fact that the national and geopolitical interests of the co-chairs have always been greater than their willingness to solve the conflict, making the conflict almost impossible to resolve in a peaceful way.

Regarding the Madrid principles, the party believes that they should have already led to a resolution of the conflict, and finds the lack of process over the last two years very suspicious. The fact that the Azerbaijani side does not seem to agree with the principles is giving the incumbent Armenian President Sarkisyan the opportunity to claim that the Azeris are not willing to accept a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, earlier this year the Azeri President Aliyev (on 9th January 2010, during a meeting with Russian President Medvedev) declared that his country is totally in favor of the principles – that they accept them as a basis for conflict resolution. From this the party concludes that the Armenian side simply does not have a response to the commitment to the principles coming from the Azeri President, and that this shows that the present Armenian administration does not have the capacity to make foreign policy decisions on its own. The party maintains that Russia is to a large extent influencing the present administration in Armenia, which has resulted in the Armenian administration's failure to serve the national interest of Armenia.

Regarding the involvement of Iran and Turkey, the party believes that they cannot be objectively included in any phase of the conflict settlement. The party is also skeptical about European involvement in the conflict, believing that Europe lacks any comprehensive understanding of the conflict and has its own self-interested opinions about it. Concerning Russia, the party believes that it regards the conflict as a tool to strengthen its regional role and ambitions in the South Caucasus. Regarding US involvement, the party maintains that although universal liberal values (in terms of human rights, freedom and liberty) have been advocated by the US in the past, these values are no longer their first priority, and have been superseded by their political interests in the region.

The party furthermore blames the policies of the international community as resulting in the coming to power in both Armenia and Azerbaijan of undemocratic regimes, who have successfully been strengthening their regimes over this time.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party is unsupportive of NGO level contributions, believing that over the last ten years the informal contacts between Armenians and Azeris have been private and non-inclusive. The party maintains that that the groups included in these types of programs never changes, and new actors have not been introduced resulting in a form of a secret society.

The party therefore considers the level of positive contributions from NGOs to be almost zero, and that the majority of the public has in no way been affected by their efforts – something the party regards as extremely poor. The party is especially critical of the use of media in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, claiming that there are no independent media outlets in both countries, and that TV outlets are used solely for propaganda in favor of the incumbent authorities. The information given to publics in both countries is therefore totally opposite to one another.

The party believes that both nations have gone backwards over the last ten years in terms of the conflict resolution process, and that hatred between the nations has increased. The party considers the two incumbent administrations in Armenia and Azerbaijan as responsible for this.

Regarding the free movement of people the party considers this unrealistic and utopian. However the party recognizes that Armenians are tired of the situation and would like to enjoy the right of free movement. Unfortunately, this desire for free movement and the possibility of people to people contacts between both nations is being prevented by both the Armenian and Azerbaijani administrations.

The party believes that in Armenia and Azerbaijan there exists a very sensitive and difficult social environment where the people are pushing the authorities to guarantee social welfare provision for them. To avoid this responsibility the governments are blaming the unsolved conflict for their inability to provide social welfare, increasing mutual hatred between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan. This, unfortunately, is working to the benefit of the nationalistic parties.

■ Other information

The LPA contested the parliamentary elections 2007 and claims to have 5600 members of which around 40% are men and 60% women. It currently has no members of parliament.

NATIONAL CONCILIATION PARTY



The National Conciliation Party was established in 2000 and is led by Aram Harutyunyan (Party Chairman) who assumed the position at the party's inception.

National Conciliation Party

ARMENIA

The position of the National Conciliation Party (NCP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the NCP, Aram Harutyunyan, held in Yerevan on 17th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

Regarding the conflict the party draws a parallel with the German scholar Hilbert's attempt to solve a mathematical formula, which no one had been able to solve for over 300 years. Hilbert said that "Yes, I can solve it but I won't kill the chicken that is coming with golden eggs". In the analogy the party considers the Nagorno-Karabakh issue as a golden egg for the great powers that are involved in the resolution process, which they will never be able to solve since they have conflicting strategic and geopolitical interests in the region. It has thus far not been possible to find common ground on which the Azeris, Armenians, residents of Nagorno-Karabakh and the international community can agree on.

The party maintains that this was illustrated during the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, following which the great powers agreed on a consensus to resolve the issue but were unable to implement it. The party furthermore believes that the longevity of the cease-fire highlights that both the mediators and the parties that are directly involved in the conflict do not want any kind of change to the status quo, as they understand that it would harm their national interests.

The party accepts that there must be a principle of mutual concession made by both sides, but that the issues of freedom and self-determination are priceless and non-negotiable. The party stresses that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh have a God given right to freedom and to defend their right to self-determination, which they have done not only legally but also through the war that was imposed on them by Azerbaijan.

Regarding the hostilities of 1989-94 the Chairman participated in the liberation of the Lachin corridor during 1992-1993, and the party has many members who participated in the war as well as others who were killed.

The party holds meetings with both veterans' organizations and individual veterans from the

war, and is trying to help them in any way they can. During the parliamentary election in 2007, the third candidate on the party's list was the legendary Commander in Chief of the "Arabo Armed Group/Freedom Fighters" (Manvel Yeyhiazanyon), who greatly participated in the Nagorno-Karabakh war. The party is also actively collaborating in particular with an NGO for mothers of soldiers killed in the hostilities.

The party also sustains very close relations with refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh and is also helping them in any way that they can. The party advocates democracy and human rights in Nagorno-Karabakh, and is not supporting any specific political party, cooperating with all of them. The party therefore does not have any special relations with any of the political parties, and furthermore since the conflict has not been settled the party believes that any kind of official relations may harm the situation by politicizing it.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party is very supportive towards the work of the OSCE Minsk Group, and considers the composition of the OSCE Minsk group as very balanced, believing it to be the most comprehensive platform to deal with the issue. However, despite this the conflict has still not been resolved and although (according to the media) several times over the last 5 years a final agreement was close to being signed, the Group has failed to achieve success. The great powers' different approaches towards the conflict settlement are harming any kind of possibility for a final settlement.

The party maintains however that despite this, the pure existence of the OSCE Minsk group proves that there is a peace process, which is very much welcome, and one which has created the platform for frequent contacts between the Azeri, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, which is something that should be supported.

The party however remains pessimistic that the issue can be resolved as regardless of which leader is in power in Armenia they will never agree to have Nagorno-Karabakh subordinated to Azerbaijan, and likewise, no authority in Azerbaijan will ever agree to have Nagorno-Karabakh as a free state.

In short, the party believes that the prevailing attitude held by the parties in the conflict may be summarized as "There are only two types of opinions about this conflict and one opinion is mine and the other is wrong".

The party believes that the composition of the Madrid Principles, as they have been published in different unofficial sources, allows all parties to pick up principles that are in line with their own national interest.

Regarding the role of other international actors, the party believes that the great powers

have their own national interests and therefore cannot be impartial towards the conflict. The party maintains that any kind of mediating role for Turkey is unacceptable, as they are directly involved in the conflict, illustrated by the fact that they closed their borders with Armenia. Iran is facing international isolation and therefore cannot participate in the conflict, even though the Islamic Republic has adopted a very balanced position. When it comes to Russia, the EU and US a final settlement of the conflict is being postponed since it is not in their core interest to reach a final settlement. For the US and Russia in particular a change in the status quo of the region would be dangerous, difficult and undesirable.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

Regarding informal level contributions the party thinks that they should be supported and has a positive attitude toward any kind of initiative. Unfortunately, the party believes that the two nations are not ready for direct talks or contacts. There exists a negative environment in Azerbaijani society beyond the authorities. For example, the Armenian Boxing team had bad experiences during the international competition in Baku, where the public were very hostile towards them.

The party considers the question of free movement before a final peace settlement as a difficult one to answer, but believes that it should be implemented only after the final settlement of the conflict, as it is not safe for Armenians to walk in Baku or in any other place in Azerbaijan.

The party maintains that unfortunately, such movement must be excluded in the near future as although Azeri journalists and politicians are coming to Armenia without needing to worry about their security, freely moving around without even needing to have bodyguards, Armenians do not enjoy the same situation in Azerbaijan.

■ Other information

The NCP contested the parliamentary elections in 2003 and 2007 and claims to have 5000 members of which around 40% are men and 60% women. It currently has no members of parliament.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC UNION



The National Democratic Union was established in 1991 and is led by Vazgen Manukyan, who was the first Prime Minister of independent Armenia, and Defence Minister in 1992/3 during the Karabakh War.

National Democratic Union

ARMENIA

The Position of the National Democratic Union (NDU) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the NDU, Vazgen Manukyan held in Yerevan on 14th June 2010.

■ Position on the future of Nagorno-Karabakh

The NDU excludes the possibility of Nagorno-Karabakh being in any form part of Azerbaijan. However if Azerbaijan agrees to Nagorno-Karabakh being an independent state than there are no problems in terms of returning the IDPs etc.

When the Soviet Union collapsed Nagorno-Karabakh was already separated from Azerbaijan and there was a lot of sympathy in the international community for the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and its people. The clashes that occurred between the Azerbaijani Army and the people of Nagorno-Karabakh eventually led to a full scale war. Nagorno-Karabakh, helped by Armenia, won the war despite the fact that the Azerbaijani Army was twice as big as the combined Armenian-Nagorno-Karabakh forces.

As Prime Minister and later Defence Minister of Armenia during the time of the conflict the Chairman of the NDU played an important role during the conflict. Other party members fought in the conflict and some were even field commanders.

The Party does not have any structured relationship with veteran organizations or with the current Nagorno-Karabakh leadership but keeps informal contacts with all political forces in Karabakh.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The NDU thinks that the OSCE Minsk Group plays a very important role in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict and that they should continue their work as it sees no alternative to them. The NDU may disagree with the opinions of the Minsk Group, but not with their work. They must refrain from working towards a solution whose outcome is that

Nagorno-Karabakh becomes part of Azerbaijan. The NDU disagrees with the Madrid principles, as they have been published, which they consider as having been written in a very ambiguous way.

The NDU is not against the participation of any country in the peace process, except for Turkey. Turkey's position is biased and they cannot be mediators in the conflict. Nonetheless all countries are also pushing for their national interest as they engage with the peace process.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The National Democratic Union believes that people to people contacts have an important role to play in the peace process. The problems for interaction come from Azerbaijan not from the Armenian side. There is not an anti-Azerbaijani feeling in Armenia, but there exists a lot of anti-Armenian sentiment in Azerbaijan. The Party is in favour of free movement of people between the two countries and for economic and trade relations as a basis for helping resolve the conflict.

■ Other information

The National Democratic Union contested the parliamentary elections in 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2007 and claims to have 2000 members of which around 60% are men and 40% women. It currently has no members of parliament. The party has informal contacts with diaspora organizations but is not affiliated to any international platform.

NEW TIMES PARTY



The New Times Party was established in 2003 and is led by Dr. Aram Karapetyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position since the party's inception.

New Times Party

ARMENIA

The position of the New Times Party (NTP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the NTP, Dr. Aram Karapetyan held in Yerevan on 17th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

For the party the main and primary concern of the conflict resolution is to secure the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, with all other points being negotiable. In reference to negotiations between the Armenian and Azeri Presidents mediated by Russia however, the party believes that the main points proposed – the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the regions surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and their replacement with peace keepers, and postponement of the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh – are wrong and the party is totally against any such developments and will never support them.

The party and its senior leaders were directly involved in armed hostilities between 1989-94, but does not wish to elaborate on their involvement. The party does not have any special relationships with veterans or organizations representing veterans from the conflict, and does not have any special relations with organizations, parties or the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh, nor refugees from the conflict.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party claims that it cannot have a position on the OSCE Minsk process as it believes there is no such process and that it is merely an illusion.

The party does not have a position regarding the Madrid principles either as they have not been officially published. The party claims to be well informed about the process, but as no one has presented any official document, they cannot give any comments about it.

Regarding the involvement of international actors, the party believes that all the great powers have different approaches towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict since their

principles and opinions towards the conflict and its settlement are completely opposite to one other.

The party maintains however that Turkey is an exception since it is directly involved in the conflict, blockading the borders and behaving as an aggressor towards Armenia. The party believes that the international community has not achieved anything, and therefore advocates direct talks between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as the only means to find a solution. The party suggests a framework which would include two representatives from Azerbaijan, one that is representing the authority and one that is representing the Azeri refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, as this way there would be a fair representation of all the parties included in the peace talks, since it would be Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh on one side and the two representatives from Azerbaijan on the other side.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party is not supportive of NGO activity, as the Chairman has been actively participating in such programmes and remains sceptical of their utility. In his view the Dortmund Initiatives, a joint initiative supported by the US State Department and the Russian Foreign Ministry, which he participated in for two years had no positive results and he therefore remains very pessimistic with regards to these kinds of efforts and their contributions to the peace process.

Regarding the free movement of people the party believes that all the borders should be opened and people should be able to enjoy free movements. Transportation routes and facilities should also be opened for facilitating peaceful relations between the two nations. The party is totally supportive of establishing diplomatic relations with both Azerbaijan and Turkey prior to the final settlement of the conflict, and does not see any linkage between diplomatic relations and the unresolved disputes between the countries.

■ Other information

The NTP contested the parliamentary elections in 2007 and claims to have 25,000 members of which around 60% are men and 40% women.

PEOPLE'S PARTY



The People's Party was established in 1995
and is led by
Dr. Tigran Karapetyan (Party Chairman)
who has held the position since 2003.
www.diplomat.am

People's Party
ARMENIA

The position of the People's Party (PP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the PP, Dr. Tigran Karapetyan held in Yerevan on 16th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

As the conflict has evolved so has the position of the party. At the very outset of the conflict, the position of the party was to maintain the status quo. However following the conclusion of armed hostilities with the signing of the 1994 cease-fire agreement, which included the signature of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, the party feels that Nagorno-Karabakh has been excluded from negotiations. This is a situation that the party is not satisfied with, and is furthermore frustrated by given the position of the Republic of Armenia which declares that two Armenian states exist - the Republic of Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The party also objects to the participation of Armenia in the negotiations without the participation of Nagorno-Karabakh as abnormal, and believes that both states should participate in negotiations. The party draws parallels with the case of Kosovo, where representatives from Kosovo were at the negotiation table themselves, and not represented by Albania as proxy, which although helping Kosovo was not directly involved in the process.

The party also considers it abnormal that Nagorno-Karabakh has declared independence but not been internationally recognized, citing the international norm that indigenous people that live in a certain territory should be able to employ their right of self-determination.

The party believes that if the process involves any Armenian withdrawal from any part of Nagorno-Karabakh and its surrounding areas, this will be unacceptable to the Armenian people and will be considered a threat to national security. In the case of new hostilities erupting the party maintains that they are ready to go and fight to the very end. The party's position is one of absolutely no concessions, as it believes that any concession will inevitably lead to the loss of Armenian sovereignty and statehood.

Numerous members of the party participated directly in the hostilities of 1989-94, and the party maintains active and positive relations with the veteran organizations as it considers them as freedom fighters and national heroes, and therefore as a very important segment of Armenian society. The party is actively collaborating with the government of Nagorno-Karabakh but does not enjoy close relationships with them.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party evaluates the work of the Minsk Group as incomprehensive, as the negotiations are only being held among the elites and not the people – something which will not lead to

a viable and lasting peace. The party considers it necessary to implement several kinds of trust building measures as well.

The party is critical that though the mediators have been discussing mutual concession for several years now, they have yielded few results. The party believes that any kind of concession from the Azerbaijani side will only give them license to demand more one-sided concessions from the Armenia side which is the direct way towards a new war.

Regarding the Madrid principles, the party takes issues with points regarding the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the point on the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the surrounding areas of Nagorno-Karabakh. The party believes that these two concessions are not balanced, as though the status of Nagorno-Karabakh should be postponed to be decided by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in 10-15 years time, Armenian troops should be withdrawn immediately. Furthermore, the party believes that the territories are like holy things for Armenians and Armenians will therefore never agree to withdraw from any part of what they consider their homeland.

Regarding international involvement the party believes that in general the international community is not very much interested in a final settlement of the conflict, since they have different approaches to the conflict settlement and different national interests in this regard. Russia for example wants to keep this territory divided and under its direct influence. The other actors: Europe and the US want to increase their presence in the region, since they hope to gain access to the energy resources of the Caspian and direct links to Central Asia. The party also believes that Turkey wants the Armenian troops to withdraw from the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh in order to gain direct access to the territory via Nakhijevan and the Armenian Goris region.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party laments the limited role of civil society for conflict resolution in both nations, blaming the authorities from both countries, as although they sometimes agree to push for certain concessions which would increase people to people contacts, as the people are not ready for these concessions they are never finalized.

Regarding the return of IDPs the party supports the idea but considers it impossible in reality, especially from the Azeri side. The party notes that whilst Azeris from Armenia that fled to Azerbaijan were able to sell their properties, in Azerbaijan the Armenians had the direct threat of ethnic cleansing and they all therefore lost their properties and many also lost their lives. The party claims that in Armenia there was not the same experience of ethnic cleansing against Azeris, and that when the Azeris fled they did not lose their properties and not a single Azeri was killed during the process. The party also maintains that the international community does know the truth about the ethnic cleansing in different regions of Azerbaijan.

■ Other information

The Christian Democratic Union Party contested the parliamentary elections in 2003 and 2007 and claims to have 18,000 members of which around 95% are men and 5% women. It currently has no members of parliament. The party also produces its own newspaper the "Kochnak" magazine

PROSPEROUS ARMENIA PARTY



The Prosperous Armenia Party was established in 2004 and is led by Gagik Tsarukyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position since 30th April 2004.

www.bhk.am

Prosperous Armenia Party

ARMENIA

The position of the Prosperous Armenia Party (PAP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the spokesperson of the PAP, Khachik Galstyan held in Yerevan on 15th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

As part of the ruling coalition the PAP considers its viewpoint on the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process as very important. The party considers Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state, and maintains that this is an irrevocable fact. One of the main objectives of the PAP is to secure the international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh's statehood and independence. The party also believes that the Republic of Armenia should do all in its power to sustain the peaceful and secure existence of Nagorno-Karabakh and its people.

The party has actively expressed its views regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement, and on the principles over which the conflict is being negotiated. In February 2009 Chairman Tsarukyan set out definitively the party's current position on the conflict, and over the last two years the party has made several speeches, declarations and issued resolutions that define the position of the party. The PAP is actively engaged with Russian think-tanks in formulating its viewpoints regarding the conflict and its settlement process, and has publically announced the principles which it supports as the basis for the process.

Regarding involvement in the hostilities of 1989-94 some party members, including MPs, were directly involved in the armed hostilities – however only as Volunteer Defense Forces, not as part of the Regular Army. The party has been actively involved in charitable works towards veterans of the conflict, helping in particular the Veterans Union. The PAP is involved in delivering humanitarian aid with special attention to the border regions which were heavily bombarded by the Azeri regular army.

The party enjoys wide scale cooperation (inter-parliamentarian cooperation) with the parliament of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, holding joint sessions to discuss common political issues and has good relationships with both the political parties and NGOs of Nagorno-Karabakh. The PAP was also actively involved in the last elections in Nagorno-Karabakh as observers.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party maintains that the OSCE Minsk Group is the only legitimate body to deal with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and therefore it will only support them. One of the party's members is also the head of the Armenian delegation to the OSCE parliamentary assembly. The PAP uses this involvement to share its understanding and objective view on the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process with the OSCE. The party furthermore believes that for the last 18 years (since 1992) the Minsk Group has proved to be the only legitimate, professional body to deal with the issue and to have the capacity to work towards a peaceful settlement in an objective manner.

Regarding the Madrid principles the party has publically expressed that they are acceptable and should be fully employed. The party believes that the principles will deliver the opportunity for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to employ their right to self determination in an unambiguous and straight forward way. The party however maintains that the interim status (awarded before the final settlement of the conflict) should not involve a downgrading of the current legal and international status enjoyed by Nagorno-Karabakh Republic today. Furthermore, the Republic of Azerbaijan must accept the existence of an independent Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as immutable fact from the very outset of the peace process, in order for the process to continue and this should be a precondition for starting the process.

Regarding the role of foreign actors the party believes that despite the recent Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, the Turkish-Armenian relationship cannot be linked to the peace process. Nagorno-Karabakh should not pay the price for the normalization of the Turkish-Armenian relations and this is something that all the actors involved, including the international community, should realize. The PAP supports all active mediation from the Russian Federation which is considered very important and priceless in order to create stability in the region. The party however recognizes the regional geopolitical dimension to the conflict and therefore advocates an inclusive and balanced approach regarding regional involvement. The PAP furthermore advocates positive involvement from the EU with regards to conflict resolution and transformation as very important, as it will in the future provide a common reference lowering the contradiction between the sides in terms of values and principles, helping the two sides to find and implement a final solution.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

Regarding the role of informal NGO level contributions the party supports all efforts, considering these contributions to be very powerful and encourages greater contributions. The party believes that for a comprehensive solution it is important to have interaction between all parties at all levels, as this will make them more cooperative and will ease contradictions, enabling a final peaceful agreement. The current lack of cooperation between the two sides deepens the lack of trust between their nations and peoples. The PAP claims that the Armenian side is very constructive and understands that the peace process should undergo collaboration between all parties and segments of society, which must come to support the final settlement of the process.

The party maintains that the possible return of IDPs and refugees should be dealt with only after the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh is determined in legal terms. As long as recognised diplomatic ties do not exist and Azerbaijan continues to block Armenian borders, the party believes that it is too early to consider the free movements of nations, ie. movement over the borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

■ Other information

The PAP contested the parliamentary elections in 2007 gaining 29 members of parliament. The party has its own Television media outlet the "Kentron" TV channel.

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF ARMENIA



The Republican Party of Armenia was established on 2nd April 1990 from a national independence movement, and is led by Serzh Sargsyan (Party Chairman) who assumed the position in 2007.
www.hhk.am

Republican Party of Armenia

ARMENIA

The position of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with Member of Parliament and senior member of the RPA Eduard Sharmazanov, held in Yerevan on 15th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The RPA maintains that the conflict should have a peaceful resolution and is totally against any military solution, which they believe has been advocated by the Azeri side. The party considers the platform presented by the OSCE Minsk group as the most justified one and supports it as the only way to proceed. It is also in support of the Madrid principles and considers them a good starting point for the peaceful settlement of the conflict. The party made its position clear at the parliamentary and presidential elections that they support the Madrid principles, and position themselves firmly on the following three points:

Firstly, that Nagorno-Karabakh Republic cannot be subordinated to and included in the Azerbaijan Republic. This position is based on the view that Nagorno-Karabakh became independent according to the internal legislation of the Soviet Union and according to international law and that not for a single day has Nagorno-Karabakh ever been part of an independent Azerbaijan Republic. It is considered a matter of fact that according to internal Soviet legislation Nagorno-Karabakh became independent before the Republic of Azerbaijan established its independence.

Secondly, that Nagorno-Karabakh should have a common land border with Armenia.

Thirdly, that the international community and actors dealing with the conflict should give firm security guarantees for Nagorno-Karabakh and its people.

The party has held these points consistently over the last years and they have not changed, they remain the party's primary concerns with regards to the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The party has issued several statements and declarations to this effect, including those of

the Chairman of the party and current President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan. These are widely available from numerous sources, including the internet.

All of the leaders of the RPA were actively involved in the hostilities of 1989-94. The founder of the party, Ashot Navasardyan, was a political prisoner during the Soviet era for 11 years. In 1989 he established the Liberation Army of Armenia, which has actively fought for the security of the borders of the Armenian Republic and the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. The co-founder of the party Vazgen Sargsyan was also actively involved in the war, playing a management and organizational role. Andranik Markaryan (long time Prime Minister of Armenia) also contributed to the war and was also a political prisoner during the Soviet era, and actively fought for the independence of Armenia. The President, from the beginning of the war, was the Defense Army Commander of Nagorno-Karabakh before moving to become Defense Minister of Armenia, and later signed the cease-fire agreement. The majority of RPA members and people affiliated with the party have not only been actively involved in the war, but also in the establishment of the Nagorno-Karabakh government.

The party maintains close links with veteran organizations and due to a common national conservative ideology has been actively collaborating with them

The party considers Armenia the protector of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's security and has therefore established very good relationships and cooperation, both with the authorities and the political parties (both opposition and ruling parties). During the last elections in Nagorno-Karabakh Republic the National Assembly of Armenia sent a delegation with 12 MPs to observe the election, which the interviewee headed personally.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party continues to support the process and believes that as long as negotiations continue there exists a positive dynamic which they will continue to support, based in the co-chairs' and the international community's commitment to a peaceful settlement to the conflict. The party highlights the references to the right to self determination in official documents presented at the Athens summit, 2009, as a positive development which they welcome. They maintain that the corner stone in negotiations is the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Regarding the Madrid principles, as outlined by the President, the party accepts them as a starting point for the negotiations, but does not agree on all points that have been presented in the mass media. The party maintains the three points outlined above as immutable. It also maintains that the Republic of Azerbaijan has been inconsistent in their position/attitude towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict and the Madrid Principles

and has on a regular basis used military rhetoric harmful to the peace process.

The party maintains the current composition of the OSCE Minsk group as the most suitable one to deal with the conflict. They consider the co-chairs to be doing a good job and to be contributing to the peaceful settlement of the conflict. Russia in particular is to be applauded for its latest active efforts and involvement, and Iran's mediating role as a balance is also appreciated. Turkey however has no role to play, not in any capacity, since they are supporting one side of the conflict, both politically and militarily. The party intransigently maintains that Turkey cannot be involved in the conflict settlement and will never support them being a part of the negotiations. The party claims that theoretically Greece has more rights to be a mediator in the conflict between Turkey and Cyprus than Turkey has the right to be a mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Turkey should better deal with their internal problems, in terms of the Kurdish issue, the Cyprus issue and their own democratic issues.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

Any kind of support to the peaceful process is warmly supported from the RPA. However the party is wary that unreliable NGOs can harm the peace process and the positive achievements that have been reached so far. Therefore the party believes that peace negotiations should be conducted by the OSCE Minsk Group alone and not in any other format.

Regarding the movement of people, the most important issue for the party is the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh. The free movement of people is a secondary issue to be dealt with only after the final peace agreement. The party looks forward to the awarding of Nagorno-Karabakh's final *de jure* status, as after that negotiations about the return of IDPs and refugees can begin. The party believes that the situation cannot be solved by starting with the end result; but by looking at the causes of the problem – that questions of IDPs and refugees can only be addressed once the cause of their displacement is resolved.

■ Other information

The RPA has contested all the parliamentary elections of the last twenty years and claims to have 135,000 members of which around 70% are men and 30% women. It currently has 65 members of parliament. The party has its own media outlet at www.hhk.am

SARDRAPAT MOVEMENT



The “Sardrapat” Movement was established as a civil society initiative group on 13 October 2009. The movement contests the incumbent authorities as undemocratic and aims to bring the power back to the people.

“Sardarapat” Movement

ARMENIA

The position of the "Sardarapat" Movement (SM) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with member Jirayr Sefilyan held in Yerevan on 22nd June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The movement believes that there is no conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh, only a conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and considers the Nagorno-Karabakh issue already resolved - remaining tensions the result of other unresolved issues with Azerbaijan such as the issue of Nakhijevan.

The movement maintains that the de facto union between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh should be legalized as soon as possible with regards to the international law, and considers Armenian policy towards Nagorno-Karabakh since 1992 as wrong since it has treated it as a separate independent state. The SM maintains that the national liberation movement that started in 1988 was aimed at reuniting Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh, which was illegally annexed from Armenia during the Soviet era. The Armenian policy since 1992 has therefore been detached from the national feelings of the Armenia people, and the SM therefore disapproves of it.

The SM therefore supports the status quo situation that was established after the cease-fire in 1994 and believes that any kind of change to it is not only against the national interest of Armenia, but also has the capacity to upset the regional security environment in the South Caucasus.

Members of the senior leadership were directly involved in armed hostilities between 1989-94, the interviewee was for example the Commander in Chief for a Special Battalion involved in the liberation of Sush. Up until 1999 he served in the army in several different positions, including senior positions in the Defence Ministry. Many of the movement's members also actively participated in the war. The movement stresses its very close cooperation with individual veterans, but only enjoys unofficial relations with the organizations representing veterans.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

Regarding the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group the movement believes that they are not putting full effort into finding a solution to the conflict, and that individuals within the group are only serving their own national interests in the region. As long as the conflict remains unresolved the great powers involved in the peace process will continue to use this as leverage over Armenian and Azerbaijan.

To the extent that the Madrid principles have been accurately published unofficially in various media sources the movement strongly opposes the principles, and believes that they do not serve the national interest of the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. In particular the movement strongly opposes the first principle which refers to the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied territories, as it considers these as liberated regions and which should not be withdrawn from by a single inch. As the principles are aimed at changing the status quo which the movement supports, it is strongly against them.

Regarding the involvement of international actors the SM maintains that mediation and good will from any party is welcome, with the exception of Turkey which should be totally excluded as it is currently an enemy state to Armenia.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

With regards to NGOs the SM believes that they haven't made any positive contributions so far, with efforts only being superficial and achieving few results. The movement also believes that the majority of NGOs (which are funded by the West) are only trying to serve their own special interests and have not been contributing to a resolution.

Regarding the free movement of people, the SM is not against giving access to Armenian transit routes to anyone under international law. However, as Armenia is being blockaded from both the Turkish and the Azerbaijani side, such free movement is impossible. For example although there exists a railway from Kars to Gumri, as well as one from Nakhijevan to Azerbaijan via Armenia, instead of utilising these Turkey and Azerbaijan have constructed a new railway from Baku to Kars via Georgia – the SM considers this project the act of an enemy, and believes that as this project has European sponsors, its aim is to isolate Armenia.

■ Other information

The SM has two own media outlets www.azatagrum.org and www.sardarapat.org; as well as pages on facebook.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC (HNCHAKYAN) PARTY



The Social Democratic (Hnchakyan) Party was established in 1887 in Geneva as a revolutionary struggle and national liberation movement. It is currently led by Vahan Shirkhanyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position since 2009.

Social Democratic (Hnchakyan) Party

ARMENIA

The position of the Social Democratic (Hnchakyan) Party (SDHP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the SDHP, Vahan Shirkhanyan held in Yerevan on 16th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party outlined its position on the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process comprehensively at the 2009 party convention. The SDHP maintains that the independence and sovereignty of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the regions surrounding its territory, should be recognized.

The party was actively involved in the hostilities of 1989-1994, Chariman Shirkhanyan being the first leader of the Armenian Defense Body, and chairman of the Defense Committee. When the Committee became the Ministry of Defense he became the First Deputy Minister for Defense, a position which he held for numerous years. The party claims to have many veterans of the war amongst its membership, including freedom fighters. These fighters have maintained strong private relations and collaborations with their military friends in Nagorno-Karabakh, and the party has conducted many meetings with the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities. The party also enjoys a very wide range of collaborations with the youth and veteran organizations of Nagorno-Karabakh.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party has a very negative attitude towards the OSCE Minsk process, and evaluates the work and efforts of the Group negatively. The party believes that the war is over and the cease-fire is signed not because of the efforts from the Minsk group, but because of the fighting and work that they have done themselves. The SDHP believes that although the Group has been working since 1992, there have not been any positive developments since 1994 when the cease-fire agreement were signed. In fact the party claims that

developments have been negative with mutual trust between the parties declining, and that the situation today is worse than in 1994. The party is sceptical that the mediators are really trying to find peace in the region, sighting the following examples:

- (1) That the former American co-chair Stephen Mann was at the time he worked for the Minsk Group also responsible for the Caspian Energy Program and manager of the BTC project, and therefore could not be an impartial mediator in the conflict since he held other interests.
- (2) The next American co-chair, Mathew Bryza was (during 2007-2008) actively discussing the Trans-Caspian Pipeline with President Aliyev and he is now the new ambassador to Azerbaijan.

The party believes that this provides example of why the Minsk Group's motives cannot be trusted, and that the great powers are only interested in a conflict settlement to ensure their capability to access Caspian oil and the gas of Azerbaijan.

Regarding the Madrid Principles, the party considers their implementation as the direct way to a new war, as it considers the principles to be biased as they outline the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the liberated Nagorno-Karabakh; that the Azeri refugees should have the right of return; and the postponement of deciding the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Furthermore, the party rejects the principles as they do not mention the return of Armenian refugees which number over 800,000.

The principles also do not include reference to the origin and the real essence of the conflict. The party believes that the conflict erupted between two nations and not two authorities, between Armenian freedom fighters and the Azerbaijani regular army in the early 1990s. The SDHP maintains that the war is a result of a triangle of: hatred – referring to the military; atrocities – referring to the people; enemies – referring to the authorities

The mediators are trying to make peace between the authorities, but do not enjoy the trust of the people in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Any kind of solution that is not comprehensive and does not satisfy the other sides of the triangle, the people and the military, will lead to a new war. Confidence building measures within these two - among the nations and the combatants from the war - is therefore essential and any agreement without these two points will be useless. In particular the party believes that the veterans (which number several thousand from both Armenia and Azerbaijan) must be satisfied otherwise a new war is possible regardless of the position of the authorities, and systematic meetings between the combats from Armenia and Azerbaijan must be pursued.

Regarding Turkey, the party maintains that it cannot be involved in any capacity or in any framework, since it is deepening the mistrust between the conflicting parties. The SDHP also believes that Turkey was a full scale party of the war, acting as an ally to Azerbaijan. The party also believes that as they have invested billions of dollars in the oil and gas industry in Azerbaijan, the co-chairs of the Minsk Group should also not be involved.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party believes that people to people contacts and civil society activity are extremely important. Such efforts should however be conducted by the organizations that have been directly involved in the war, and contacts should be made by the parties that have a specific understanding informed by personal experience of the conflict, including hardliners reluctant to find a peaceful solution. This is because Armenians and Azeris lost 30,000 lives - meaning that there are 60,000 parents who lost their children during the war - an unsatisfactory resolution could bring up new conflicts if these people are not content with the peace settlement.

The party also considers free movement as a positive thing. Cross-border interaction however should be conducted through confidence building measures between the nation's peoples. The party believes that it will be easy to start cross-border trade, particularly on the entire border of the autonomous Nakhijevan republic.

■ Other information

The SDHP contested the parliamentary elections in 1990 and 2007 and claims to have 2300 members of which around 90% are men and 10% women. It currently has no members of parliament. The party has branches in 22 countries across the world, and is particularly strong amongst the Armenian diaspora communities of France and Lebanon.

UNION OF NATIONAL SELF DETERMINATION PARTY



The Union for National Self-Determination Party was established in 1987 as an underground organization, and is led by Paruyr Hayrikyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position since the party's inception.

www.aimusd.org

Union for National Self-Determination Party

ARMENIA

The position of the Union for National Self-Determination Party (UNSDP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the UNSDP, Paruyr Hayrikyan held in Yerevan on 17th June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

In 1988 the party made an appeal for the creation of the two nation-states of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and for the main goal of these new states to become free and democratic countries. This was highly provocative towards the Soviet Union, and as a result the Chairman was arrested and deported to Ethiopia. The party's main position on the conflict is that it was created by Moscow from the very beginning. In the present however the party believes that conflict resolution must follow democratic principles, and that the people should participate in the decision making processes as this will facilitate finding a solution to the conflict.

The party considers its name as outlining clearly its position as one seeking the right to national self-determination in the region. The party's commitment to self-determination is not only limited to Nagorno-Karabakh however. It considers it the main principle of all international relations, maintaining that there is no principle of territorial integrity without the right to self-determination and to sustain territorial integrity, territories must first be established by employing the right of self-determination. Furthermore, the principle of territorial integrity is established to sustain stability and security in international relations, but there cannot be any security if human rights are not respected and protected. Territorial integrity should therefore not take precedence over human rights. This is the core belief of the party and is illustrated in all its statements and declarations.

The party was actively involved in the hostilities of 1989-1994. The Armenian national hero Movses Gorgsyan, killed in 1990, was one of the five founders of the UNSDP. The Chairman was a commander in the Lachin corridor (from 1992), and was nominated as a prefect by the National Assembly and the President with the task of establishing refugee camps. During

this time more than 50 of the members of the UNSDP were killed while defending the refugees.

The party however believes that it is not good for political parties to be involved in armed hostilities, and therefore although the members of the party that participated were volunteers, they were not armed combatants but were there to build refugee settlements. Before the war the Chairman was good friends with the Azeri foreign minister, as they were both members of a Coordinating Center that included all democratic movements under the Soviet Union, and as a result of their friendship many hostages captured during the fighting were released. However when he became a commander in Lachin this relationship ended, as he became actively involved in the conflict.

Although the party has many veterans within its membership, it holds no special relations with veteran organizations. In 1988 the party established a charity organization (as a sister organization to the party) which worked in Nagorno-Karabakh for a number of years, however today the party does not enjoy special relations with organisations and parties, the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh or refugees from the conflict.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party has always claimed that the internationalization of the issue is good for the conflict, and is therefore very positive towards the OSCE Minsk process. The party has maintained this position as it believes that in cases where a conflict becomes internationalized, international law is given a bigger role to play in the conflict resolution. Furthermore, in the absence of international involvement, if the conflict was to be resolved internally, national interests overrule international law.

Regarding the Madrid principles, the party believes that as they do not distinguish between the principles of international law and international agreement, they cannot be supported. The party also objects to the principles of the invariability of borders, arguing that if this was maintained in the cases of Kosovo and Germany they would not have been established and reunified respectively. The party also does not recognize the legitimacy of the borders established by the Soviet Union, drawing parallels between those drawn in the region by Josef Stalin as the same as the so-called borders of Europe drawn by Adolf Hitler. The party moreover points to the borders of the region drawn by the League of Nations in 1920, as a historical precedent which enjoyed greater consensus.

Regarding the involvement of other international actors, the party believes that the region should move towards EU integration and greater integration with Western countries.

The party furthermore believes in the exclusion of any kind of role for Turkey and Russia in the conflict settlement, since they were directly involved in the conflict - Turkey as an ally to Azerbaijan and Russia as supplying weapons to all parties in the conflict (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh). The party does not consider Russia as a friend of Armenia, as it has supplied weapons to Azerbaijan which it may use in a future conflict.

The party however is very supportive of the European approach towards the conflict which it considers very comprehensive, having taken into consideration all the aspects of the conflict. The party has maintained for some 15 years the position that the integration of Armenia and Azerbaijan into the EU would make the conflict senseless, and therefore believes it should be pursued as a lasting solution to the conflict.

The party does not hold a position on the involvement of Iran.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party believes that neither Armenian nor Azerbaijani NGOs have a role to play in the conflict. The party also maintains that track-two diplomacy regarding the conflict is ineffectual, and argues that this is something recognised internally by NGOs conducting it. The party believes that the only means to resolving the conflict is a political solution.

The party however concedes that unofficial people to people contacts may have a positive role to play in terms of lowering the amount of hatred between the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan and their perceptions of one another as enemies. The party considers this activity as particularly important as new generations are being brought up with ingrained hatred towards one other, and these activities can play a big role in undermining that hatred. NGOs have an important role therefore to play in stimulating informal contacts and bringing the two nations closer together.

Regarding the free movement of people, the party has maintained for many years that even if the conflict is ongoing all the borders, including the borders with the Nakhijevan autonomous republic, must be reopened. The party believes that all kinds of cross-border interaction should be stimulated, including free movements of people but also free trade in order to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The party however remains pessimistic, and considers such a border regime as unworkable, since both administrations in Armenia and Azerbaijan are still very hostile towards one another, with several political leaders in both countries still not recognizing that they cannot change their neighbours and must therefore learn to live together.

■ Other information

The UNSDP contested the parliamentary elections in 1990, 1995 and 1999 and claims to have 4000 members of which around 60% are men and 40% women. It currently has no members of parliament.

UNITED LABOUR PARTY



The United Labour Party was established in 2002 and is led by Gurgen Arsenyan (Party Chairman) who has held the position since 21st September 2002.

www.ulp.am

United Labour Party

ARMENIA

The position of the United Labour Party (ULP) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Chairman of the ULP, Gurgen Arsenyan held in Yerevan on 23rd June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The party maintains that after the collapse of the Soviet Union Armenians experienced ethnic cleansing both in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Azerbaijan. The party draws a linkage between the genocide that happen during the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and the ethnic cleansing that occurred in Nagorno-Karabakh and different cities of Azerbaijan during the 1990s, and believes that Armenia's failure to act 100 years ago allowed the current armed hostilities to develop. The gap between the two nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan has only widened, resulting in the current state of affairs. The position of the party towards the conflict resolution process is that the issue should be overcome by a legally binding expression of popular will from the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. The party maintains that any kind of "good" war is ten times worse than the "worst" of negotiations.

The party has made the following two declarations regarding the conflict resolution: (1) That the final borders must completely conform to the line of contact existing today, and (2) The solution should be equally bad or equally good for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and the people of Azerbaijan, and a common ground should be found.

Regarding the hostilities of 1989-94 the Chairman was personally involved in armed combat and was a member of the Independence Army of Armenia which was created before the Republic of Armenia was declared, and later transformed into the Republican Party of Armenia. During the armed hostilities many of the party's members were killed in combat. The party enjoys warm relationships with the veteran organizations, since many of the members of these organizations were also members in the Independence Army, and much of the party's membership are also members of the veteran organizations. The party also has working relations with all of the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh and organizations representing the refugees from the conflict.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

Regarding the OSCE Minsk Group the party evaluates the efforts being done by them as very positive, since they have been contributing to the peace since the cease-fire in 1994, and any peace is better than war. The party also highly appreciates the efforts and willingness of the co-chairs in the Minsk Group to solve the conflict.

The party appreciates, welcomes and is very much supportive of the Madrid principles, believing that by employing the principles a more serious solution is possible and that the process can move forward with them.

Regarding the involvement of international actors, the party is supportive of the three co-chair framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, and believes that this should be preserved considering it premature to have other states entering the peace process. The possible involvement of Turkey in the peace process is not acceptable, given Turkey's participation in the blockade of Armenia.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party is supportive of the involvement of NGOs as it believes that any kind of informal contact and interaction between the two nations can bring them closer to a more positive environment of mutual understanding. This is essential given the huge amount of negative propaganda coming from both countries which undermines the possibility of creating such an environment. Civil society initiatives from both sides can also lower the likelihood of retributions being sought and weakens groups that are calling for revenge. The party believes that such activity will also decrease the possibility of a future war, something which must be avoided at all costs as any future war would destroy both countries.

Regarding free movement, the party is supportive of the idea of having good relations with all Armenia's neighbours. The party maintains that no Azeri has any problem to move freely in Armenia, however it is ignorant of the situation for Armenians in Azerbaijan and cannot comment on this.

■ Other information

The ULP contested the parliamentary elections in 2003 and 2007 and claims to have 3500 members of which around 60% are men and 40% women. The Party Chairman, Gurban

Arsenian served as an MP from 2000-2007 and the party had six MPs in the Parliament between 2003-2007. It currently has no members of parliament.

UNITED LIBERAL NATIONAL PARTY (MIAK)



The United Liberal National Party (MIAK) was established in 2007 and is currently led by Ara Hovsepyan (Secretary-General) who assumed the position in 2009.

www.miak.am

United Liberal National Party (MIAK)

ARMENIA

The position of the United Liberal National Party (ULNP) (*abbreviated in Armenian as MIAK*) on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peace process, based on an interview with the Secretary-General of the ULNP, Ara Hovsepyan held in Yerevan on 21st June 2010.

■ Position on Nagorno-Karabakh and its future

The position of the party regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is fundamentally that whatever resolution is reached it should reflect the popular will and the interests of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh (those the party considers as current residents of Nagorno-Karabakh) and therefore no resolution can be negotiated or agreed without the acceptance from the residents and citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh. Furthermore, the resolution should reflect the two principles of national self-determination and territorial integrity, with both principles being regarded of equal importance.

Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh issue the party follows the lead of President Serzh Sargsyan and welcomes the steps the President is taking to negotiate a final solution, believing that they are both appropriate and in line with the national interest of Armenia.

None of the senior leadership was involved in the hostilities of 1989-94, and the party does not have any special relationships with veteran organizations, or with the authorities of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

■ Position on the peace process and international involvement

The party regards the OSCE Minsk process as the most viable framework amongst all available options which has proven itself to be the most longstanding, providing an opportunity for Armenia and Azerbaijan to meet, negotiate, discuss and exchange views.

The party believes that the OSCE Minsk process has not expired itself and still enjoys potential to continue.

Regarding the Madrid principles, the party has not publically expressed its position, and as it is following the Presidential line does not feel the need to express its position since it is identical to that of the President, the party wholeheartedly supporting his approach on the issue.

Regarding other international actors the party believes that any regional countries or actors that can contribute to the peace process should be welcomed to participate, but their participation must be in a structured way so as not to detract from the work of the existing framework, the OSCE Minsk Group. The party maintains that the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group have a big role to play in negotiations for resolving the conflict, and that after 15 years of direct involvement in the negotiations of the conflict they have developed and gained a lot of knowledge and experience, and therefore can continue to play a valuable role.

The party hopes that Turkey can play a more constructive role and believes that it has the potential to certainly do so in the future. However Turkey's continued close relations with Azerbaijan prevent it from being an impartial regional force and a country that can contribute effectively to the peace process. The party also highlights Turkey's failure to ratify the Armenian-Turkish protocol for re-establishing diplomatic ties and re-opening the borders, and believes that if Turkey had been more pragmatic in their approach towards the conflict, a solution may have already been reached.

The party considers that Iran has adopted the correct position in regard to the conflicting parties on its border, acting as an impartial neighbour to both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and behaving in a manner sensitive to its own Armenian and Azeri minorities.

The party maintains that there is certainly more that the EU can do for the process, in particular with regards to different political and economic programs, and criticizes the EU therefore as currently underutilizing its potential.

■ On people to people contacts and civil society activity

The party believes that NGOs definitely have a role to play prior to a formal settlement, and that they should therefore be more active. The party highlights that in the past NGOs were much more active and that there existed quite a lot of direct contacts between Armenian and Azeri groups, with additional contacts established through third parties - predominately organisations and platforms either located in, or acting through Georgia. Over the last several years however these contacts have weakened. The party suggests that this is due to

a government policy in Azerbaijan that tries to minimize any kind of relations or informal contacts between any groups from the two countries. The party maintains that though there is willingness for such activity on the Armenian side, there is much less willingness from Azerbaijan.

Regarding the free movement of people, the party has not considered this in depth before, but believes that it is unrealistic and would have little point, due to issues of security which would prevent any such initiative from being implemented before a final agreement is reached. Furthermore the party maintains that although one good project for example may be the opening of the railway which connects Nakhijevan to Azerbaijan, by-passing Armenia, people would not accept such an opening before they knew clearly that their futures were secure - suggesting that cross-border initiatives and people to people interactions that go beyond simple discussions for,- and may impact economic and security issues - before a final agreement, are completely unrealistic.

■ Other information

The ULNP contested the parliamentary elections in 2007 and claims to have 1500 members of which around 50% are men and 50% women. It currently has no members of parliament.