

INTRODUCTION

In my decade of service as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, I crisscrossed the globe and spoke in dozens of capitals around the world, at more than 150 international and academic conferences and other venues. As the representative of an ancient people, new at statehood, I viewed each appearance as our opportunity to move from being witnesses or mere subjects of history to a new place on the world stage where we would participate in the making of history. This collection of speeches reflects that emergence and documents the evolution of Armenia's foreign policy.

As the international community was observing and analyzing the new world order and trying to prescribe guidelines for moving forward, I believed it was essential that we present our own perspective, describe our own experience, present our own explanations about our goals and our limitations, and focus on global occurrences that impact us. I knew I was addressing people who would influence the opinions and make the policies that would have a bearing on our development and our future. I was speaking to be heard.

I was also speaking to be heard by Armenians worldwide. Rare was the city that didn't have a slice of the Armenian Diaspora. Rarer still was the visit that didn't include a meeting with those local Armenians who needed messages of both realism and hope. They were removed from Armenia in time and space, yet their very existence re-defined Armenia even as the new Armenia re-defined their identity. I knew from my work in the diplomatic community that Armenia would certainly be perceived differently, were it not for the extensive, visible, influential Diaspora.

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I was a part of that Diaspora when independence came in September 1991. By March 2, 1992, when I witnessed the raising of independent Armenia's tricolor at the United Nations, I already knew that my future lay in Armenia.

At the time, I was a student at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, where I had arrived circuitously, more than a decade after graduating from Yerevan's Polytechnic Institute. There, I had studied to be an engineer, and in 1980, I enrolled in the Tufts University graduate engineering program to continue my studies.

For a student born in Syria, with a college degree from a Soviet Armenian institution, the breadth, depth, fascination and challenges of university education in the United States were indescribable. Furthermore, the world was becoming very interesting politically and nowhere was that more evident than in the academic subculture of Boston. I was constantly distracted by the array of international speakers and programs offered by some of the world's greatest educational institutions. It didn't take long for me to succumb.

After the Tufts Engineering School, I enrolled in a government studies graduate program at Harvard University, and from there went on to the Fletcher School. The world was changing, and I wanted to be a part of that transformation, somewhere, somehow. For me, the shift from engineering to political studies had taken place years before there was even a glimmer of independence for Armenia. When independence did come in 1991, euphoria was mixed with trepidation. Armenia – with no resources, no experience of statehood, no natural allies, and plenty of historical and geopolitical limitations – was independent for the first time in nearly a century and only the second time in a millennium. My country was free but not secure.

The decision to move to Armenia was one of the easiest of my life. It was almost a non-decision, a default action. My education in and out of Armenia, my father's and family's continuous ties over the years with Armenia's cultural and intellectual life meant that Armenia, for me, always felt like home. Now it was to be home. Upon graduation in June 1992, I left for Yerevan with my family, and took up a post in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

FOREIGN POLICY

Our foreign policy agenda has not undergone significant change since the first days of our independence. Achieving physical and economic security for our people, striving for ever-deeper relations with neighbors near and far, reaching a peaceful and lasting resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, normalizing relations with Turkey, regional cooperation, European integration, as well as the global issues of disarmament, globalization and promotion of human rights and democracy – these are our challenges still.

Foreign policy is a tool for achieving national goals and defending national interests. National interest, however, is a broad concept. Ensuring the security and prosperity of a people is in the national interest of all countries. What sets nations apart is not so much their understanding and definition of their national interest, as it is the strategy, tactics and methods they choose to pursue and defend those interests.

It is that process of choosing, and choosing correctly, that confronts policy makers. While the possible choices are many, the plausible options – those that may lead to success or that will at least not backfire and cause harm – are limited. The magnitude of those restrictions is commensurate with a country's capacity and potential.

As with other countries, Armenia's geography, lack of natural resources, small population, history and even national character determine a great deal. There are also the global and regional considerations that affect policy choices as well as a leader's own perceptions, vision and diplomatic ability.

These were all in play in 1998 when the growing personal and policy differences between Armenia's first president, Levon Ter-Petrossian and his closest collaborators led to his forced resignation. While the complete circumstances under which he was obliged to relinquish power remain a subject of debate, foreign policy issues were certainly crucial, if not leading, causes. Among them were divergent views on resolving the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

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Both change and continuity follow any natural or regular assumption of office by a new administration. Although the transfer of power in Armenia in 1998 was neither natural nor regular, there was both continuity and dramatic change. When Robert Kocharian was elected president, and I was appointed foreign minister, we had our work cut out for us at home and abroad.

Internationally, the US-Russia honeymoon was already ending. Russia became more assertive in international relations and began to take stands on global matters. For a country like ours, these changes meant reduced flexibility and far less room to maneuver in order to be able to conduct an Armenia-specific foreign policy.

Regionally, conflicts were still simmering, not just in Nagorno Karabakh but also in Georgia. The international community now had a clearer position on conflicts, and articulated a preference for the principle of territorial integrity. This was what Azerbaijan wanted above all else, in order to justify its claim to Karabakh, a territory to which they had no ethnic, religious, legal or historic rights. Further, the Baku-Tbilisi-Çeyhan pipeline deal was almost sealed. This didn't just mean an emboldened Azerbaijan. It also meant an enhanced regional role for Turkey.

Domestically, while Armenia's economy had started to recover, the negative consequences of the post-Soviet transition were everywhere. In addition, there was the other transition – the complicated one from the first presidential administration to the second.

This was the context when I was appointed. It was essential to conduct a serious reassessment of strategies, tactics and methods being used to implement our foreign policy. Clearly, continuity was necessary in many areas. In others, change was required.

In the end, there were six policies which were either new or which varied in some significant way from what had come before: the policy of complementarity; the focus on multilateralism; a vigorous promotion of European integration; a more inclusive approach to Armenia-Diaspora relations; a new approach to Armenia-Turkey relations; and, most visibly, a different strategy for the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

COMPLEMENTARITY

Especially in light of the unprecedented military confrontation that erupted in the Caucasus in August 2008 between Georgia and Russia, it is impossible to overestimate the importance of a policy of complementarity in the Caucasus. This is more than a policy of balance or evenhandedness. It is a policy of maximal inclusion and broadest collaboration.

In 1998, in the first days of the Kocharian administration, we were obliged to rethink the older, and simpler, policy of balance that had guided decisions in the early days of the Republic. It had always been apparent that the new Republic of Armenia would and should have good relations with all three major power centers – the European Union, Russia and the United States. However, the sometimes perceptible, sometimes veiled competition among them made it necessary for us to balance our activities and interactions intentionally, to make sure that a relationship with one in one area was offset by an association with the other in another area. We had convinced ourselves that this would not be possible in the same sector, given the differences in outlook among our friends. The growing, albeit not overt, annoyance of each of them every time we did not take sides in their favor was another reason to review this policy.

Although such reactions were usually no more than irritations and therefore not hugely consequential in any one instance, accumulated misunderstandings can take a toll in any relationship, especially a political one, and so we had to find a suitable way out of such recurring predicaments while protecting our interests.

We needed a new concept – clearer, more persuasive and more bluntly articulated. That new direction was complementarity. The term had never before been used in the political context. This was a first. It required certain thinking, a firm commitment and a particular assumption.

The thinking was that we had to be bold and open with friends and foes. We announced that we are not obliged to choose among friends, that Armenia can be the place where the overlapping

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interests of the European Union, Russia and the United States or any two seemingly adversarial, competing countries, can prosper and where their divergent interests will never be exploited or manipulated in pursuit of our own national interests. We rejected a return to a Cold War mentality, insisting that it is not in anyone's interests, including those of the big powers, to return to that era. Armenia adhered firmly to this approach for the sake of our own future, and to reduce global tensions. We preferred to be the country that found ways to conflate the others' conflicting interests, rather than exacerbate and use them, for short-term, local gain.

The commitment to be considerate of those friendly to Armenia was one we took upon ourselves. This is a pre-emptive way of choosing voluntary cooperation where desirable in order to avoid compulsory collaboration where objectionable.

Finally, to make the policy of complementarity work, we had to understand and assume that national interest is indivisible and that it's the big picture that counts. Small, seemingly insignificant cooperation in one area with one country may yield short-term dividends, but may backfire with serious consequences in the mid or long-term.

Thus, our adherence to complementarity and our rejection of adversarial and partisan Cold War categories offered us some flexibility. We ventured into collaboration both with the US and with Russia, or with the European Union and Iran, or with the US and Iran in the same sectors, in ways where interests did not clash. That was key to the success of this policy and it did not manifest itself better anywhere than in the complex area of security.

Without this policy, it would have not been possible to dare remain in a strategic partnership with Russia, continue as a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and at the same time bring our relationship with NATO to a level short of membership. Among the former Soviet republics, we are the only country with such multilayered alliances. We believed that both these organizations desire peace and security, and we went forward with what was in Armenia's interest, and in the large powers' own long-term interests, as we saw them.

MULTILATERALISM

The second area where we introduced change was in our heightened focus on multilateralism. Given Armenia's size, and the geopolitical challenges facing us, my professional choice was to advocate a multilateralist approach to our international engagement.

This was also somewhat born of my own upbringing. I was born and raised in the Middle East, spoke Arabic, knew the histories and appreciated the cultures of the peoples of the area. I attended college and traveled extensively in the Soviet Union. I had lived, studied and worked in the United States, and spent much time in Europe.

Although my multicultural background may have made it easier for me to promote active multilateral engagement, I remain convinced that this approach is obvious and necessary to address Armenia's challenges. Our relations with individual countries are very important, and multilateralism even reinforces those bilateral relations from multiple capitals. Each of our ambassadors in the multilateral centers – New York, Brussels, Geneva, Strasbourg – has a chance, daily, to talk to and inform dozens of ambassadors from around the world. Armenia's relations with each of them are reinforced from each of these capitals. Thus, active multilateral ties help create a favorable environment. They help form international opinion.

Multilateralism means a state pursues its interests and goals beyond its national borders, not alone, but in cooperation and in coalition with other states. No country's problems, let alone Armenia's, can be solved unilaterally, or in isolation. Even great nations, when acting alone, have seen failure and disappointment.

Indeed, multilateral diplomacy has and continues to have vast benefits for Armenia. Whereas our bilateral relations are informed by economic, political, geographic realities, our multilateral relations are limited only by our creativity and willingness to take part in the discourse shaping today's and tomorrow's world.

Thus, a heightened focus on multilateralism was our clear foreign policy goal of intentional, consistent engagement in global issues. A small country, with little to give in terms of commodities and natural resources, can get lost on the big international stage. On the other

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hand, with Armenians living in every country on earth and with a long history and vibrant culture providing frames of reference, I believe that an Armenia active in the resolution of issues of global importance, engaged in the agendas of international organizations in matters beyond narrow national and regional issues, able to contribute conceptually and organizationally to the improvement and betterment of life would forge alliances, join coalitions, create friends and cohorts on new ground.

In this belief, we went ahead to form just such an agenda. This was a significant change and our multilateralism policy took Armenia to the world stage, and brought the world's issues to Armenia. The active contributions of our multilateral ambassadors were key to this approach. Each of them brought a great deal of energy and creativity, understanding and commitment to their often daunting challenges.

One of them, retired now, personified this policy. Jivan Tabibian, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, from 1998 to 2008, was the first appointment I, as foreign minister, recommended to the President. A true renaissance man, Jivan's extensive, varied experience in academia, consulting and international relations, his deep well of knowledge, keen understanding of people and cultures, turned him into the senior statesman of the OSCE community in no time, although he'd never before held a diplomatic post. His colleagues in Vienna reported to their capitals on his weekly statements which, beyond reinforcing Armenian issues, ranged from OSCE reform to electoral processes, the war in Iraq, regional conflicts, women's and children's rights, economic justice, and every other issue of urgency. When he left, he was gifted with his ten years of weekly speeches on five kilos of paper. This was multilateralism at work.

INTEGRATION INTO EUROPE

Our policy on integration with Europe was a continuation of the ideology that had come before, but with a change in emphasis and speed. We worked hard to accelerate integrational processes with three institutions – the Council of Europe, the European Union and NATO.

When in the first days of our independence, our people and our leaders asked the natural question – where do we belong? – the obvious response was Europe. Historically, religiously, linguistically, culturally, we have been and are of Europe. It is the idea of Europe that became our ideal. Living within the European neighborhood, we understood the importance of common views, shared approaches and universal values. Europe, too, acknowledged the need to nurture that which we have in common, especially in such a tight, interconnected, densely populated neighborhood.

There was competition among the three Caucasus countries to enter the Council of Europe as soon as possible. Membership would come only when a minimal political and economic standard had been met, and commitments made to continue with the remaining reforms. When Georgia was accepted in April 1999, Armenia expected to be next. However, in order not to appear to be taking political sides in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the Council of Europe decided to link our membership to Azerbaijan's, although there was acknowledgement that we were further ahead in democratic reforms. Thus the process became politicized. Again, our work was cut out for us.

We had applied in 1992. In 2001, Armenia received full membership status in the Council of Europe. This however was only the first hurdle. Improved economic and political standards, democracy and stability are key requirements for deeper integration with both the European Union and NATO. Euro-integration remained a priority even as the process itself greatly accelerated our domestic reforms. As I have said to the Council of Europe leadership and to our own people, Armenians have been beneficiaries of the process of accession to European structures.

TURKEY

With Turkey, in effect, there was continuity of policy. It is difficult to imagine an Armenian leader who might say anything other than that we want normal relations with all our neighbors, including Turkey. This does not mean that we forget, dismiss or deny our past as the Turkish government does. At a speech at the UN General

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Assembly in the first year of his administration, President Kocharian evoked the Genocide from that highest podium. This signaled that we had adopted genocide recognition as an element of our foreign policy agenda, but not as a condition for the establishment of bilateral relations with Turkey.

Our focus was on transcending and reconciling, and our approach was welcomed by other states that understood the moral and political dilemma facing us. We were vocal at times and places where it was appropriate to recall the Genocide, and at the same time, insist on the logic of normal relations.

Those relations were not formalized in my years as foreign minister. In my opinion, and as I have said on many, many occasions, Turkey missed several historic opportunities – not just to establish relations with Armenia, but to contribute to lasting peace and very real bonds and cooperation in this region. Instead, at different times, Turkey's messengers point to one of three “obstacles” for not establishing relations: First, they say that Armenia has territorial claims, although no Armenian official has ever raised such an issue, and no existing treaties have ever been rejected or replaced.

Second, they point to Armenia's support for the international processes for genocide recognition. But if Armenians, the very victims of genocide, do not condition bilateral relations on modern Turkey's recognition of the crimes of the Ottoman Empire, on what moral or political ground can Turkey expect Armenia to renounce or forget its past?

Third is Turkey's solidarity with Azerbaijan and their insistence that the Nagorno Karabakh issue be resolved quickly or that at least serious progress be demonstrated, in a direction that would clearly favor Azerbaijan.

We have explained that to make our bilateral relations subject to our relations with a third country is unrealistic. Still, Turkish opinion and policy makers have said that they are at Azerbaijan's mercy on this matter. And given the Nagorno Karabakh conflict situation, Azerbaijan does not want to see improved relations between Armenia and Turkey.

To try to address and satisfy all real and imagined concerns, when

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we left office, the discussion with Turkish officials was that, if they were willing to de-link Armenia-Turkey bilateral relations from Azerbaijani pressures, then we could tackle a four-pronged approach, with all four steps to be taken simultaneously: (1) The signing of a protocol on bilateral relations, which, by definition, (2) affirms each state's internationally recognized current borders, (3) accompanied by the opening of borders, and (4) the establishment of an intergovernmental commission that could discuss all problematic and painful issues outstanding between our countries and peoples. This package would offer solutions, acceptable in form and substance, to difficult problems, and would allow the region to move on.

NAGORNO KARABAKH

On the policy of complementarity, on multilateral engagement, on a heightened focus on integration with Europe, and on relations with Turkey, the second administration's policies were changed, modified or accelerated variants of prior policies. But in our position on the Karabakh conflict settlement process with Azerbaijan, there was a clear-cut and dramatic break.

President Ter-Petrossian, daily reminded of the threat to our security and the damage to our economy, society and psyche by the continued closure of our eastern and western borders, was convinced that the country's viability was at stake. He believed that it would be possible to postpone a resolution of Karabakh's status, receive solid security guarantees for the people of Nagorno Karabakh including a land link between Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, and return to Azerbaijan those territories outside of Karabakh under Armenian control. This, he believed, would bring relations closer to some semblance of normalcy.

The leadership and people of Nagorno Karabakh were opposed to this, as were a majority of the people of Armenia. The thinking then, and I believe now, is that without assurance that the people of Nagorno Karabakh will be responsible for their own security and destiny, there can be no partial solution. In other words, without clarity about the status of Nagorno Karabakh, no one was, or

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is, prepared to return the territories surrounding Karabakh which are under Armenian control and which ensure Karabakh's security.

This was certainly President Kocharian's firm belief. Having led the Nagorno Karabakh self-defense forces during the conflict, he was not about to relinquish the buffer zone without solid security and political guarantees. The territories provided physical security on the ground, and status would provide political security. In addition, he truly believed that Armenia's own resources were sufficient to ensure development even under conditions of blockade. After all, this was a blockade whose intent was to bring Armenia to its knees, to get maximal concessions from Armenia on the Genocide and on Nagorno Karabakh, and to weaken our negotiating position all around. Armenia had to demonstrate that this is not the case, that we do not doubt our own capacity. The Armenian economy can and indeed did grow. It had done so slowly even in the difficult early 1990s and faster in the last decade. Turkey and Azerbaijan could not suspect doubt on our part. Only when our adversaries understood that the blockade is not working and won't work, would they let normal relations prevail.

Thus, 1998 brought a clear change in policy. When we came into office, we inherited the consequences of the OSCE 1996 Summit in Lisbon, where, in a non-binding declaration by the Chairman, self-determination for Nagorno Karabakh was capped at the level of autonomy within Azerbaijan. This was untenable both politically and in terms of people's security. My task was to chip away at the legitimacy with which an emboldened Azerbaijan wanted to invest that concept. Indeed, the international community already had a reinforced perception of a restricted solution, a perception that was partially the result of President Ter-Petrossian's policies and actions between the 1996 OSCE Lisbon Summit and his resignation.

The dilemma was that, on the one hand, Armenian confidence and sense of security would not be restored with anything less than a comprehensive solution that addressed both the conflict's cause and its consequences. On the other hand, international thinking at the time assumed that any comprehensive agreement would only

be possible if Karabakh's maximal status were restricted to high autonomy within Azerbaijan. Otherwise, they advocated a step-by-step resolution, where the first step would be to address not the cause of the conflict – status – but its consequences – territories and refugees. It was this partial, and some said backwards, approach that Armenians found unacceptable, and President Ter-Petrossian's resignation was evidence of just how unacceptable.

It took months of active diplomacy, bilaterally and multilaterally, to rebuff this thinking and to make clear that only a comprehensive agreement that did not force Nagorno Karabakh to remain within Azerbaijan would be acceptable. Partial solutions that dealt with each element of the conflict separately and sequentially would be insupportable. This was the negotiating position of the Armenian side, which included both Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia. One of the consequences of the Lisbon declaration was that Azerbaijan's representatives refused to talk directly with the representatives of Nagorno Karabakh. To avoid a stalemate, Armenia agreed to continue to negotiate for Nagorno Karabakh, given that President Kocharian himself had been the leader of Nagorno Karabakh and the architect of its negotiating stance – especially the insistence on a comprehensive solution.

Even as we explained the security risk of an incomplete solution, we were careful not to alienate the mediators or the international community. Instead we adopted a non-conventional approach, and an unorthodox vocabulary. We advocated that the international community do the same in order to be able to find a creative, but just and lasting solution. We fought to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. "De facto independent, de jure not part of Azerbaijan" was born of this effort.

We rejected the step-by-step solution that assumed a return of territories, a return of refugees, open borders, and an uncertain future for Karabakh.

We began speaking about a non-vertical relationship between Karabakh and Azerbaijan, and insisted on a geographic link between Karabakh and Armenia. Of course, security guarantees

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had always been and continued to be part of the discussions, although over time, the levels and types of security forces considered acceptable have changed.

The Common State Agreement which the mediators proposed in the fall of 1998 was the result of this successful effort. It assumed horizontal relations between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan, contiguity between Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia through the district of Lachin, and security assurances. Azerbaijan rejected that proposal and it was buried. Its contents were later made public.

We searched for a different approach and introduced the legal component in our arguments. We explained that this is not just self-determination, but self-determination on territory towards which Azerbaijan cannot have any legal claims, since Nagorno Karabakh at no time was a part of independent Azerbaijan. From 1918 to 1920 when Azerbaijan, like Armenia, enjoyed a short-lived independence, Nagorno Karabakh was not part of that republic. In 1991, when we all became independent following the collapse of the USSR, Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast held a referendum per Soviet legislation and voted itself out of Azerbaijan. Thus, in 1991, too, Nagorno Karabakh did not form part of independent Azerbaijan.

Active diplomacy and a surprising amount of audacity on the part of both presidents, especially Azerbaijan's President Haidar Aliyev, led to the Key West agreement. Developed in Key West, Florida, during a week of negotiations in April 2001, this document could have been the final resolution, dealing as it did with all issues comprehensively, leaving no loose ends. After giving his agreement in Key West, once in Baku, President Aliyev withdrew his consent. So, the Key West proposal, too, was rejected by Azerbaijan.

The process then stalled. In December, 2003, President Aliyev died and his son assumed the presidency. For the next year and a half, he tried to consolidate power. In some areas, he even tried to forge new policy.

In Prague, in April 2004, with a new Azerbaijani Minister of

Foreign Affairs, we embarked on a new path, with the active mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs – the representatives of France, Russia and the United States. The international community invested a great deal in what came to be known as the Prague process. In two dozen meetings over four years, "A Document on Basic Principles" underwent various modifications. At the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Madrid in November 2007, the top diplomats of the three co-chair countries personally presented their own last version of that document to my Azerbaijani colleague and myself. They also formally submitted it to the OSCE depository.

When I left office, four years after the Prague Process had begun, the Nagorno Karabakh negotiation process was at a turning point. The Madrid document, as it came to be known, though far from perfect, was the culmination of successful multilateral diplomacy on our part. The right of the people of Nagorno Karabakh to self-determination was clearly codified in that document. No amount of dismissal or negation from Azerbaijan would now change the fact that compromise solutions were realistic, sustainable and possible. Armenian diplomacy had succeeded in turning around public opinion and international thinking. Most importantly, we registered our willingness to compromise without conceding the security of the people of Nagorno Karabakh.

Everyone had become accustomed to Azerbaijan playing on three tracks. Publicly, they would make extreme and bellicose statements about only one possible future for Nagorno Karabakh – within Azerbaijan. Privately, they would continue to negotiate that status within the OSCE Minsk Group format. Simultaneously, they would attempt to move the Nagorno Karabakh process from the OSCE to the United Nations where they believed many factors worked in their favor: their alliance with Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, the support of the Islamic Conference and Turkey's and Pakistan's unreserved solidarity and influence.

Most of all they liked the UN General Assembly's simple majority rule, where votes are not necessarily based on political and strategic choices, but on alliances and obligations. Over the

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years, we had resisted this effort to transfer the Nagorno Karabakh resolution process to the UN General Assembly and thus dilute its sustainability and capacity to actually bring lasting peace. We were not interested in the feel-good value of a popular vote offering opinion and advice.

But 2008 was a different time. First, there was the Madrid document. Azerbaijan's top diplomats were an integral part of the process in which this document evolved. But with the placement in the OSCE depository of this document, where the right of Nagorno Karabakh to self-determination was clearly codified, Azerbaijan sought ways to undermine both the document and the process. Second, 2008 was the year of Kosovo. The willingness of the international community's heavyweights to unilaterally recognize the independence of Kosovo, without the acquiescence of Serbia, gave Azerbaijan great cause for alarm, and they again sought ways to protect themselves from what could become a model. Ironically, the international community, too, was eager not to turn Kosovo into a precedent, and sought to reinforce the territorial integrity principle.

Finally, on March 1, 2008, Armenia's post-election instability ended in violence. Azerbaijan used the opportunity of a weakened and distracted Armenia and on March 14, they presented a resolution to the UN General Assembly which unequivocally reflected Azerbaijan's position and Azerbaijan's intentions for the resolution of the conflict, dismissing any room for compromise.

That resolution had been on the UN agenda for four years. Each time Azerbaijan attempted to bring it to a vote they calculated that the 'yes' count would be so low for even such a non-binding formulation that the minor victory would not be worth the humiliation of a majority rejection. In 2008, they believed that a combination of Armenia's domestic woes, and the international community's concern over a Kosovo precedent would combine to make more countries willing to listen to Azerbaijan's call to limit Nagorno Karabakh's people's rights.

In the end, of 192 countries, 39 voted yes. But at the UN, that's a pass. The Minsk Group co-chair countries of Russia, the US and

France, usually very careful not to take sides, denounced the intent of such a text and actually voted against the resolution. The countries of the European Union abstained. Azerbaijan did not seem to mind such trouncing. They needed the resolution language, albeit non-binding and unrealistic, to compensate for their sense of vulnerability and their fear of a compromise solution on the negotiation track, where those knowledgeable about the conflict, recognizing its real causes and consequences, were offering acceptable ways to recognize and respect the right of the people of Nagorno Karabakh to self-determination. Thus the serious political value of the Madrid document is in its formal documentation of compromise solutions.

The Nagorno Karabakh process continues as it has for so long – in a spirit of negotiation, privately, and in a spirit of resistance and belligerence publicly.

DIASPORA RELATIONS

Finally, the sixth area in which there was also a significant change in policy was the way in which the Armenian government interacted with the Diaspora, and particularly its institutions.

It can be said that relations during the Ter-Petrossian administration were neither defined nor realistic. It was an unreal time for the Diaspora for whom an independent Armenia had been a dream. The Armenian Republic and its leadership were expected to behave and evolve in ways that reflected the Diaspora's hopes and aspirations, as well as the stable, developed states in which most of the Diaspora lived. For Armenia, on the other hand, this was a time of very difficult political and economic choices, of undeveloped political institutions, of great needs and non-existent resources. It is fair to say each had unrealistic expectations of the other. But it is also fair to say that even the realistic expectations of either side that could have been met, were not.

On the contrary. In Armenia, the Diaspora tensions and partisanship continued. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Dashnaksutyun (ARF), the segment excluded from the life of Soviet Armenia, came into the new independent Republic with a sense of

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entitlement. In clashes with the Ter-Petrosian administration, for reasons many of which still remain unexamined and unexplained, the ARF was stripped of its right to operate in Armenia and its leaders were ostracized – some expelled, some jailed. The non-ARF communities became the new Republic's Diaspora friends.

This was a situation we inherited. When President Kocharian came to office, he reversed the decisions against the ARF leadership, freed their operations and very soon the ARF was even part of the government coalition. Although over the next decade, this resulted in a more open, normal relationship between Armenia's and Diaspora's elites, those who had stood by the new government in the days of Government-ARF tensions felt somewhat aggrieved at the dilution of their former privileged access.

Without offering or expecting any special relationships, during the Kocharian administration, there was an effort to institutionally engage the Diaspora. This was done through demonstrative, public, somewhat symbolic acts such as three massive Diaspora Conferences. Although the efficiency and value of such gatherings is limited, they are the first steps in the necessary process of establishing more purposeful and productive relationships with a Diaspora that is largely unorganized and uncoordinated.

There were two kinds of direct, concrete, productive relationships. One was with the Armenian lobbying organizations in the US and Europe, with whom our relations, and mine specifically, have been very open and useful. The other has been our relationship with individual Armenians or Armenian organizations that have had specific agendas, have needed particular forms of assistance in their work, and who found an open door at Armenia's Foreign Ministry.

The epitome of such a genuine and productive relationship was our work with the businessman-philanthropist Kirk Kerkorian. Beginning with my first meeting with him in 1998, I represented a government that was grateful for his benevolence in the past and was formally requesting his participation in Armenia's development, offering the highest levels of government transparency and collaboration. Mr. Kerkorian's generous and visionary engagements since that time will remain part of Armenia's history.

IMPLEMENTING POLICY

This collection of speeches should be seen in this international and domestic context. Many have been delivered to think tanks, academic institutions or local organizations. They influence global processes and I have found them to be a very useful sounding board, especially since their agendas are derived from those of the international organizations.

The majority, however, have been delivered in an official capacity at the periodic meetings of half a dozen major world organizations – the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. There are two other organizations whose meetings I regularly attended, but whose formats did not offer the opportunity for formal statements – the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

These organizations are all products of war – the hot Second World War, or the Cold War, or the post-Cold War world order. Each has its own dynamic, differs in terms of its mandate and scope of responsibility, and varies in its administrative and evolutionary process. But all welcome the committed participation of their members in finding solutions for the troubles of the world, and all are concerned with serious institutional reform.

I have made most of these statements at the annual meetings where the head of the country's foreign policy establishment speaks and addresses national and international political topics. The United Nations (UN) calls these annual conclaves General Debates, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) calls them Ministerial Councils. At the Council of Europe, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the CIS and CSTO, they are Ministerial Meetings. NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) holds one annual meeting where the ministers of partner countries, such as Armenia, join their colleagues from NATO member states.

At each of their headquarters Armenia has permanent missions. At the foreign ministry, there are desk officers for each of these organ-

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izations. Each of those annual meetings marks the culmination of a year's work by our permanent delegations led by our representatives. So when Armenia's foreign policy chief takes to the podium to state, explain, defend, question, challenge or support the global problems and international policies which have been under discussion, the content of those statements are the result of the combined effort of Armenia's entire foreign service establishment.

They are also the result of close cooperation with Armenia's parliament, with those in civil society and others who also work with and within these international organizations. The members and leadership of our delegations to the Council of Europe, OSCE and NATO Parliamentary Assemblies have also been a part of the policy implementation process. Without being a member of any political party, having worked in the administrations of two presidents, I used my contacts to maximize our effectiveness.

These annual meetings were our chance to present to the world our own report card on our domestic situation, including democracy building, legislative reforms, advances in understanding and protection of human rights and other basic freedoms, and the revitalization of our economy.

Finally, these organizations have provided the settings where ideas turned into guidelines, policies, standards and norms. For us, they also provided framework and guidance and introduced discipline. In other words, membership in these organizations taught us a lot, and that is exactly what was intended. I've often said, with the benefit of hindsight, it is more than clear that without the inclusion and vision that these organizations offered, we would no doubt have evolved differently.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Council of Europe was the natural place to begin our process of Integration with Europe. This was the organization that in 1949 was formed to foster common values and principles among its members. It is seated in Strasbourg, the former Franco-German apple of contention, to demonstrate that a continent of

adversaries can transform itself into a community of neighbors.

The symbolism was not lost on Yerevan. The late 1980s and early 1990s brought a reaffirmation of the Council's mandate, as newly independent states emerged, ready to join European structures. This organization offered instruments for fostering and nurturing the basic principles of human rights, democracy and rule of law, especially in societies torn by war, weakened by a restrictive central authority, and devastated by collapsed economies. So, over ten challenging years, the process of Council of Europe accession provided us with the tools to democratize Armenia's institutions, legislation and society. It was our Europeanization accelerator.

I used every statement as an opportunity to reiterate our speedy and successful reform process and to encourage the Council to judge us on our own merits, delinking our membership from Azerbaijan's. In nearly every pre-membership speech, I looked for a way to say that membership in the Council of Europe would not mean that we would bring our conflict to Strasbourg, but that we would use the opportunities the Council offered to resolve our conflict within a broader cooperation platform, and begin to cooperate regionally as well, on the way to resolving the conflict. Thus, on the way to membership, I stressed our reforms, our unique path to Europe and the significance of that path. There was also room to talk about culture, science, human rights, media – the areas the Council of Europe actively supports.

Following accession, each of my statements became an accounting of sorts on domestic economic and political advancement, on progress made on the fulfillment of our obligations, as well as an update on our relations with Turkey, and on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Good neighborly relations are to be expected among Council of Europe members, and Turkey-Armenia relations are no exception. At the same time, finding a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict was a condition of membership placed on both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Thus, it was understood that these aspects of our foreign policy would be of particular interest to colleagues in Strasbourg.

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THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO

Integration with Europe is a three-pronged process. With the Council of Europe, we strived for membership and we achieved our goal. In the case of the European Union and NATO, for very pragmatic reasons, we focused on the process of integration.

European Union membership requires a minimal level of economic development and institutional standardization that we still endeavor to achieve, but that is still quite a distant goal for us. Yet, short of membership, there are a generous number of opportunities for institutional relationships, for economic ties, for political cooperation and Armenia made every effort to benefit from that process, without speaking about membership prematurely.

With the European Union, we signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in 1996, followed by membership in the European Neighborhood Policy in 2006, followed by an Action Plan in 2007.

Annual meetings with the European Union leadership took the form of an informal dinner with all three Caucasus foreign ministers, with no one making formal statements. Rather, we responded to questions or explained security issues – status of the unresolved conflicts, the European Union's role in conflict resolution, and regional cooperation. There also were no formal statements during the individual bilateral meetings that followed. There, we followed an extensive agenda on European Union-Armenia cooperation on everything from nuclear power to domestic politics and reforms. Both sides discussed and assessed progress in each area of our cooperation agreement. Thus, institutional relations between the European Union and Armenia proceeded according to a finely defined blueprint. A decade later, with the European Union's qualitatively new instrument, the European Neighborhood Policy, we devised an Action Plan that included economic integration processes and offered even greater opportunity to deepen relations with the European Union.

The situation is very similar with NATO. As members of NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, we were inducted

into various programs, beginning with Partnership for Peace, upgrading to our current Individual Partnership Action Plan, which is the last level before NATO membership. Our policy of complementarity made it possible for us to reach this level of association even as we maintained our CSTO membership.

At NATO EAPC ministerial meetings, there was only the occasional opportunity to make a specific statement on an agenda item. Generally, the format was such that participating ministers would comment or respond to current issues on the agenda, rather than deliver formal remarks.

Thus, this comprehensive process of integration with Europe in the context of global change is reflected in the statements that appear here.

CIS AND CSTO

The policy of complementarity is at the core of our foreign relations precisely because varied associations and memberships are not only natural, but mandatory for a country with our history and geography. Thus, we believe that our process of integration with Europe is supplemented, not contradicted as some have claimed, by Armenia's membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Unlike in many other former Soviet republics, in Armenia anti-Soviet sentiment did not transform into anti-Russian sentiment. For us, friendly relations with Russia pre-dated the Soviet Union, and continued after its collapse. This history could not be ignored. Additionally, our geography was not about to change any time soon.

We viewed the creation of the CIS as simultaneously visionary and inevitable. Such connections as this organization provided were helpful for our transition from a rigid centralized, soviet system to full sovereignty and independence. Old economic ties and political associations were very much needed to ensure the sustainability of our independence in the early period. Some have called this a marriage of convenience. I agree, and believe that many such marriages have indeed been successful. In fact, with the benefit of hindsight,

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we can say the CIS assured a smooth transition for many of us, avoiding the minefield that was the Yugoslavia breakup. Or, mostly avoiding it.

After all, there are many cracks in the CIS. The activities of GUAM – the association formed by Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova – as well as the conflicts between those countries and Russia have, of course, heightened tensions. Yet, the CIS continues to provide an umbrella for multilateral cooperation, albeit not on all issues. In addition, its regular meetings offer opportunities for effective, efficient, regular, multifaceted bilateral engagement. At CIS ministerial meetings, too, there are no formal statements. Instead, discussion revolves around agenda items.

Along with economic and political issues, security was an important CIS agenda item. Thus, the emergence of a security organization for the same geographic space was to be expected. The creation of the Collective Security Treaty Organization also satisfied Russia's own security interests and its need for broader Russian engagement in the Caucasus. Although the CSTO was supposed to be the security arm of the CIS, fundamental differences between many of those countries and Russia kept most CIS members away from the CSTO. It includes Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Russia and Armenia.

For Armenia, CSTO participation was desirable even though we already had bilateral security arrangements with Russia. Given our acute security consciousness, our vulnerabilities, our conviction that with security 'more is better,' the CSTO offered an additional layer of protection, especially after it adopted the principle that an encroachment against one is an encroachment against all. Thus, our inclusion in the CSTO remains important, although that is not reflected in this book, because the nature of participation in those meetings is not through formal statements.

BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Just as the CIS and the CSTO can be considered regional organizations, so is the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) that was

established precisely to serve as a body that would provide a single forum for all the regional players. There is no other organization (aside from the UN) where Turkey, Russia, Ukraine and Iran, as well as the Balkan countries of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Serbia, and the Caucasus three – Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia – all are present. Among these 12, there are many areas of common interest and potential gain, as there are many serious issues of contention. The premise was that the former would override the latter and through economic cooperation, regional political and security threats would be minimized. This also mattered to the US and the European Union who would be immediately affected by instability and unrest in the region.

Armenia joined this organization precisely for that reason. This would offer a forum for economic, transport, cultural and other kinds of cooperation, especially with Turkey and even Azerbaijan, to begin to create an environment within which other more difficult political issues could be resolved. Instead, the opposite happened. Turkey and Azerbaijan clung to the extant political differences to block other kinds of cooperation. Similar obstacles hampered other BSEC programs as well. Thus, the regional stability issues remain unaddressed.

The standoff over BSEC's evolution in light of such regional entanglements was at the core of many of my statements. At the end, it seemed Armenia was alone in advocating for the original BSEC vision.

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is a Cold War creation turned into a transatlantic forum for cooperation embracing the remnants of the Soviet Union. Its membership, both Eurasian and North American, operates on the principle of consensus – in effect giving each of its 56 participating states a veto. Finally, it is the organization that internationalized the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by passing a decision in 1992 to create the Minsk Conference for the purpose of convening a meeting to

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determine the status of Nagorno Karabakh and resolve the conflict once and for all. That conference never took place. Instead, an OSCE Minsk Group chairmanship evolved. The chairmanship consisted first of one, then two, then three countries to address the Nagorno Karabakh status issue and the consequences of the conflict.

OSCE's engagement in Armenia is critical in various spheres, beyond the Nagorno Karabakh conflict mediation. For Armenia, where security and stability depend on egalitarian development, a respect for environmental resources, a trained civil police and defense force, the OSCE's active and far-reaching programs have been invaluable. One reason is the OSCE's definition of security. It addresses security non-traditionally, stressing the economic and social dimensions of safety and stability. This organization strives to ensure not just individual security but collective security, and not through the military dimension, but by strengthening and nurturing a human dimension. In other words, the participating states acknowledge that poverty of all kinds – in the marketplace, in values and principles – can also endanger a society.

This is a thoroughly different, more sustainable and far-sighted approach to security, particularly in an era when individuals, societies and countries must withstand serious energy, environmental, social and political threats that come not just from overt and self-declared enemies, but also from unlikely and informal adversaries.

OSCE's concern with improved electoral processes across its membership meant the engagement of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Armenia (ODIHR) where they have worked with government and civil society to improve the electoral code, and to monitor, assess and recommend reforms of the actual electoral processes. They do so in all countries that issue invitations to them. Armenia has done so since independence, and the assessments, although never expressing complete satisfaction, have, nevertheless indicated improvements, pointed to challenges and guided change.

These aspects of our OSCE engagement, together with updates on regional relations, especially those with Turkey, have been at the

core of my decade of statements at annual OSCE Ministerial Councils. In recent years, these statements have also included reference to another theme – that of OSCE reforms. Armenia can be proud of its contribution to revitalizing the organization, adapting it to today's world, and strengthening the role of all participating states. In 1994, we blocked a critical decision about doing away with the consensus rule. We used the rule to uphold the rule, and today, the consensus seems to be that we did well.

As extensive and varied as our OSCE agenda is and has been, it is the Nagorno Karabakh conflict that has been at the center of my statements before that forum. Besides the annual ministerial meetings, I also spoke before the OSCE Permanent Councils, held weekly in Vienna and attended by the ambassadors of all member countries. I felt the need to keep them well informed. I believed it was important to reflect the spirit and direction of the talks, without revealing the details of the contents, since, as negotiators know, nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. Also, this conflict is so complicated and contentious that a lasting solution will have to be complex and unorthodox. I worked to take it in that direction and tried to explain that in my statements. Without divulging secrets, without contradicting ethics and understandings, it was important to offer substance and content, independent of the interpretations of the press, the 'experts' and the various sides. Astute practitioners of international relations and those who followed regional developments could understand the essence of the closed negotiations process.

The OSCE statements in particular reflect the thinking that went into the various stages of Nagorno Karabakh negotiations and demonstrate our reasons for guarded optimism and hope.

UNITED NATIONS

Finally, there is the UN and its various bodies. Membership in this club is the single greatest expression of statehood. Armenia has been active at the UN General Assembly, the International Atomic Energy Association (where our involvement is largely the result of having a

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nuclear power plant on our territory), the Economic and Social Council as well as the Human Rights Commission. In the last two, we have been elected to governing bodies, and we aspire to Security Council membership in the next decade. Such engagement has been reflected in our statements at the annual meetings and assemblies of the UN's various bodies – particularly, the Human Rights Commission (which became a Council in 2007) and UNESCO, as well as a few special sessions.

Our statements at the Commission on Human Rights had extra value because we had, twice, been elected members of that Commission. This was a particular honor and also a complicated responsibility. Each time there was a difficult ballot about a member's human rights situation, it meant remaining true to our policies and principles even as many fought for Armenia's vote. Such votes are, in the most basic sense, bargaining chips, but more than that, they are viewed as a sign of a country's alignment along various political associations and issues. On difficult issues such as Iran, Cuba and Palestine, it often meant choosing within gray zones, among various complex positions and between friends.

Membership in the Commission also placed two national responsibilities on us. One was the obligation to get our own house in order, to be more attentive to our own human rights issues and democratic development. The second was the moral obligation to remember the political reality of the phenomenon of genocide worldwide. Thus, we initiated a resolution on the 50th anniversary of the Genocide Convention. Further, I spoke at the 60th Anniversary of the closing of the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz. We used these opportunities not to highlight our own experience with Genocide, rather to highlight the continuing threat and danger, by raising our own experience and calling for acknowledgement and recognition.

Just as the UN is the epitome of international legitimacy and belonging, so speaking from the UN high podium is the ultimate opportunity to speak to be heard, to speak to the world, to speak about universal truths and individual dreams. Each speech is a test of our ability to capture the attention of high level representatives of dozens of countries – some with interest in Armenia, others in the

region or in the region's conflicts, some in post-Soviet democratic and economic development processes, others in our neighbors Russia, Turkey and Iran, and some, frankly, with no interest in Armenia at all. The challenge is to use each chance in order to be heard by all – on issues that are ours alone and on those that are ours together.

Therefore, beyond presenting our own domestic report card, Armenia's statement each year included our stance on the international agenda. This was done to indicate to the international community that we, too, are impacted by international developments and have opinions on these consequential issues. For our domestic audience, this was a signal that Armenia must consciously strive to be a presence beyond our borders.

Over the years, I have spoken about conflicts close to us on the map as well as those close to our hearts, like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the bombardment of Lebanon. As East Timor gained independence, as small countries in the Pacific joined the UN family, we made clear that it was only geography that separated our dreams. At the conclusion of the statement, in typical UN tradition, the speaker stands behind the stage, and is approached by those who wish to comment on the speech. The appreciation expressed to me by the representatives of the countries mentioned, was an indication of how important it is to build bridges and more effectively fight universal injustice.

Darfur (and Rwanda before that) has been on the world's agenda the last several years. For us, it has been of immense, tragic significance and I've said so at each opportunity. Commemorating each anniversary (and the 95th is coming soon) of the Armenian Genocide weighs heavily on us as individuals and as a nation. To do so in the context of new genocides, of recurring attempts by states to resolve political differences by planned, organized use of violence against one's own people – state terrorism, in effect – that is an indication that modern nations still abdicate their duty to, in UN language, ensure a state's responsibility "to prevent and protect" from Genocide. Worse, they are permitted to hide behind a state policy of denial. The burden was mine to deliver that message.

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Other issues such as disarmament, non-proliferation, globalization, and after September 2001, especially security, were also addressed, albeit more often with questions than answers. For Armenia, September 2001 was more than a turning point. If, for others, those attacks signaled a change in security policy, for us, this date changed alignments and tolerances, thereby reducing greatly our own political options. Ever since, we have worked with partners whose prisms and perceptions on regional and global issues have been altered. Thus, we have had to express and demonstrate our adherence and allegiance to very real security concerns, even as we attempt to navigate among friends, neighbors and allies with divergent perspectives, experiences and fears.

There are many examples. Armenia and Iran have excellent relations. Is Armenia perceived as a transit country for dual use materials? The Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty was challenged by Russia. How would Armenia, with Russian bases, and with serious security fears from Azerbaijan, be affected? Regarding balance and transparency in arms procurement, how should Armenia deal with Azerbaijan's baseless accusations about Karabakh, while diverting attention from their own transgressions? These questions and many more hanging on our heads were publicly addressed.

Of course, Armenia's relations in the region and with Turkey have been, arguably, the subjects of greatest interest for the international community. Although it can be said that there has been little movement in those relationships, I have understood the need to make clear Armenia's readiness to move forward, without pre-conditions, even as I have reminded the world of the Genocide's political and psychological wounds that have not been allowed to heal.

Still, there is no doubt that developments around Nagorno Karabakh have almost always taken the lion's share of space in my statements. This is because this conflict, its consequences and lingering impact are of huge significance to our own people. That cannot be overestimated.

There is also the UN's institutional interest in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, arising from the four Security Council resolutions passed in 1992 and 1993 calling, among other things, on

Armenia to use its influence with the local forces in Nagorno Karabakh to bring a halt to the hostilities. Of course the military phase had long ended when I took office, but as the conflict moved through new stages, explaining the process as much as possible, within the limits of negotiating rules and ethics, has been essential at the UN, as at the OSCE.

While adhering to the principle of confidentiality, my speeches never included falsehoods and never intentionally misled. Those able to read between the lines, those involved in the process looking for messages, were able to understand the essence of the discussions and Armenia's inclinations. It was always a shock to get back to Yerevan and read Azerbaijan's take on my statements (and even on the actual negotiations themselves, but that's for another book.)

LOOKING BACK

The evolution, not just of the Nagorno Karabakh negotiations process, but of the whole of our foreign policy, is reflected in these statements. One can follow the transformation of global events even through the international shorthand that is used. In 1999, Kosovo and East Timor referred to war and violence. In 2002, East Timor came to mean a self-determination movement that had succeeded. In 2007, Kosovo meant a double-edged sword: a successful self-determination effort, executed as an imposed solution by the international community.

These speeches were addressed to the rest of the world, but of course, they were of great interest to our people. Although talking to our own population, through interviews, talk shows, in speeches at universities and press clubs, was also part of my work – and I used and enjoyed those opportunities often – it was important that the international speeches also resonate at home. After all, they were as much about Armenia and our own development as they were about our international relations. Without attempting to overestimate or exaggerate Armenia's realities, I never hesitated to put the best possible face on our economic, social and political progress.

For Armenia, confidence and vision are critical. To underestimate one's accomplishments and potential is to waste a precious resource. This is the message I will bring as I continue to do what I can, as a citizen, within civil society and particularly through the political process, to further Armenia's prosperity and stability, and to work for a life of justice and dignity for all our people. I and my whole generation are fortunate to have this opportunity.

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