

## **Abstract**

# Azerbaijan-Turkish Relations(1992-2012):common interests and Solidarity

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November 2012

This thesis is aimed to study the main aspects of Azerbaijan and Turkey in a historical perspective on the one hand and to examine foreign policy formation during the Abulfaz Elchibey,Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev periods on the other. The essential force on this work is to show the real duty is being favored by both country with an emphasis on the national interests in accordance to the contemporary political sphere .

Keywords :Bilateral relations, Economical interests, Strategic Depth, Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan –Turkish Relations

## Acknowledgments

I am so thankful to my supervisor Dr.Emmanuel Karagiannis(Assistant Professor of Russian and post-Soviet Politics at the University of Macedonia's Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies in Thessaloniki, Greece) for his guidance throughout the research and Prof.Dr. Anar Valiyev(Assistant Professor and Dean of School of International Affairs of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy)for his comments and suggestions. I tried to use the significant sources in the Azerbaijani,Turkish and English languages

## List of Abbreviations

<b>JDP</b>	Justice and Development Party
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation In Europe
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>GUAM</b>	GEORGIA/UKRAINE/AZERBAIJAN/MOLDOVA
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CSCE</b>	Commission on Security and Co-operation In Europe
<b>AIOC</b>	Azerbaijan International Operating Company
<b>BTC</b>	Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan (Pipeline)
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet and Socialist Republics
<b>OMON</b>	Otryad Politsii Osobogo Naznacheniya (Special Purpose Police Unit)
<b>MIT</b>	Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı (National Intelligence Organization)
<b>PKK</b>	Kurdistan Workers' Party
<b>NK</b>	Nagorno-Karabakh

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## Introduction

The big world-innovation -the end of Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Union-the empire of the Communist system had done presentable changes on the world map by mentioning new independence 15 countries at Caucasus, Central Asia and Europe.

Azerbaijan is also one the former from Soviet Union at Caucasus region, that got its independence in 1991 within a hundreds victims bloody war because of Soviet system roughness and Armenia separation ideas- in the northern-west part of Azerbaijan. It is true that Azerbaijan. Like other countries from former Soviet Union, faced many obstacles as it took its first steps towards independence.

Turkey is the first country ,that approved the independence of Azerbaijan in 1990 years and made military support as governmental level to this young independent country. It is not accidental that the first Azerbaijan Democratic Republic ,headed by Mammad Amin Rasulzade, who got big support from brother country-Turkey in establishing process of Azerbaijani government ,separate from USSR in 1918.Unfortunately,this republic could be alive just 23 months, and destroyed by Bolshevik power in the region.

The political circumstance and gradually growing weakness of Moscow government gave an opportunity for Turkey to penetrate the former Soviet space giving it chance to follow a different kind of foreign policy. As the years would progress, this relationship would attain certain labels such as brotherly nations giving emphasis on normative elements such as language, culture, and history.

In other words, the Azerbaijani-Turkish engagement has always been a pragmatic one based on realist intentions instead of the popular sentiment of One Nation Two States which had a limited appeal even at the dawn of the Azerbaijani-Turkish engagement and became more apparent as the Justice and Development started to initiate a different kind of foreign policy initiative in the South Caucasus.

Generally ,we could divide the historical and economic development of Azerbaijan in the region in the case of cooperation and improvement of its suzerainty with neighboring countries into three phrases according to the presidential period In this thesis we will discuss the Turks and Azerbaijanis warmer feelings toward each other than probably to any other nation in the world. The two countries share powerful common interests in regional security, trade and energy cooperation. There are burgeoning cultural and educational exchanges.



Map of Azerbaijan with border countries

## **Main theoretical ideas-Complex Interdependence and Realist IR**

The irrelevant theory with the thesis-Complex interdependence in international relations is the idea put forth by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. The concept of economic interdependence was popularized through the work of Richard N. Cooper. The term “complex interdependence” was claimed by Raymond Leslie Buell in 1925 to describe the new ordering among economies, cultures and races.

The theorists recognized that the various and complex transnational connections and interdependencies between states and societies were increasing, while the use of military force and power balancing are decreasing but remain important. In making use of the concept of interdependence, Keohane and Nye also importantly differentiated between interdependence and dependence in analyzing the role of power in politics and the relations between international actors. Complex interdependence has three main characteristics:

1. Multiple channels connect societies, including: informal ties between governmental elites as well as formal foreign office arrangements; informal ties among nongovernmental elites (face-to-face and through telecommunications); and transnational organizations (such as multinational banks or corporations).
2. The agenda of interstate relationships consists of multiple issues that are not arranged in a clear or consistent hierarchy. This absence of hierarchy among issues means, among other things, that military security does not consistently dominate the agenda. Many issues arise from what used to be considered domestic policy, and the distinction between domestic and foreign issues becomes blurred. These issues are considered in several government departments (not just foreign offices), and at several levels. Inadequate policy coordination on these issues involve significant costs. Different issues generate different coalitions, both within governments and across them, and involve different degrees of conflict. Politics does not stop at the waters’ edge.
3. Military force is not used by governments toward other governments within the region, or on the issues, when complex interdependence prevails. It may, however, be important in these governments’ relations with governments outside that region, or on other issues. Military force could, for instance, be irrelevant to resolving disagreements on economic issues among members of an alliance, yet at the same time be very important for that alliance’s political and military relations with a rival bloc.

The three main characteristics of complex interdependence give rise to distinctive political processes, which translate power resources into power as control of outcomes. As we argued earlier, something is usually lost or added in the translation. Under conditions of complex interdependence the translation will be different than under realist conditions, and our predictions about outcomes will need to be adjusted accordingly.

While applying this theory to the Azerbaijani-Turkish solidarity, it obviously proves us with the main idea of the thesis. The main argument present in this thesis is based on the fact that what has started as an engagement on normative and romantic grounds has over the years of engagement evolved into a realist political atmosphere. In other words, the relationship between these two nations is not based on shared culture or

language instead it is strictly based on rigorous pragmatic engagement between Azerbaijan and Turkey. This means the popular One Nation Two State sentiment only had a marginal appeal in both parties to the point where it was only championed in the nationalist circles, however it should be pointed out that there had never been an occasion of a nationalist party being in a majority power in the Turkish parliament, instead only a limited time as a coalition partner.

The second argument is based on the reaction on the part of Azerbaijan as Turkey started to implement Islamic elements in its foreign policy making. This became more apparent as the Justice and Development Party guaranteed a second term in the Turkish Parliament which later gave rise to certain initiatives such as the attempt to normalize relations with Armenia. The Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship can be divided into two phases in which the initial years served as the years of convergence when the relationship started after Azerbaijan's independence, and the second phase as the years of divergence. Therefore this kind of relationship is no different than any other in the present international system, in the sense that it is dictated through pragmatic intentions and guided through national-interest of the both parties involved.

This would naturally first manifest itself through energy cooperation Contract of the Century being as the primary evidence as well as Turkey's initial stance on Nagorno-Karabakh. Another significant factor would be outlined Turkish State's secular nature which seemed as an attractive motive for the Azerbaijani government in engaging relations considering the volatile situation regarding with Iran. However, it should also be noted that the Azerbaijani perceptions would have already started to change with the initial years of the Justice and Development Party. Considering the time line in the Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship, this was Azerbaijan's first experience with an administration having an Islamic agenda and managing to be the ruling party close to a decade. This is also significant in showing how Azerbaijan's foreign policy toward Turkey transforming in reflecting the changes in Turkey's domestic political thinking with the previously mentioned lineage toward an Islamic agenda. Therefore, in light of all these the arguments of the thesis, the Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship is not based on One nation, two states principle, instead it is the kind of relationship in which national interest dictates the bilateral relations, a factor that can be detected through the foreign policy alignments of Azerbaijan throughout different administrations. Moreover, one can say that even though the Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship was built on romantic ideals this started to develop into a realist framework as a result of twenty years of engagement.

Another factor is related with the revival of Islamic elements in Turkey's foreign policy with the Justice and Development Party taking the helm in managing the bilateral relations.

In some cases Realist IR theory is appropriately suited in explaining the Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship. When looking at the basic assumptions of the realist theory, one would notice the following principles:

- The anarchical structure of the international system.
- The state derives its characteristics from the selfish state of human nature.

- State being the primary actor in international politics.
- State's objectives is not independent of the character of the international system,

Indeed, what has been mentioned above can be traced on how Azerbaijan started to formulate its foreign policy after gaining its independence? The first evidence in this case shows Azerbaijan by becoming a fully independent unit in terms of determining its own fate while conducting foreign policy without being bound to the former Soviet Union. This would necessitate Azerbaijan to concentrate on territorial security and other matter related with foreign policy, therefore the basic realist assumption has a plausible value in explaining Azerbaijan's foreign policy making.

Another assumption of the realist theory is the state's need for survival in the international system, therefore regardless of the nature of the domestic political system, states give a priority on maintaining security in its border. By doing so, the state can decide upon acting in a collective manner either by joining alliances with other states. This is another factor evident in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. As the historical accounts show of how the Azerbaijani government would consider options ranging from taking diplomatic measures to taking military action in showing a response against the Armenian aggression as a result of the war on Nagorno-Karabakh. This factor in itself is an evidence of how security formation is significant in terms of defining Azerbaijan's endeavor for territorial integrity.

Preserving the balance of power is another assumption being put forward by the realist school. A clear example would be Azerbaijan's avoidance in disruption the balance of power with Russia and Iran particularly during the Heydar Aliyev period and still continues today as an important foreign policy tool under the Ilham Aliyev administration. As for the Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship, from an Azerbaijani perspective Turkey's role is seen as a tool to get close with the international community through cooperation on energy politics, which gives an idea on how Azerbaijan uses oil and natural gas as leverage in foreign policy making.

## Chapter 1

### 1.1 Abulfaz Elchibey Period Foreign Policy Making (1992-1993)

The first phrase covers the period from 1991 to 1995 and is characterized by political instability ,military activities, the emergence of hundreds of thousands of refugees and deep economic crisis. During this period the government was organized by The Azerbaijan Popular Front Party (AFP) ,headed by Abulfaz Elchibey,laid the foundation for Azerbaijan's independence He tried to control both the external and internal power, in order to take on the mantle of advocating for the interest of the nation ,when Azerbaijan was forced to confront Armenian separatism in Nagorno-Karabakh in 1988.( [www.anspress.az](http://www.anspress.az))

After all, the AFP had done an effort to create a fully independent national state, based on a relationship with Turkey. They emphasizes the possibility joining NATO at some point in the future ,changing the country's political orientation from north to west. Of course if we get consideration about that most significant part of industry was dependent on imports from other post-Soviet republics, this was so complicated issue for new independent country, like Azerbaijan to implement all these issues to the political and economic sphere of the country. The official name of the Azerbaijan nationality was changed to Azerbaijani Turk and the name of name of the language to Azerbaijani Turkish. Somehow these measures met with mixed reaction in the republic, especially among member of national minorities who feared the rise of pan Turkism in their country.

During this gloom and doom period Turkey postured to fill the vacuum. The members of this nationalist government travel to the region with pan-Turkic agenda. Elchibey openly, announced on his election platform that there would have Western and Turkish orientation, which would work to remove Azerbaijan from the Russian orbit, even it was wrong decision for Azerbaijanis at this tense years. In addition I would like to mention the lack of leaders without nationalist feelings ,like Ayaz Mutalibov and Addulrahman Vazirov (The leaders of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan),who were Russian-speaking puppets backed by Moscow.

But for those years Elchibey's fantastic dreams it was not enough for morally destroyed country Indeed,Elchibey's foreign policy lacked long-termed strategic objectives and not understanding Russia interest in the region. His foreign policy even caused alarm inside Azerbaijan as well, as society was not ready for such an unconditional embrace. (Mustafa Aydın, "Azerbaycan, "Türkiye-Ermenistan Anlaşmasının Neresinde?",*Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları*, 2009. Pp...14-18)

## **1.2 Heydar Aliyev/Ilham Aliyev Period Foreign Policy Making (1993-2003/2003-Present)**

In 1993 coup forced Elchibey to flee the capital and Haydar Aliyev came to the power. He had been leader of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic from 1969 to 1982. Haydar Aliyev was one of the successful politician on the Azerbaijani history. By maneuvering between Russia and Western power Aliyev just managed to keep the strained fabric of Russian-Azerbaijani relations intact.

Heydar Aliyev began working to generate all the power in his own hands and raising the possibility that an authoritarian regime was being created. Azerbaijanis trusted his political charisma and hoped he could manage to solve these national problematic issues. They could see the contrast to the ideological romantic and revolutionaries of the APF, with H. Aliyev.

Aliyev was so bravely could force people to rely on his political power by using the population fears about the chaos and losing more areas in Nagorno-Karabakh. That is why they decided to become blind eyes and not to see the personal interest of Aliyev for his family and his inner circle. Having understand that the prospects for a military victory were absent Aliyev settled for a cease-fire.

In order to build the national economy and to attract Western power towards the existence of Azerbaijan at the Caucasus he created a new plan, which became the key of world policy for Azerbaijan government. Aliyev resolved to sign a contract with multinational oil companies in order to give stakeholders from different countries and to attract signing fees the AIOC came to include American, European, Turkish, Russian, Arab, and Japanese companies. The Contract of the Century was signed in October 1994, forming the beginning of Azerbaijan's gradual rise on the international scene. Turkey's TPAO was also given a part in this project.

The existing Baku-Novorossiysk route to the Russian port was politically trustworthy nor economically efficient. That is why President Aliyev was familiar the lack of major export route for the transportation of Caspian riches from the landlocked Azerbaijani to European markets. Thus, by 1996-1997 the motherland's leadership decided with his Georgian and Turkish colleague to build pipeline from Baku to the Turkish port Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea though the territory of Georgia. So as soon with the support of US Government BTC pipeline became reality. The official ceremony of signing declaration took place for \$4 billion worth pipeline in 2002 OSCE's Istanbul Summit with participation of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Georgia, Kazakhstan and US representatives.

Parallel with BTC, the South Caucasus gas pipeline from Baku to the Turkish city Erzurum through the Georgian territory is also being completed and the Azeri gas from Shah-Deniz field will soon reach Turkish and European market. ([http://ebooks.preslib.az/pdfbooks/enbooks/ataturk\\_en.pdf](http://ebooks.preslib.az/pdfbooks/enbooks/ataturk_en.pdf))

The most impressive example of Azerbaijan-Turkey solidarity ,that formed by Aliyev was the opening of UMID (Hope) bridge between Turkey-Nakhcivan, which was crucial step towards overcoming the blockade of Nakhchivan by Armenia. Relations between Aliyev and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel had one the most presentable friendship. Aliyev had managed to turn Azerbaijan into the only truly independent state of the Caucasus.

Instead of becoming the democratic leader of Azerbaijanis, the rapid illness caught Heydar Aliyev and his death in 2003 radically changed the situation in Azerbaijan. So next presidential post had occupied by Heydar Aliyev's son, young leader Ilham Aliyev. in 2003.He followed the same political way as his father – to make soften circumstances with neighbors, and to stabilize the conditions inside of the country.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

As a conclusion I would like to mention that these three phases of Azerbaijan democratic independence process developed into a stable on the regional scene in a turbulent environment. Naturally, Azerbaijan and its energy resources played a significant role in this geopolitical struggle. It is no accident that at world political arena Azerbaijan is called the “geopolitical pivot” of not only the South Caucasus ,but the entire Caspian region, and its government deserving of “America’s strongest geopolitical support” This fire land is valuable as the junction point of three “big bosses” like, Turkey, Russia and Iran in the Caucasus and to adapt on their political circumstances at the region. This increases the strategic importance of the country, particularly to the West and makes Azerbaijan a pivotal state in Eurasian geopolitics.

## Chapter 2

### Dynamics of Azerbaijan foreign policy

#### 2.1 Domestic and Regional Context

The growing oil rates caused the extension of importance Azerbaijan in oil market as a supplier of its own as well as most of the European parts in the world. Azerbaijan is a borderland many times over between Europe and Asia, Islam and Christianity, Sunni and Shiite Islam, Russia and the Middle East, Turkey and Iran. While many elements of Azerbaijani foreign policymaking are dictated by this external reality, a number of domestic determinants also have great significance, explaining to a considerable extent the stability of Azerbaijani foreign policy.

Regarding Turkey, a gradually moderating form of political Islam grew to become the dominant force in Turkish politics. Under the government of the Islamic conservative Justice and Development Party, Turkish society and politics have been affected by a gradual but powerful Islamization. In the case of Turkish involvement in religious affairs in Azerbaijan is done primarily through two channels- one is the official Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey and the other is the Fethullah Gulen movement .The work of the Gulen movement is harder to qualify or quantify-and its interaction with government policies also much more complex. This movement leader is Turkish Islamic scholar/preacher named Fethullah Gulen who lives in Pennsylvania. The Gulen movement's presence in Azerbaijan has been growing consistently since Azerbaijan's early years of independence.

Another hand the state has been keen to protect secularism, yet it appears somewhat contradictory in dealing with the rise of religious movements in the country. Law relating to religion were tightened in 2011 in Azerbaijan. Regular crackdowns against Azerbaijanis 'engaged in illegal radical religious sects' take place, with 'propaganda books' 'being confiscated. As an example, the Baku administration keeps a firm grip on religious movement and imposes strict procedures for the registration of religious institutions. But any case, Turkish public sensitivities and political outreach towards the Muslims of the Caucasus region is always available and it ties more the religious chains of these two nations.

By its geography as well as by its politics, the South Caucasus is a clearly delimited region. Politically, the South Caucasus consists of three small countries surrounded by the three great powers that have traditionally dominated the area: Iran, Turkey, Russia. In the case Nagorno-Karabakh conflict some experts argue that this kind of occupation is in Russia's favor since the conflict increases Russia's 'sphere of influence' International security structures, such as NATO's Partnership for Peace program failed to stabilize the region, while the

integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the Council of Europe, NATO, and the European Union has progressed only slowly.

The regional security deficit consists of internal, regional, and transnational challenges which are in turn interlinked. The internal component of the security deficit is the risk of domestic civil and political conflict, which has affected all three states at different stages of their evaluation. In the line of all these considering the Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship the two countries signed several military cooperation agreements in order to enable the Turkish Armed Forces to be involved in military assistance. Turkey consistently provided military assistance to Azerbaijan throughout the 1990s. Having lost the war on Karabakh, the Azerbaijani army was both humiliated and in need for re-organization. With a lack of unity, professional training and modern weaponry the Azerbaijani army was at a disadvantage in light of its arch-rival, the Armenian army. Turkish military experts trained Azeri officers both in Baku and in Turkey, and provided military expertise in the design and development of modern army structures. Hundreds of Azeri officers have graduated from Turkish military schools and starting from 1999, Azeri soldiers participated in the peacekeeping missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan under the Turkish command.

## 2.2 Geopolitical Factors

Geographic factors are a major and enduring influence on Azerbaijan's foreign policy. This country is valuable with its location on a strategic land bridge between Europe and Asia. As additional reflect in of the impact the landlocked has had on Azerbaijan's foreign policy is Baku's preference for multiple export pipelines. In the region to have three significant neighbors –Russia, Turkey and Iran has an immense impact on Azerbaijan's landlocked status. Turkey remained Azerbaijani's key ally in the political, military ,and economic sectors.The relations between Baku and Tbilisi has been a major element in the country's foreign policy, especially during the tenure of presidents Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze. Azerbaijan cannot export oil towards to Europe without Georgia ,which is connects it to Turkey and the West.

Example of Azerbaijan's prominent role can be observed regional organization GUAM, which includes Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. Transportation, and trade linkages, including protection of energy export infrastructure, are GUAM's most concerned issue. Baku is also essential transit state itself, focusing on trade and transport to and from the greater Caspian region, in which Turkey's role played a decisive role in a attempt to restoring relations in the Caucasus.

As a major source of oil ,Azerbaijan has continually been on the international political system's radar screen, starting from the post-Soviet period. Moreover, due to its challenging geographic situation as an oil exporter that does not border open seas, Azerbaijan and interested investors have enlisted international financial organizations and major powers to ensure an atmosphere of stability in the region. This stability is essential for foreign investments in energy exports in a

geographically and geopolitically complex location like Azerbaijan. Prior to making investments that would only produce a yield after almost a decade and a half of operation, foreign energy companies needed assurances regarding Azerbaijan's political and economic orientation. In some cases, this required major powers to foster ties with Azerbaijan. On the other , what was referred as the “contract of the century” created an complicated alignment between Turkey and Russia due to competition between these two states.

(International Crisis Group, Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders,Europe Report no.1999, April, 2009. Pp.25-37)

## **2.3 Conclusion**

In the times following the foundations of both the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Azerbaijan, the types of leaders and regimes in the region have changed radically numerous time. These have had significant influence over Azerbaijan's foreign policy decisions, options and calculations. Despite radical changes in the borders of two of the region's powers and significant changes in Iran's strategic posture both regionally and internationally, the power relations between these three states have continued to serve as a major influence on Azerbaijan's foreign policy options. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the coalescence of the European Union, and the emergence of an interconnected globalized economy and worlds culture, prevailing paradigms in the international relations discipline downgraded the importance of certain factors such as domestic regional contexts, geography and energy related factors in a state's foreign policy making scenario.

## Chapter 3

### Azerbaijan –Turkish Relationship

#### 3.1 Azerbaijan's Position in Davutoğlu Doctrine

The change of an economical, geo-strategic, social and energy related environment urged Turkey to establish a new foreign policy doctrine. Ahmet Davutoğlu considered foreign policy as the continuation of domestic policy and therefore he believed that domestic reforms in Turkey would reinforce foreign policy. So, the changes in the domestic policy of Turkey were necessitated from the changes needed in the foreign policy of this country. Internal security problems were tracked internally, not externally. Due to the internal reforms, efforts were mobilized to combine cultural, political and economic issues around foreign policy. Internal policy reforms and economic development would introduce Turkey as a peaceful and attractive country in the visions of neighboring states. Thus, foreign policy of Turkey emerged with a new role of Turkey in the neighboring countries and in the world, under the cover of strategic depth stretching beyond the borders of this state. In fact, the new foreign policy of Turkey removed geographical lines in policy thinking. Therefore, the concept of strategic depth introduced by Davutoğlu into the foreign policy of Turkey is the product of two components: historical cultural inheritance and geographical position of Turkey. Davutoğlu interprets his foreign policy doctrine with these two components saying that historical responsibility attached to Turkey and its geographical position demonstrate that Turkey cannot be indifferent to a geopolitical gap in any region. He argues that after the events of September 11th, the geographical position of Turkey should be redefined. Similar to Russia, Germany, Iran and Egypt, Turkey should not be seen as a country attached to a single geographical space. As being part of the several regions, Turkey has an advantage of being able to maneuver in these different regions. By taking all these in regard, in order to determine the position of Azerbaijan in the strategic depth of Turkish Foreign Policy, one main aspect need to be addressed being the position attributed to Azerbaijan in the strategic depth doctrine. (Bülent Aras, “*Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy*”, SETA Policy Brief, no.12,May 2009.Pp.134-140)

In his foreign policy concept, Davutoğlu mentions Azerbaijan not as a neighbor of Turkey (although in Nakhchivan area Azerbaijan has 13 km land border), but a country located in its geopolitical space. Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey discusses three geopolitical spaces in his book “Strategic Depth”:

1. Near land bordered areas: the Balkans - Middle East - the Caucasus
2. Near sea bordered areas: Black Sea - Adriatic Sea - East White Sea - Red Sea -the Gulf - Caspian Sea.
3. Near continent area: Europe - North Africa - South Asia - Middle and East Asia.

Claiming that power of Turkey lays in its historical background and geographical location, Davutoğlu positions Azerbaijan into two of the three geopolitical areas directly contributing to the formation of foreign policy and protection of internal integrity: West Asia, as a gate of Turkey to Central Asia, Caspian Sea area and Caucasus area in the north-south corridor. Davutoğlu reveals the importance of events happening in the Caucasus - the near land bordered area, for Turkey saying that “An Anatolian state with no influential role over the events in the Balkans, the Caucasus region and Middle East can neither be able to protect its integrity, nor open up for the world”.

Davutoğlu describes Azerbaijan as part of the Caucasus and considers this region as a south-north transition point of Eurasia and buffer zone for Turkey against the threats of Russia. Essentiality of the Caucasus as a buffer zone against threats from Russia is explained with two examples: Russian-Turkish war in 1877-1878 and menace by Soviet Union towards Anatolia through South Caucasus after the Second World War. Moreover Davutoğlu argues that Turkey is not psychologically and diplomatically ready for Caucasus region after the cold war and the steps of Turkey towards the geopolitical changes in the region are not sufficient.

The deficiencies of politics followed by Turkey towards Azerbaijan and other Turkic states after the collapse of the USSR, mentioned by Davutoğlu, have also been acknowledged by the decision makers of that period, as well as politicians and academicians. Davutoğlu criticizes the policy of Turkey over Caucasus after the 1990s of the previous century and claims that the policy over South Caucasus has not be able to cover the whole Caucasus and has only been assessed within the framework of Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict. The multidimensional nature of policy over Caucasus is expected to increase Turkey’s sphere of influence. This political discourse related to South Caucasus is shared by many writers and politicians supporting Armenian expansion. If read between the lines, Davutoğlu’s views canbe interpreted as the Post Cold War policy of Turkey over Caucasus not being multi-dimensional. This serves as an example positioning Turkey-Armenia relations at the foreground of Turkey’s policy over Caucasus.

Davutoğlu mentions Azerbaijan as an important ally in the whole Caucasus and especially South Caucasus and believes that Turkey will not be able to increase its sphere of influence and expand it towards Caspian Sea region until Azerbaijan gets a strong regional position in the Caucasus. He considers that occupation of part of the Azerbaijan’s territory as a result of Azerbaijan-Armenia war is the greatest strategic loss for Turkey.

According to Davutoğlu, the confrontations in the region have produced a risk of involvement of Iran, Russia and Turkey. Bilateral relations of Turkey-Azerbaijan and Russia-Armenia have urged Georgia and Iran to follow a different political discourse. Davutoğlu criticizes the lack of Turkey’s sea policy during the Cold War and suggests having an active and attack-based sea policy to replace defense based concept left from Cold War. He further explains: “The main factor ensuring the government of Ottoman state over three continents was the possession of sea power enabling it to have an access to nearby waters, such as Red Sea, Indian Ocean and Caspian Sea through its control over Aegean Sea, White Sea, and Black Sea”.

Davutoğlu considers that it is necessary to have an influence over several sea areas in order to make Turkey a stronger state. Among the others, the Caspian Sea is a knot for the access of Turkey to Central Asia. The access of Turkey to Central Asia is ensured through the Caucasus-Caspian Sea-Central Asian route and he suggests three main policy tracks: Firstly, to strengthen the status of North Caucasus republics within the Russian Federation and to ensure Caspian-Black Sea tie over this region; secondly, in order to balance the influence of Russia over Central Asia and Black Sea, to expand trade relations with Iran and thus decrease the ideological tensions in Turkey-Iran relations; lastly, to promote cooperation among Central Asian countries. The principles suggested by Davutoğlu for the Caucasus and Caspian region in fact match with the policy of Azerbaijan for the region. Davutoğlu considers that even though Azerbaijan is located in the Caucasus, it is an extension of Central Asia geography, because of access to Caspian Sea and its geo-cultural ties. It means that Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey sees Azerbaijan as a country with the capacity to influence a large area.

Because of these attributes, Azerbaijan has a labyrinth-like role among Russia, Turkey and Iran. By saying “Azerbaijan has a capacity of defining the position of Turkey in Caspian Sea politics,” Davutoğlu emphasizes that a state willing to be powerful in the Caspian Sea region, as well as in the Caucasus region, should consider the attitude of Azerbaijan necessary. He views Azerbaijan in the union to be established by Turkic states such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan against Russia in the Caspian Sea region and hence, makes a suggestion which is very challenging to realize.

In terms of relations between Turkey and Central Asia, Azerbaijan is an important player in Davutoğlu’s foreign policy concept as being a West Asian country. To put it in other words, Northern Middle East geopolitical space covering the Caucasus including Azerbaijan, East Anatolia and Gulf-East White Sea region, oil resources in Northern Iraq and Azerbaijan, water resources in East Anatolia is forming a geoeconomical integrity. The events happening on these geopolitical and geoeconomical lines cannot be assessed separately. Calling this line West Asia, Davutoğlu views this region as a sphere of influence, in terms of Turkey’s relations with Central Asia, economic interests and security politics.

However, in terms of Davutoğlu’s suggestions regarding the access of Central Asian countries to the West, there is a contradiction between his views in the book, as well as practical experience and the politics of Azerbaijan. Four alternative corridors suggested to open up Central Asian Turkic states having no access to sea borders to the world, are missing Azerbaijan. The corridors include:

1. Central Asia-Russia-Euro Atlantic
2. Central Asia-China-Pacific Ocean
3. Afghanistan-Pakistan-India-Indian Ocean
4. Central Asia-Iran-Turkey-Europe.<sup>64</sup>

Therefore, Azerbaijan views itself as one of the main chains in the land and energy corridor between East and West. However, at this point, Davutoğlu puts more emphasis on Russia and Iran and in some way, contradicts suggestions about decreasing the influential role of Russia over these regions. The increasing role of Russia in the transportation of energy resources from Central Asia to the West means the growth of its influence over the region. During his tenure, Davutoğlu realized steps as reflected in his statements. In order to increase position of Turkey in terms of energy corridor, an agreement on Central Asia energy links was signed with Russia and Iran. According to this agreement, oil and gas from Central Asia will be delivered to Turkey through Russia and Iran. As phrased in the book, Turkey tried to support this geopolitical advantage with active diplomacy. In Davutoğlu's strategic depth, Azerbaijan is playing an important role for the relations with Caucasus, Caspian region and Central Asia. Especially in the Caucasus and Caspian region, the future success of Turkey's politics depends on the power of Azerbaijan in the region. Eventually, Azerbaijan seems to be a part of Turkey's policy over

Asia either within land or sea bordered areas. Especially considering the decrease of Turkey's relations with the West and expansion of its relations with Asian countries during Davutoğlu's tenure, the role of Azerbaijan is reinforced. Therefore, his presence in active politics avails him to test whether he applies theories and suggestions in his book or if there is a contradiction or compliance between the theory and practice.

While the misunderstanding regarding the protocols between Turkey and Azerbaijan continued, the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkey faced a change on May 1, 2009 and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who has always been supervising Turkish foreign policy from behind during the last seven years, replaced Ali Babacan, Minister for Foreign Affairs and became the only Minister appointed out of Parliament. On May 1, at the press conference held after the handover ceremony, Davutoğlu stated that Turkey will continue to expand relations with all its neighbors, including Armenia. The eight year-status quo (1994-2002) in Caucasus was being continued when Davutoğlu started his position. Armenia continued occupation, South Ossetia and Abkhazia were separated areas and border between Turkey and Armenia was closed.

Following the dissolution of the USSR, Turkey recognized all three South Caucasus countries, however it did not establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, and in 1993 closed borders with it, when Armenia occupied the lands of Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, secret meetings between the two countries in 2007 aimed at normalization of relations that were made public with the invitation by the Serzh Sargsyan and Abdullah Gül. Considering the effect of Turkish-Armenia meetings over Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh policy, Azerbaijan was closely watching all the developments, and while declaring that it did not get bothered with such meetings, Azerbaijan did not wish opening of Turkey-Armenia borders and therefore was clearly expressing protest against it. During Abdullah Gül's visit to Armenia, Ahmet Davutoğlu was occupying a position of foreign policy advisor at the office of Prime Minister and he interpreted this visit with two reasons: Obama's coming to power at the US and the threat caused by Russia-Georgia war in the region in August 2008. In his own words this is how interpreted the course of relations after the signing of the protocols: "All of these normalization

processes are parallel to each other. Those who are asking us and praising us because of our normalization process with Armenia should also propose that Armenia should stop the invasion of 20% of Azerbaijani territories. It is against international law, and international criteria of norms and values. This a division we have.” All these events occurring between Turkey and Armenia coincided with the critical period for Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Kosovo’s declaration of its unilateral secession in 2008, and Russia’s declaration of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia following Russia-Georgia war in the same year, brought up the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, known as a separated area into the agenda. Availing itself of these events, Armenia wanted the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan was anxious after all the developments and therefore needed support from the strategic allies.

With Barack Obama’s victory in the U.S presidential elections the Armenian problem for Turkey and Azerbaijan was brought up into the agenda. During previous years, the allies tried to settle this issue with more cooperation among them and more pressure was exercised on Armenia. Now the situation is different. The Armenian issue, bringing together national interests of Turkey and Azerbaijan confronted the two states with each other. For instance, the “football diplomacy” in September 2008 and the signing of the protocols in October 2009 can be regarded as the attempts toward normalization in relations between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>70</sup> In 2009, Azerbaijan got concerned because it was receiving the information about the details of normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia from third party sources, Turkish officials were making statements differently from each other, Turkey was not protesting news in Armenian media claiming that Nagorno- Karabakh is not a primary condition for the process of normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia.

Moreover, for the first time since 1993, there was an impression that the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh is not as a primary condition in Turkey-Armenia relations. The number of opinions criticizing lack of sufficient awareness on the process of normalization for Azerbaijan from Turkey, as well as lack of attention towards Azerbaijan, was increasing. Eventually, these events caused mutual unreliability.

Davutoğlu took the position of Minister for Foreign Affairs during the period when Turkey-Azerbaijan relations reached the highest level of dissatisfaction in post-Cold War history. Davutoğlu visited Azerbaijan 10 days after his appointment together with the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. However, Armenia managed to make a political and diplomatic leverage by not including the Nagorno-Karabakh within the framework of the protocols. On the other hand, the Azerbaijani foreign ministry repeatedly put forward the notion of that “Azerbaijan would follow a balancing foreign policy by putting an emphasis on its national interest”.

After the signing of the protocols, the emotional part of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations became one of the questioned principles. One political leverage manifested itself when President Ilham Aliyev decided not to attend the Alliance of the Civilizations meeting in April 2009 and instead visiting Moscow. Discussions over taking the bilateral relations between the two countries beyond the energy, started. At this point, one of the

things making Azerbaijan resentful was the effort to realize Armenian expansion through the critiques towards Azerbaijan. Even beyond Davutoğlu's direct responsibility, a number of articles circled in subjective and objective manners about Azerbaijan increased during this period and high appreciation expressed for the Armenian leaders caused confusion and concern in Azerbaijan. Despite the growth of the soft power mechanisms in the foreign policy discourse of Turkey, the relations with Azerbaijan continued just at the level of leaders. Moreover, this fact is bound to be limited on the intellectual realm as well since there is a lack of knowledge regarding Azerbaijan and the unwillingness on the part of both the Turkish intellectuals and academics, such as learning the Azerbaijani language.

Azerbaijan and its geographical location received an importance with the search of Europe for natural gas sources as an alternative to Russia. Turkey wanted to get a role of bridge for Europe's energy needs. Having the same allies and same opponents in energy issues has made the countries not opponents, but allies. During Davutoğlu's term as the foreign minister, both parties focus and therefore, energy negotiations between the two countries could not reach contracting phase. The crisis of Armenian issue emerged within Turkey-Azerbaijan relations during Davutoğlu's term influenced energy negotiations as well. While energy negotiations with Turkey were delayed, Azerbaijan signed agreements on gas with Russia and Iran. However, despite all these developments, withdrawal of certain requirements and unification on common point during negotiations for the sake of continuation of cooperation reveals the importance of the two countries for each other. However, the Turkish political elite's lack of understanding in terms of Azerbaijan's socio-economic and political features creates a stumbling block in understanding Azerbaijan's internal political dynamics, especially a country whose population has Shiite and Sunni division from 60 to 40 percent ratio.

Previously, when Turkey was viewed as a representative of the West in the region and Azerbaijan as part of Turkey's pan-Turkism policy, both countries were included into the list of distrustful countries by Russia and Iran. However, the efforts of Azerbaijan to establish mutual confidence with both of its neighbors produced an outcome. The policy pursued by Turkey, recognized as an ally of Azerbaijan, to achieve close cooperation with Russia and Iran also brought out positive effects for Azerbaijan. Especially, when Turkey did not act as a representative of the West during Russia-Georgia war in and Caucasus Regional Peace and Cooperation Platform. On the outset of the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement there is the risk of Baku "not answering the phone call from Ankara", which should be seen as a potential political signal.

Moreover, Turkey's disapproval of sanctions and possible military intervention during the Iran-US nuclear crisis and Turkey's non-support for the sanctions against Iran at UN meetings positively altered the image of Turkey in Iran and eventually, the image representative of the West in the region changed. Cooperation the three regional opponents abated tensions in the region and it decreased trilateral pressure on Azerbaijan. Competition between the three powers was reinforcing regional competition over Azerbaijan was reflected in the form of pressures towards it. Consequently the trust demonstrated by two powers of the region - Russian and Iran towards Azerbaijan, was also reposed in Turkey. Turkey and Azerbaijan fostered energy cooperation

with Russia trying to gain its confidence. This trilateral cooperation disturbed Armenia. However, the regional competition between Russia and Turkey was not over. Before the regional competition is over, it is impossible to say that there is a real, fully mutual confidence between Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkey. Harmonization of Turkey-Russia and Iran-Turkey energy relations did not bring positive effect for Azerbaijan's energy policy. In the case of Turkey particularly in energy politics, its inherited role from the Ottoman Empire as a "land bridge" between Europe, Asia and the Middle East gives an idea on the interplay in that region. This is also related with the state's geographic location influencing its foreign policy making.

( [http://www.hudson.org/files/documents/Event%20Summary%20\(EN\).pdf](http://www.hudson.org/files/documents/Event%20Summary%20(EN).pdf))

The change introduced into the foreign policy of Turkey by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu influenced Azerbaijan as well. It was mainly caused by the real change of Turkey's eighteen year policy for the Caucasus. While the relations with Armenia are being continued within framework of programs and plans, relations with Azerbaijan are realized through individual activities and in an unplanned manner. As stated previously, there are no serious projects. Therefore, this deficiency should be taken into consideration. Regional projects had an important stake in the expansion of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, as Graham Fuller refers it as the "yellow peril" in explaining the imperial legacies of the past empires including both the Ottoman and the Russian empires considering the "pan-Turkic" aspects.

### 3.2 Political Measures

At the time of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, both the Turkish government and Turkish society had spent seven decades in isolation from the Turkish people's ethnic cousins in Azerbaijan and Central Asia. On Turkey's part, this extended separation contributed to an early neglect and ignorance of these two areas to its east, which had a significant influence on Turkish policy in the region, especially toward Azerbaijan. First, the poor understanding of the region led to an ill-conceived euphoria regarding future Turkic unity, which had as its backdrop the 1989 rejection of Turkey's request for admission to the European Community. When it comes to the South Caucasus it is apparent to see their foreign policy alignment is being shaped by their history which is also motivated through "Realpolitik". This also reflects on their security policy arrangements.

From the mindset of Turkey Azerbaijan was from the outset the most important country in the South Caucasus, and the Turkish government recognized Azerbaijan several weeks before it recognized the other newly independent states in the region. Azerbaijan was both geographically and culturally the closest of the Turkic republics. Strategically, it was the only Caucasus state on the Caspian Sea, and was thereby crucial to Turkish access to Central Asia; Azerbaijan also had substantial energy reserves. As outlined by Sūha Bölükbaşı, Turkey's policy toward Azerbaijan was guided by five priorities: support for Azerbaijan's independence; support for Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh; a desire to prevent or limit a Russian return to the South Caucasus; participation in Azerbaijani oil production and the export of Azerbaijani oil through Turkey; and preservation of a friendly, though not necessarily pan-Turkish, government in Baku. Mutalibov had been decidedly cautious in building ties to Turkey. When Abulfaz Elchibey came to power, his fancy for the Turkish model of governance, his militant secularism, and his strongly anti-Iranian views may have aligned well with what many leading Turks privately believed. But Elchibey's erratic style did not align with the traditional cautiousness of Turkish foreign policy. Indeed, Elchibey was a bit too pan-Turkic even for Ankara's taste, and certainly too indiscreet a pan-Turkish. Elchibey's lack of political tact caused influential circles in Turkey to see him as a destabilizing factor, unfit to govern, as well as an impediment to Turkey's regional objectives. The same attitude can be observed during the initial stages of the Baku-

Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline in the sense that Turkey would try to pose its political stance so that the pipeline route would follow either one of the Caucasus states (Georgia and Armenia) or Iran for economic feasibility.

As Thomas Goltz documents in this book, Demirel tried to convince Heydar Aliyev to assume a more active role in influencing the Elchibey regime, however Aliyev refused to be associated with the government. Later on, Demirel prompted Elchibey to ask Aliyev to come to Baku. In this sense, Ankara played a crucial role in thwarting Moscow's plan to put insurgent commander Surat Huseynov in power in Elchibey's place. This is also important to illustrate Demirel's decisive role in convincing Aliyev to assume the leadership role in Baku. Aliyev, hence, saw Turkey as one of Azerbaijan's partners, not as its sole partner. He purposefully broadened

Azerbaijan's links with the West as well as the Muslim world, focusing on establishing better relations with the United States and Iran, but also countries such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. For Turkey, the replacement of Elchibey with Aliyev meant a less devoted but more pragmatic regime in Baku.

Aliyev also made a point of showing that the relationship was a two-way street: it was not only Azerbaijan that needed Turkey; Turkey also needed Azerbaijan. This was also a preemptive attempt on part of Aliyev because the "contiguity factor" influenced the regional powers' foreign policy alignments to influence Azerbaijan.

Turkey's post Nagorno-Karabakh relations with Azerbaijan began with an embarrassing coup attempt. The 1994 action by members of the special-purpose police force known as OMON, acting under the direction of Deputy Minister of the Interior Rovshan Javadov, set off a crisis in Turkish-Azerbaijani relations when the involvement of high-level Turkish figures was uncovered. This vacuum allowed the military, the foreign policy establishment, and President Demirel to step in to take the lead in determining policy toward the Caucasus. By this time, the Turkish military had come around to espousing many of former president Turgut Özal's ideas about international relations, in practice if not in name. The General Staff was now advocating and driving a more assertive foreign policy, the most important element of which was the alliance with Israel.

Aside from this alliance, which revolutionized the geopolitics of the Middle East, this renewed assertiveness had the effect of suppressing the PKK terrorism in southeastern Turkey and forcing Syria and Iran to curtail their support for the Kurds and other separatist elements operating inside the country. Turkey began to see itself as a regional power in its own right. In spite of having had his own bouts with the military throughout his long career, President Demirel was now acting very much in unison with the top brass. Turkey refined its policies toward the East, and began to put increasing emphasis on the Caucasus, including a bolstered strategic partnership with Georgia. A pragmatic understanding of the region developed in Ankara in place of the emphasis on ethnic ties that had dominated previously. Ankara saw the South Caucasus in strategic terms, and defined Georgia and Azerbaijan as the key countries whose independence needed to be supported if Turkey were to project its influence eastward, and if the movement of Caspian Sea energy resources through Turkey were to be possible. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, in particular, was key to the region's development, and a concrete issue around which multilateral cooperation among Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the United States could grow. With Turkey's alliance with Israel, there was ample discussion of a U.S.-supported Israel-Turkey Georgia-Azerbaijan axis developing, countered by a Syria-Iran-Armenia-Russia axis. The geopolitics of the former Soviet space were becoming increasingly linked to the Middle East.

Three factors combined to produce the disengagement, which has been described as resulting in the end of the honeymoon between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The first was the financial crisis of 2001, which intensified Turkey's focus on domestic issues while, in regard to foreign affairs, orienting it more toward Europe. The second factor was the election to power of a government led by the Justice and Development Party. The third was the end of Süleyman Demirel's term as president and his replacement by the chairman of the Constitutional Court, Ahmet Necdet Sezer.

The Turkish military's stiff stance on Azerbaijan in 2001 was especially significant because of the dire straits in which Turkey found itself at the time. Between November 2000 and February 2001, the worst financial crisis in the country's modern history hit Turkey. Large segments of the banking sector collapsed, and resulting in devaluation, plunging the country into chaos as millions lost the value of their savings. The unemployment rate soared. These events set off a political crisis, as the public ran out of patience with the bickering among Turkish politicians. In the November 2002 parliamentary elections, called eighteen months early, all of the parties that had been elected to Parliament just three years earlier were thrown out, all having failed to cross the ten percent threshold for representation. In effect, the entire Turkish political class was voted out.

Süleyman Demirel's retirement also meant the loss of statesmanship and vision in Turkish foreign policy. The leadership vacuum in foreign policy created by a sequence of coalition governments had been filled by Demirel, who used his age, the respect he commanded, and his personal relationships with many world leaders, including Heydar Aliyev, to put Turkey on the map. Sezer, by contrast, was a lawyer, who made a point of doing no more and no less than the constitution prescribed. He took few initiatives in foreign policy, and his foreign visits, such as to Baku, were primarily of symbolic importance. For Azerbaijan, the personal link between Demirel and Aliyev had been the cornerstone of the bilateral relationship. In the absence of such ties, the relationship subsequently suffered. The parameters of Turkish Foreign Policy affected Turkey's policies toward the Caucasus both directly and indirectly, and mainly to the detriment of the country's interests in the first half of the 1990s. This also coincides with the attempts of regional powers such as Iran and Russia to influence the domestic politics of the country by taking the advantage of lack of "national cohesion" and "identity".

Since the late 1990s, moreover, campaigning to have the 1915 massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire recognized as genocide had become official policy in Yerevan, bringing the Armenian government in alignment with the diaspora groups and irritating Ankara further. Turkey's consistent approach since the mid-1990s had been to make the normalization of Turkish relations with Armenia an element in the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan essentially offering to open its border with Armenia at some point in a coordinated sequence of events that would contribute to resolution of the conflict. Turkey refused to take that step unilaterally, demanding prior Armenian concessions in the conflict; to do otherwise, the logic went, would lead to abandonment of the remaining leverage on Armenia to vacate occupied territories, and essentially to acquiescence in the ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanis. This logic continues to command strong public support in Turkey. Thus, linking the Turkish Armenian relationship with the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict remained conventional wisdom in both Turkey and Azerbaijan, however Western officials and pundits especially the International Crisis Group had other ideas. For instance one of the group's reports Azerbaijan is trying to be convinced on the grounds of "trade relations", "energy politics" and "shared common identity in terms of culture and linguistics.

Ankara's problem was that as long as the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict remained unresolved and Azerbaijani internally displaced persons were unable to return to their homes, Turkish policy toward Armenia could not be dissociated from relations with Azerbaijan. In the context of the officially supported maxim one nation, two states, any unilateral opening to Armenia that was perceived as detrimental to Azerbaijan would be explosive stuff. This conundrum was reflected in the government's contradictory statements. In signing the protocols, Ankara effectively committed to opening the border within two months of ratification. But in statements making explicit reference to the border opening, foreign minister and other officials also stated that no move injurious to the interests of Azerbaijan would be made. The only way these conflicting statements could be reconciled would be through progress in the parallel process of conflict resolution between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Ankara's hope lay in the conclusion of a preliminary deal between Baku and Yerevan envisaging the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the five occupied provinces of Azerbaijan outside Nagorno-Karabakh itself. This fact can also be explained by Turkey's "neutral" foreign policy in the conflict acting as an "impartial mediator", which influenced Turkey to take upon "shuttle diplomacy" within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. ( [www.mfa.gov.tr/](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/) [www.todayszaman.com](http://www.todayszaman.com)

[www.sam.gov.az/](http://www.sam.gov.az/) [www.azembassy.org.tr](http://www.azembassy.org.tr) )

### 3.3 Energy- Measures

Trade and energy had always been key elements in the Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship. As Azerbaijan has become an important potential transit country for East Caspian resources, its strategic importance to Turkey's business and political relations with Central Asia has grown as well. Energy was a key area of cooperation in the 1990s. This discord focused mainly on the second stage of the development of Azerbaijani natural gas exports to and through Turkey. Indeed, when phase two of development of the Shah-Deniz oil field was poised to get under way, this meant that the South Caucasus pipeline needed to be upgraded just as Turkey was sorting out the conflicting objectives underlying its ambition to become an energy hub. Central to that ambition is the Nabucco pipeline, the leading project to bring Caspian Sea and Middle Eastern gas to Europe via Turkey. This fact also resulted in the emergence of two power blocks in the late 1990s in the borderlands of the Caspian: Russia and Iran on one side and Turkish-Western presence on the other.

The planning or construction of several energy projects that would require the involvement of Turkey not only the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline but also Iraqi energy projects, a proposed pipeline linking Ceyhan with the Black Sea port city of Samsun, boosted Turkish self-confidence and strengthened Turkey's chances of becoming an energy hub. Yet Turkey's own intransigence has, paradoxically, helped undermine that very prospect. Turkey has demanded the right to purchase the gas at discounted prices and to resell the gas that enters its territory, and has voiced various claims regarding transit fees. Turkey's insistence that it continue to benefit from the flow of cheap gas from Azerbaijan's Shah-Deniz field gas that it acquired at well below market prices, indeed, at levels about a third of what it pays for Russian gas has upset Baku as well as gas-producing companies. Turkish policies have been driven by three factors: Turkey's need to consider both domestic consumption and transit politics, its wish to keep domestic prices low, and its attempts to turn itself into a regional energy hub rather than a mere transit country. Turkey's hub ambitions are more complex. At times, certain policymakers in Ankara have appeared to toy with the idea of turning Turkey into a second Gazprom by buying gas at low prices at its eastern borders and reselling at higher prices on its the western borders rather than have it function as a transit state operating according to market principles and European business practices. While obviously bad for producers such as Azerbaijan, this idea was ill fated for at least two other reasons. First, under such conditions, Western governments and companies would be unwilling to make the investments Turkey would need in order to realize these projects. Indeed, the corridor through Turkey has become attractive precisely because it operates under European market conditions, something that would change should Turkey turn into a gas hub. Second, such Turkish ambitions were effectively killed by Russia's decision to offer Caspian Sea producers much higher prices than it had set earlier very much in order to undermine Turkey's chances of becoming a major transit state. This is also evident in Turkey's ambitions within the framework of the Nabucco Project- particularly in the year 2009- when the Turkish Prime Minister personified them as the "leap year".

A key problem was that Turkey appeared to lack a coherent strategy until 2009. In reality, Turkey lacked a coordinated energy policy, not to mention a diplomatic strategy linked to energy policy. The leadership of the Ministry of Energy, often at odds with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was a leading impediment during the tenure of Hilmi Güler as energy minister. The appointment of a new minister, Taner Yıldız, in mid-2008 appeared to be an improvement. Well versed in energy affairs compared to his predecessor, Yıldız espoused a more realistic view of Turkey's role in European energy supplies. In particular, Yıldız regarded as unrealistic the prospect of Turkey becoming a gas hub. He favored instead making Turkey a transit country, a role that could provide long-term geostrategic benefits. Meanwhile, Russia was not slow in capitalizing on the discord between the two Turkic states, as Gazprom moved in and offered to buy all of Azerbaijan's gas at European netback prices in other words, three times what Turkey was paying. In what was more a symbolic move than anything else, Baku agreed in 2009 to supply half a billion cubic meters of natural gas per year to Russia a small quantity, but nonetheless a signal to Turkey and the West that Azerbaijan had options and was running out of patience. Indeed, Baku was now torn between economic and political considerations. Russia's offer was financially lucrative if genuine but politically dangerous, it being clear that it was geo strategically and not economically motivated, since Russia would not profit from reselling Azerbaijani gas to Europe if it paid European prices to Azerbaijan. The politically favorable option, Nabucco, on the other hand, failed to materialize, and appeared increasingly distant on account of European indecision and Turkish confusion. According to some analysts this kind of confusion is related to the Turkish government lack of "three significant policies"; mainly "cohesive", "coordinated energy" and lastly "foreign policy".

(Ahmet Davutoğlu, Stratejik Derinlik, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009 Pp..110-145)

### 3.4 Religious Measures

The ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan on the basis of ethnic kinship, history and language are broadly recognized. This affinity has reflections on popular culture, economic links, politics and geo-strategy. Asked which country is Turkey's friend, Azerbaijan tops the list in public opinion polls. Turks and Azerbaijanis customarily rally for each other in the Eurovision song contest and international soccer games. Student exchanges are relatively intense, and Azerbaijani tourists flock to Turkish resorts. This reality in itself has had important reflections in the political relations between the two countries. Politicians on both sides go out of their way to showcase strong bilateral relations. The first state visit of an incumbent president or foreign minister is traditionally to the other's capital.

Ideology has always figured high in shaping the narratives of the Turkish-Azerbaijani relationship. It is often recalled that Azeris and Turks together conceptualized Turkish nationalism in the early 20th century (along with Crimean Turks). These thinkers mostly united in support of Westernization and secularization, as well as, to various degrees, Pan-Turkic visions. While this is a uniting 'memory' for nationalists, it is a page of history with relatively negative connotations for those Turks who prioritize Islamic identity and political visions.

Turkey's Islamist intellectuals and Islamically-informed political class do not traditionally have strong bonds with Azerbaijan. As also reflected in the below quote, some formulate disaffection, rooted in the founding of Turkic nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th century. Azeri intellectuals' anti-clerical agenda, rejection of forming a government on the basis of Sharia 1 and enthusiasm to organize society as a nation state, with Western cultural elements was contrary to the vision of the competing political faction of the time that strived for a united Islamic polity.

In Soviet times, the Azerbaijani dissent movement was mobilized along the lines of Turkic nationalism and a passion to embrace Turkic culture, traditions and political visions, repressed by Soviet ideology. This was a natural extension of the legacy of freedom in Azerbaijan, lost when the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the first independent Azeri nation state, was conquered and sovietized.

Nationalist narratives were also at the core of how third-parties defined Turkey-Azerbaijan ties. Armenian independence struggles were mobilized by the legacy of 1915 – pitting them against Azeris as well, which they deemed the "same people" as their brethren in Turkey. In other words, Armenians 'otherized' Azerbaijan by pointing to the ethnic-national unity between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Having 11 coalition governments in Ankara in the course of the '90s contributed to the inconsistencies. The political and social divisions in Turkey were reflected in policies towards Azerbaijan. Clashing visions and engagements were pursued at once. While Turkish nationalists advocated the idea of integrating the Turkic

world into one political entity, religiously motivated Turkish activists had Islam high on the agenda of their approach to Turkey-Azerbaijan relations.

Nevertheless, links between the state establishments and strong personal relationships between high-level individuals – such as Heydar Aliyev and Suleyman Demirel, between state institutions, as well as general support among the Turkish society, ensured that Azerbaijan's interests were taken into consideration in Ankara at every relevant juncture.

Turkey maintained a closed border with Armenia, as a reaction to Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani districts in the course of the Karabakh war. The pressure that this closed border imposes on Armenia is seen by many as the only incentive Armenia has to reach a compromise deal with Azerbaijan. Turkey also brought the Karabakh issue to the attention of world leaders and international partners consistently, an important contribution for Azerbaijan particularly before Baku increased its pull in the international arena through energy politics.

Realizing the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline – against many odds at the time – has arguably been strategically the most important achievement of the Turkey-Azerbaijan partnership. Over the years, favorable terms for Turkish businessmen were granted in Baku and military assistance as well as small-scale development and education-related support was extended from Turkey to Azerbaijan.

Though governments changed in Ankara throughout the '90s, the real fundamental 'regime' shift started in 2002 with the rise to power of AKP in Turkey. In the course of the following 10 years, in a few instances, such as in the course of the Turkish-Armenian diplomatic overtures, the change of interlocutors in Ankara left Azerbaijani counterparts without familiar channels to share their concerns with.

The rising prominence of liberal intellectuals in Turkey, at the expense of more nationalist-minded, old guard supportive of the military and 'Republican ideals', meant the Turkish press and general social debate also factored Azerbaijan out (relatively), at least for a few years. Azerbaijani counterparts initially felt the brunt of these shifts of power in Turkey.

Though for a few years it was not clear how links between Turkey and Azerbaijan would be accordingly reformed, Baku did not take long to realize the needs stemming from a changing Turkey and to recognize the so-inclined Gülen movement as a significant channel through which to fortify its Turkey relations. Since 2010 a new equilibrium appears to have been established. Though Ankara and Baku are both driven primarily by the strategic value of the bilateral relationship, the ideological ties now rest increasingly on a more complex shared identity in which a new blend of ties based on religion, culture, and ethnic identity plays a dominant role.

In the meantime, Turkish intellectuals who had geared to the West and who openly advocate political reform in relatively non-ideological, liberal forms have been unable to build meaningful and sustainable ties with the

progressive segments of the Azerbaijani political elites, hampering the representation of the full spectrum of Turkish values, capacities and interests in the sphere of relations with Azerbaijan.

Since the mid 2000s, AKP has stepped up its nationalist credentials, to some extent alienating the liberal segments that it was earlier coalescing with. Coupled with changing global and regional changes, Turkey's foreign policy has also been transformed in the past decade. While in general 'diversification' from a focus on the West has taken place, emphasis placed by Ankara on Turkey's neighbors has increased. Muslim countries and Muslim causes are more prominent in the rhetoric of official Ankara, while relative to the past, references to Turkic solidarity or ethnic kinship has faded. These shifts have led to the expectation among some observers that this government in Ankara would be less adamant about owning up to the legacy of nationalist forerunners of the Republic such as Enver Pasa or Talat Pasa who are controversial figures due to the acts of ethnic cleansing which are attributed to them.

Though the attempt fizzled due to Azerbaijan's reaction and the potential fallout of Baku's displeasure on Turkish domestic politics and strategic interests, this process depicted the 'arrangements' between the Gülen-affiliated media outlets and official Baku. In order to proceed with their functions smoothly in Baku, those associated with the Gülen movement were very cautious about standing by Baku and not publicly supporting the Turkey-Armenia normalization process. In a give-and-take relationship, Gülen-affiliated institutions use their network and resources in the interests of Azerbaijan on issues related to the Karabakh conflict/Armenia (such as articles they run, support of diaspora lobby activities on behalf of Azerbaijan etc.) and in return work in Azerbaijan without interruption. (This caution is also extended to issues pertaining to democracy, with the Gülen-affiliated outlets exercising clear caution not to print articles that question the democratic credentials of the administration in Baku, so as to ensure their business in Baku is supported by the Azerbaijani officialdom). Azerbaijan has recently increased its outreach in the Muslim world, both to back up its claim of bridging civilizations, and as a means to increase support for its Karabakh position. Perceived neglect from the Western world to the plight of Azerbaijanis has increased Baku's inclination to resort to Muslim sympathies, resources and solidarity on this issue. This trend was most recently observed in the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) think tank forum hosted in Baku in early March 2012 where an emphasis was placed on discussing conflicts and the importance of countries of the OIC supporting each other in cases of conflict where the Christian West was either negligent or approached with bias rather than a sense of justice. Muslim countries and their civil societies are increasingly talking about Western bias in preaching norms and values, the failure of Western institutions to deliver moral conflict resolution, the need to pool Muslim assets and weight in the international community to level the playing field, to pass counter-resolutions in their parliaments (against for example the massacres of Azerbaijanis in Armenia in the course of the Karabakh war), playing a stronger role - in line also with the shift of economic gravity in the world, of Muslims on the international agenda-setting processes. As Turkey has also been putting more emphasis on its relations in the Muslim world, Azerbaijan and Turkey are also collaborating more in this field of international affairs. This trend is more limited on the

Azerbaijani side however, not extending in the case of Azerbaijan to hawkish positions against Israel for example.

While the marginalization of Turkish nationalist networks in both Turkey and Azerbaijan left a vacuum, it has been the religiously networked Turks that have stepped up their presence and involvement in Azerbaijan.

Part of the reason that liberal NGOs and intellectuals have been absent is the prejudice against Azerbaijan, rooted in the antipathy that ethnic-kin rhetoric has developed among Turkish liberals. Part of the problem was the assumption on both sides, as well as among potential donors in Western Europe and the United States, that building such ties required conscious effort - the assumption was that the two sides already know each other well enough to bond and coordinate their development. And finally, the demand from Azerbaijan to have liberal Turks coming to Azerbaijan and talking about human rights and the like was weak.

Turkey's multifaceted influence on Azerbaijan has prevailed though - from avenues such as Turkish soap operas and political debates viewable in Azerbaijan, to business links and joint opposition to perceived Armenian hostility against Turks - which appears to treat Azerbaijanis and so called "Anatolian Turks" as one. On occasion Turkey exported its problems to Azerbaijan too. Some in Baku recall Turkish political figures coming to Azerbaijan and talking about the headscarf or hijab issue and creating controversy on issues the Azerbaijani society had not previously been polarized about. Gülen "initiated the setting up of schools" in Turkey in the early 1980s and Azerbaijan was the first country outside of Turkey where the Gülen Movement opened schools, in 1992. Since, this trend has continued, exponentially. In their own words, 'Businessmen, school teachers and academics inspired by Fethullah Gülen's teachings have opened hundreds of educational institutions of all sizes, from kindergartens to universities, in over 100 countries' in a decentralized manner. The relationships are between individuals rather than institutions, and thus organic structural connections are not concrete.

To get a sense of how they articulate their philosophy, the abundant articles accessible on Gülen websites are a source that can be draw upon. One such example quotes "the end goal" of Gülen's educational initiatives as being to raise a "generation of ideal universal individuals, individuals who love truth, who integrate spirituality and knowledge, who work to benefit society."

Fethullah Gülen-'inspired' schools are broadly referred to as "Turkish schools" in Azerbaijan, equating them with the Turkish state, government, or nation as a whole in the minds of Azerbaijanis, which is indeed misleading. Gülen-inspired schools are not under any government control; however, they strike more synergy with AKP policies than past governments' policies, and that their many functions translate into Turkish soft power seems relatively straightforward. They both benefit from and complement Turkey's increased foreign policy activism, all the more so because non-Gülen media, civil society, educational institutions, intellectuals and the like are not engaging these geographies with anywhere near the intensity of Gülen associates. Given the Turkish state not having philanthropic support for civil society engagement, de facto, a significant share of

Turkish cultural educational and other soft power outreach is linked to the Gülen movement. The Gülen movement even has activities and schools where Turkey does not have official diplomatic representation, let alone any other functioning Turkish civil society organization. Advocates of the movement point out that Gülen schools preceded the AKP government and cannot be considered as extensions of Turkish foreign policy in any way.

As in Azerbaijan, the Gülen movement outlets have become dominant in places where Turkish organizations of alternative conviction used to be present, and have in a sense crowded out the other Turkish ideological outreach groups.

In Azerbaijan, “Gülen -inspired” schools and university preparatory courses, dormitories are run under the umbrella of a company called Cag Ogretim – including the Qafkas University that was set up in 1993 and has been growing particularly throughout the 2000s.

The promotion of a pious lifestyle is often intertwined with promotion of Turkish identity in Gülen’s institutions in Azerbaijan – as well as in other countries that would be receptive to the Turkish component. In the early years of Azerbaijan's independence, the Gülen schools were low-priced and everyone could afford them. Currently many are high priced and school the children of prominent bureaucrats and businessmen.

As a general strategy, in these schools, worldwide, the level of advocacy of identity/values/religion is said to be adapted to the receptiveness of the context. In countries or environments where ideological components would not fare well, they are kept at a minimum. Islam and its specific understanding by Gülen is projected to students to the degree and in the form that it will not be negatively received - it is fine tuned so as not to be reacted against, which could harm the movement. Thus these schools can also be popular in non-Muslim communities or among adherents of other sects and denominations of Islam. Religion is said not to be forced upon students or employees, but it is taught, its practice rewarded through the granting of more opportunities, and encouraged. Taking part in the Gülen movement can bring scholarships, employment and assistance, with an expectation of loyalty and “giving back” in the future. Intertwined in the schooling is the ethics of solidarity - or looking out for others that are affiliated with the network. Many people can aid the movement without necessarily sharing the religious convictions. The ties are also built upon gratitude for the dedication or financial assistance that has been granted by teachers or othermentors.

*([http://www.gmfus.org/galleries/ct\\_publication\\_attachments/Nigar\\_OnTurkey\\_Analysis\\_0609\\_final.pdf](http://www.gmfus.org/galleries/ct_publication_attachments/Nigar_OnTurkey_Analysis_0609_final.pdf))*

Though Islam has become a more prominent and consistent current in bilateral Turkish-Azerbaijani relations in recent years, religion does not define state-to-state relations, nor does it underpin the strong affinity between the two societies. Historical, linguistic, nationalistic and cultural bonds are arguably still stronger bonds between the two peoples.

The question remains open, though, about how the role of religiously-informed networks will evolve. The answer will very much depend on the various dimensions of domestic evolution in both countries. Fuelled by their lack of transparency, there are diametrically opposed views about whether the Gülen network is a danger or a positive contribution to Azerbaijan, also reflecting the polarized debate in Turkey about this network.

Arguably, the fate of liberal, Western-oriented, rights and freedoms-driven segments of both countries will play a central role in determining how much of a monopoly nationalistic or religious groups are able to control in this sphere. Besides the question

of whether they are free to be empowered, it will also be decisive whether the liberal intellectuals have the passion and the interest to be involved, to compete, and the means to mobilize the public. The guarantor of solidly sustained Turkish- Azerbaijani relations may be for diverse interest or value-driven communities to be engaged, competing for influence with a level playing ground.

The guarantor of solidly sustained Turkish- Azerbaijani relations may be for diverse interest or value-driven communities to be engaged, competing for influence with a level playing ground.

### **3.5 Sparkles on the Relationships**

Despite the high level of cooperation and relations between Baku and Ankara, the bilateral relations have been experiencing some setbacks in the last several years. These setbacks have not caused any major damage to the Azeri-Turkish relations; however demonstrate that the relations between these two brotherly nations are changing and that both governments need to work hard to sustain a high level of mutual trust and beneficial partnership.

Foremost, the change in the bilateral relations came after Ahmet Necdet Sezer became the President of Turkey. Although Turkey is not a presidential republic, this position has been crucial in building bilateral partnership. Azerbaijani-Turkish relations remained strong throughout 1990s mainly due to the high level of personal friendship between Turkish president Süleyman Demirel and President Heydar Aliyev. Unlike Demirel, who was a professional politician with a long-term vision and who was able to put long term considerations above shorter term problems that exist between the two nations, Sezer is a professional lawyer. For him, bilateral relations were to be built on the rule of law and democracy. Seeing Azerbaijan as authoritarian and corrupt, Sezer has difficulty building warm relations with Azeri authorities. The coolness in the personal relations of lawyer Sezer and pragmatic Aliyev was evident. This was perhaps a wrong approach from the side of the Turkish president, because even though issues of democracy and rule of law are very important for building the right statehood, Sezer failed to understand the complexities of the transition period in the post-Soviet republics and the necessity of time and gradual development for the eradication of corruption and other governance problems in Azerbaijan.

This coolness further increased after the government change in Turkey. In 2002 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became the new Prime Minister of Turkey. Erdoğan, closely linked to neo-Islamist groups, pursued a different approach than the former coalition government led by Ecevit. While the Ecevit Government's policies towards Azerbaijan were very similar to those of Demirel, and even included pan-Turkic features due to the inclusion of Devlet Bahçeli the coalition, Erdoğan's foreign policy was primarily focused on economic growth and the accession of Turkey into the European Union.

It is true that Erdoğan made his first foreign trip to Baku and met with the Azerbaijani leadership. But it was also clear that Erdoğan cared less about Turkic solidarity than previous Turkish governments. Instead of seizing on the great economic and political opportunities opened up in the Caucasus and Central Asia, where Turkey could play a dominant regional role, Erdoğan, instead, decided to completely focus on the EU accession and abandon the “Eastern” part of Turkey’s foreign policy. Erdoğan’s agenda was focused on economic issues, and in this area Azeri-Turkish relations have some problems. Although it was important to highlight these problems for their resolution, putting them as the priority in bilateral relations and risking damaging the high level of strategic friendship built between Baku and Ankara was a mistake.

For a long time already, Turkish businessmen were complaining about the high level of corruption, custom harassment and bureaucracy in Azerbaijan. This, they claim, makes their business operations in Baku almost impossible and many of them had to close down their businesses. Notoriously corrupt customs officers seem to create the most problems for Turkish importers and truck drivers. Besides, Azerbaijan’s economy, which has become increasingly dominated by monopolies, tied to the ruling regime, posed little opportunities for investors from abroad. Erdoğan, keen to increase Turkish economic power and reduce poverty, was clear about these obstacles and urged Azerbaijani authorities to reduce barriers to free trade and economic partnership. Thus, one can conclude that the period of ideological brotherhood and pan-Turkic solidarity was over and it was time for rational, calculated relations based on economic concerns to start.

The second issue that irritated both governments was the issue of the Armenian-Turkish border. As part of the Turkey’s efforts to join EU, Erdoğan began softening the Turkish stance on this issue, and seemed to be more willing to lift the trade embargo. Obviously, he was facing pressure from the U.S. and EU governments, but his willingness to restore trade with Armenia prior the liberation of the occupied Azerbaijani territories was received in Baku as a sign of treason. Politicians in Baku stated that Azerbaijan also faced many pressures on the issue of BTC, but the official Baku did not give up. Both the public and media in Azerbaijani capital condemned this intention and a group of Azerbaijani journalists organized a march to Turkey to show their dismay with these plans. Azerbaijanis claimed that lifting the blockade on Armenia would further embolden Armenians for more territorial claims on Azerbaijan

and Turkey. Besides, Azerbaijanis believed that opening the border would show that Armenia can get away with the occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory.

Although Erdoğan and his government never claimed that they would open the border, they seemed open to the discussion of this issue. The new Turkish government believed that the opening of the border would help the shattered economy of the Kars region. After facing severe objections from the Azeri side, Erdoğan backed down on this issue. Yet, it is clear in Baku that the Turkish-Azeri solidarity should not be taken for granted any more. ( Nazrin Mehdiyeva, "Azerbaijan and Its Foreign Policy Dilemma", Asian Affairs, 2003, Vol.4, No.2. Pp.18-45)

Finally, a thorny issue in Azeri-Turkish relations is the status of Northern Cyprus. Azerbaijan did not recognize the Republic of Northern Cyprus because it feared that this would create a dangerous precedent for the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent republic. The Turkish side felt that the two conflicts were of different nature and that Azerbaijani political leadership was not doing enough to help Northern Cyprus.

The issue of Northern Cyprus further increased tensions in Azeri-Turkish relations in May 2004, when a scandal broke out at the session of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg.

During the voting on a bill that would allow the unrecognized Northern Cyprus republic to establish its representation at the Council of Europe, all Azerbaijani delegates except one were absent. The bill was defeated and the Turkish delegation accused their Azeri "brothers" of betraying them.

The topic quickly made the headlines in the Turkish press. The influential daily *Hürriyet* accused Azerbaijan and its leadership of killing the bill and not supporting Turkish national interests. Similarly, the opposition press in Azerbaijan rushed to slam Ilham Aliyev's foreign policy and its inconsistency. "Sell-out action from the regime," exclaimed the opposition-sided daily *Yeni Musavat*.

The scandal was connected to a statement made by Ilham Aliyev during his visit to Turkey two weeks earlier, where he said that should the referendum on the unification of Cyprus fail, Azerbaijan would be one of the first countries to render international recognition to the Turkish part of the island.

Samed Seidov, who is heading the Azerbaijani delegation to the Council of Europe, denied all accusations. “First of all, the bill was rejected by more than two dozens votes. The votes of six Azerbaijani delegates would not matter much,” he told ANS TV. The head of delegation stated that the Azerbaijani delegation deliberately did not participate in the session, because it could create a precedent for the “recognition of unrecognized regimes”.

Nevertheless, President Ilham Aliyev kept his promise and on 27 July 2005 Azerbaijan became the first country, besides Turkey, to open direct flights to the unrecognized Republic of Northern Cyprus. The charter flight, although handled by the private company IMAIR, carried a huge significance for bilateral relations as well as for lifting the Turkish side of the island from economic isolation. More than 90 Turkish and Azerbaijani businessmen flew to Northern Cyprus to participate in a business forum and promote trade and business relations between the two nations. The move came several days after a group of Azerbaijani parliamentarians visited Lefkoşa, the capital of Northern Cyprus, and held talks with the political leadership. Local analysts linked the intensification of the bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Northern Cyprus to the visit of Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan to Baku in 2005 and his steady persuasion of the Azerbaijani leadership to take these measures. Others believed that President Aliyev was making these steps towards the Northern Republic of Cyprus to please the Turkish political leadership prior to the sensitive parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan.

The warming up of relations with Northern Cyprus caused a great deal of problems for the official Baku, because the EU, under pressure from the Cyprus Republic, threatened to end the implementation of the Neighborhood Policy with Azerbaijan.

During most of the post-independence period, Turkey did not interfere with the domestic issues of Azerbaijan and more or less supported the ruling party. Some political circles in Ankara maintained relations with and even supported opposition parties in Azerbaijan. And the leaders of the opposition bloc Azadlig (Freedom), Ali Kerimli and Isa Gambar, frequently visited Turkey during the campaigning season in 2005. Yet, this generally has not been welcomed at the official governmental level of Turkey.

Azerbaijan's parliamentary elections in November, 2005 were met with criticism from international organizations and Western countries, but Turkey has given the voting process "silent acceptance." This position, largely driven by geopolitical and economic considerations, has angered the domestic opposition in Azerbaijan. Even though Turkey considers itself a regional power, its influence seemed relatively insignificant compared to the activities of Russia and the U.S. during the election process. Visits of the Turkish politicians to Baku were very rare and Turkish weight in the domestic political developments in Azerbaijan was almost non-existent. This comes as a surprise in light of the valuable role Turkey played in the development of Azerbaijan's democracy in the 1990s. (Svante Cornell, "A Delicate Balance: Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1998, vol.34, no.1.pp..56-73)

Turkey has always served as a model for Azerbaijan. Now that internal stability and development are being consolidated in Azerbaijan, promoting democracy in Azerbaijan should be one of the key priorities of official Ankara. With one eye on its membership bid for the European Union, Ankara indeed sent clear signals to Baku that it wanted to see democratic elections held. Both President Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül urged for greater transparency in the voting process. "Azerbaijan will be much stronger if the elections are conducted in an orderly and transparent manner," Gül said "Azerbaijan's position on the international stage would be strengthened if transparent and orderly elections are held."

Nonetheless, Turkey appeared willing to go only so far in pressing its point about democratic reform. On November 7, the Turkish Foreign Ministry expressed reserved pleasure over the Azerbaijani parliamentary elections. "The official election results and reports from election observers, particularly observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will shed light on the way the elections took place," the ministry said in a statement. In addition to a 52-member Turkish observation team that took part in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's observer mission, 100 Turkish parliamentarians and representatives of non-governmental organizations monitored the election. "Irrespective of these evaluations, the protection of tranquility and stability in Azerbaijan is our main wish," the ministry statement concluded.

The opposition perceives this stance as one of not giving priority to the relationship. In the interview with Axis Globe, Gambar characterized Turkey's role in Azerbaijan's elections as "much more passive than our other neighbors." Turkey's goal of integration with the European Union has distracted it from events in the South Caucasus, Gambar argued.

Azeri-Turkish relations are surely going through some qualitative changes. Political circles in Ankara are putting more emphasis on pragmatic and day-to-day issues such as trade and economics, rather than ideological and vague statements on the pan-Turkic brotherhood, which was the case in 1990s.

President Ilham Aliyev is paying strong attention to the relations with Turkey, but his relations with Erdoğan and Sezer are surely not as close as his father's relations with Demirel. Thus, we can see that both sides are now taking more pragmatic positions. The recent plan of the two governments to build the Kars-Akhalkalaki railroad, which would link the railway systems of Turkey and Azerbaijan through Georgia, if implemented, will be another major regional project that would benefit all three nations. For the first time, Asia and Europe would be connected by railway.

Yet, it is also crucial that the Turkish leadership maintains the Caucasus at the center of its focus and foreign policy priorities. Turkey has great potential to be the regional power player in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Investing economically, benefiting from language and cultural links, actively participating in the mediation process of the local conflicts can turn Ankara into the regional power center. Only after being a power broker in the Caucasus and Central Asia, can Turkey aim at dominating the Middle East politics and aim at EU membership. Without the stronghold in Caucasus and Central Asia, Turkey's bargaining stance with EU will also be very much weakened. Neglecting the Caucasus for the sake of EU membership will only hurt Turkey in the long-run and damage its status as the regional power.

Turkish leaders should pay frequent visits to Baku. One Turkish diplomat, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that "it has been a long time since the foreign minister of Turkey visited Baku, while he spends most of his time in Brussels." Lack of attention to the Caucasus can be also seen from the fact that the construction of the Turkish part of BTC is being delayed for more than a year already and no politician in Ankara seems to be worried about it.

Only by maintaining tight relations, can Azeri-Turkish brotherhood strengthen ensuring both Azerbaijan's secure independence and Turkey's growing role as the dominant force of the region.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The Turkish Parliament's role in this process should not be underestimated. Indeed, loud voices within the party were in strong disagreement with the leadership. Then, the party leadership had allowed members to vote according to their consciences, thereby avoiding the need to enforce party discipline on an unwilling parliamentary group and thus giving itself an exit strategy. The same strategy could well be used if the Armenian protocols ever got to Parliament. Indeed, the court's caveats in interpreting the Protocols not to mean any end to Armenia's quest for recognition of the 1915 massacres as genocide, emphasizing the de-linking of the Turkish Armenian relationship from the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, and murky legalistic language on the common border all offered the Turkish leadership an opportunity to lambast Armenia for changing the game.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT IN AZERBAIJANI-TURKISH**

#### **RELATIONSHIP**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

Turkey was the first state to recognize Azerbaijan, several weeks before it recognized the other states in the region. Azerbaijan was crucial for Turkey in more than one way. Naturally, any substantial Turkish influence in Central Asia depended on influence in the Caucasus, and in the Caucasus Azerbaijan was defined as the strategically most important country not only by Turkey, but by Iran and later the United States as well. For Turkey especially, Azerbaijan was a logical strategic pillar for influence in the wider region because of the close ethnic affinity, all but lack of linguistic difficulties, potential petroleum wealth, and its strategic location as the only Caucasian state on the Caspian Sea.

## 4.2 Significance in Azerbaijani-Turkish Relations

Despite Turkey's overtly pro-Azerbaijani stance during 1992–1993, Ankara did not supply Baku with anything that could have helped it turn the tide of the Nagorno-Karabakh war. Some retired Turkish army officers were sent to help train the Azerbaijani army; Armenian sources claim that Turkey provided weapons, but if such shipments took place, these weapons were insignificant, given the readily available Soviet weaponry in the region. Turkey's policy on Nagorno-Karabakh illustrates the profound restraint exercised by Turkish leaders, who very likely would have wished to do much more for Azerbaijan. A clear divide emerged between elected officials and political appointees, on the one hand, and the career military and civil service establishment, on the other. As politicians in government as well as the opposition outbid one another in expressing pro-Azerbaijani statements, the establishment was not about to let elected leaders drag the country into a war in the Caucasus. It is hence doubtful whether the military would have followed orders of direct intervention, had these been given. In other words, the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict served as a case study for the limitations that Turkey may encounter if it opted for military intervention. (Svante Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, Curzon Press, 2001.)

Turkey's active policy in the South Caucasus first revealed itself in the aftermath of the Georgia-Russia August 2008 war. After the conflict, Turkey proposed to create a South Caucasus Security and Cooperation Platform that would include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, and Turkey. Interestingly, Turkey did not include the United States in this platform and decided to proceed independently together with Russia, even though the United States is one of the official mediators for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict under the aegis of the OSCE. In 2008, Turkish and Armenian presidents watched the World Football Cup qualification match between Armenia and Turkey together. This was a very symbolic gesture indicating the beginning of rapprochement between the two countries. The media was quick to dub the event as football diplomacy between Turkey and Armenia. Tensions escalated between Azerbaijan and Turkey in 2009, which is a sharp contrast to the years of the BTC's construction. Azerbaijan's concerns over Turkish policies became even more pronounced after the so-called "football diplomacy" between Turkey and Armenia.

Until a few years ago, it was inconceivable in Azerbaijan that Turkey would trump its most important foreign policy priority, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Turkey's aims to eventually open its borders to Armenia and its strengthening cooperation with Russia, was perceived as abandonment by Azerbaijan, especially with respect to the conflict. Azerbaijan is also acutely aware that without Turkey, it loses a great deal of leverage in the conflict. This is also evident within the scope of the protocols that Turkey is not mentioned as a mediator regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. It was becoming evident that borders were going to be reopened. In order to pacify Azerbaijan and Turkey's nationalist opposition, Erdoğan of Turkey visited Azerbaijan in 2009. However news started spreading that Turkey and Armenia were expected to sign two protocols, whereby diplomatic relations would be established between the two countries and borders between them would be reopened. The new wave of disappointment came to Azerbaijan during the second football match between Turkey and Armenia, in September 2009, this time in Bursa, Turkey. The match was followed by barring the Azerbaijani flag from entering the stadium. Azerbaijan responded by bringing down the Turkish flags at the military memorial in Baku. Despite all these, in his 2009 Baku visit Prime Minister Erdoğan reassured Baku to "overcome the misunderstandings and to keep Baku's interests as top foreign policy priority".

Tensions, however, eased after Davutoğlu's visit to Baku, where he reassured the Azerbaijanis that the borders will remain closed until Armenia withdraws from the Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite Davutoğlu's reassurances, on October 10, 2009, the protocols were signed in Zurich by him and his Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandian, establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries and further creating the possibility of the border opening in the future. Both protocols were meant to enter into force two months after ratification by the legislatures of both states. The parliaments, however, have not ratified the protocols yet. Turkey argues that ratification may be possible if Armenia releases five districts adjacent to the Nagorno-Karabakh. It should be noted that the majority of the Turkish public is against the reopening of borders with Armenia before the progress on the Nagorno- Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan, however, views the signing of both the protocols as a threat to its stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. On the other hand, soon after the signing of

the protocols in 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan called the process as an “important step” both within the political and diplomatic realm.

It is very likely that Azerbaijan will be using its gas resources to inform Turkey and the West of its concerns with Turkish-Armenian rapprochement and its implications for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. More interestingly, Azerbaijan only agreed to sell gas to Russia in October 2009, when the Turkish-Armenian protocols on normalizations of relations and opening their mutual border were signed. Azerbaijan’s active promotion of the BTC oil pipeline in the 1990s and 2000s is an unprecedented step to deliver gas to Russia, while at the same time holding talks on another energy pipeline that was meant to provide Europe with gas. Turkish rapprochement with Armenia has also made Azerbaijan consider the Russian option more closely. Russia now has greater political weight in Eurasia, which was especially evident after the Russia-Georgia War of August 2008. The war altered the traditional political configuration in the region and pushed Azerbaijan more into the Russian political orbit. (<http://rnurullayev.blogspot.gr/2010/01/turkiye-azerbaycan-ucuntekbasina.html>)

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh at an early stage shattered the illusions of certain Turkish policy-makers about the capacities of their country with regard to its relations with its lost cousins of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Indeed, as if subjected to a cold shower, the Turks which had not done so realized the complexity of their country's relations with the United States, Western Europe, Russia, and the Middle East, and the constraints upon it that prevented Turkey from pursuing a truly independent policy in the region. Turkey found itself involved in a myriad of liabilities, as it was compelled to take into account the stance of the West and that of Russia while formulating its policy in the Caucasus. In view of the difficult conditions it was subjected to Turkey nevertheless managed to keep its relations with all involved powers avoiding to compromise its position in any center where that would have been to its detriment.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

After 20 years of engagement, Azerbaijani-Turkish relations still remain a focal point in foreign policy making. Even though these two countries share certain aspects in terms of language and culture it is of utmost importance to underline the fact that international relations is not area of ordinary citizens, instead it is the apparatus of official government representatives in which the final outcome is dependent on. The feeling of kinship in the initial part of the Azerbaijani-Turkish engagement proved to be an ideal one that was felt strongly among the intellectuals and government officials. However, since the second decade of Azerbaijan's independence, both Turkey and Azerbaijan has changed. Turkey came under the rule of an Islamic conservative party favoring moderate Islam and has little enthusiasm for Turkic brotherhood, while Azerbaijan gained increasing self confidence as its independence consolidated and its economy boomed. This naturally affected the relationship between the two countries which was once romantically considered to be under One Nation Two States. In other words Baku and Ankara have found that pragmatic and realists interests do not always comport with the solidarity notably in the area of energy politics.

Therefore, in light of what has been stated in the introductory part of the thesis, it can be concluded that the extent of Azerbaijani-Turkish engagement is merely based upon pragmatic and realist assumptions, even though there have been certain instances that statesmen from both parties made references to nationalist rhetoric and other bonding elements. One such instance is the One Nation Two States principle that was popular in the 1990s during a time when this engagement was flourishing and became especially useful when the decision making elite in Turkey originated from a secular background. In his book, "Azerbaijan Since Independence", Svante Cornell makes striking references regarding this phenomena:

*To varying degrees, this group espouses some form of nationalism, and therefore feels strong cultural affinities with Azerbaijan and other Turkic nations. For this large segment of society, including the political class, it is natural for Turkey to keep close ties with Azerbaijan and actively support its interests and its independence.*

Other evidence as far as showing the recent phase of the Azerbaijani-Turkish relations can be traced to other platforms such as the leaked U.S Dept. of State files, also known as the “Wikileaks”. In such an example, the documents contain harsh criticisms of the ruling Justice and Development Party by the President Ilham Aliyev. Accordingly, Aliyev is reported to dismiss Turkey’s recent foreign policy establishment as being “naive”.

These revelations confirming an open factor, that behind “One Nation Two States”, tensions and misunderstanding abound. The signing of the Geneva protocols between Turkey and Armenia signaled a reality check for the Azerbaijani decision makers in the sense that the steps taken without meaningful progress in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and being perceived as a betrayal by Turkey. Moreover, the intensity of the Azerbaijani reaction to the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement revealed growing resentments in Azerbaijan at the tendency of many Turkish politicians, religious missionaries and businessmen to treat Azerbaijan as an extension of Turkey. While the two countries share a lot in terms of language and culture, Azerbaijanis have their own distinct multi-layered identity, with a strong, European and Caucasian heritage that set it apart from Turkey. What is more, while Azerbaijanis admire Turkey’s economic dynamism and military prowess, they also feel their own society is more progressive due to higher literacy rates, more profound secularization and higher levels of female emancipation.

Svante Cornell goes one step further in explaining the societal factors in affecting the current state of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations by making several connections with Azerbaijan’s pragmatic behavior in terms of Turkey. As Cornell states:

*Turkey will always be more important to Azerbaijan than Azerbaijan is to Turkey. Furthermore, as Islamic solidarity increasingly rivals Turkic solidarity in Turkey, this is likely to further temper the intensity of the relationship on the Turkish side. But it is also possible that as Azerbaijan becomes wealthier and more self-conscious, its population may not continue to acquiesce in being treated as the neglected younger brother. As Azerbaijan matures as an independent nation, its ties to Turkey may very well become less emotional and eventually more pragmatic.*

These factors have resulted Azerbaijan and Turkey to be estranged from each other on an array of international and foreign policy issues Azerbaijan, for example, has made

a point of continuing close relations with Israel after Turkey fell out with the Jewish state. Azerbaijan is much more critical of Iran's current leadership than Turkey is, and its policies on Iran are aligned to those of the West. As far as domestic policies are concerned, many in Turkey see Azerbaijan as an authoritarian petro-state with scant regard for the rule of law. The Azerbaijani elite on the other hand generally don't see any merit in a JDP style moderate Islam. Moreover, some circles in Azerbaijan assert once being hopeful of a positive spill-over to Azerbaijan from Turkey's European integration, now watch with dismay of how certain freedoms in everyday life is increasingly becoming under threat in Turkey where the majority ruler Justice and Development Party hold a firm grip.

On another note, as the Azerbaijani-Turkish relations become strained one should also notice the possibility of Azerbaijan falling under Russia's sphere of influence. It is evident that Azerbaijan using energy politics as a political leverage to remind Turkey of the Nagorno-Karabakh by signing vital energy agreements with Russia. In line with the research questions and the main arguments outlined in the introductory part, this thesis concludes that the formal dictum in international relations discipline no eternal friends, only eternal interests, appears to be increasingly true in Azerbaijani-Turkish relations. The aphorism of One Nation Two States seemed to have long occupied the two countries' relationship seems to be in contradiction in this current decade by the time this thesis is being published. However, it should be once reminded that states identify their interests separately, instead of jointly, through calculation and political processes as the Realist international relations theory suggests. In the case of Azerbaijan and Turkey remain distinct states their interests as defined by their respective leaderships will to likely to align. The contradiction between the claim of belonging to a single nation and the realities of two states is therefore likely to continue to be the main feature of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations and particularly will likely to last in this manner as the Justice and Development Party remains as the majority power in Turkey.

In other words, since with the recent ups and downs in the current decade, the romantic phase of One Nation Two States phase in the Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship is over. Azerbaijan is likely to continue in engaging in a more realistic and pragmatic manner in the years to come.

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