

**Vladimir  
KAZIMIROV**



Peace  
to  
Karabakh

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МИП



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# Peace to Karabakh

Russia's Mediation  
in the Settlement  
of the Nagorno-Karabakh  
Conflict

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A book focuses on Russia's efforts to resolve the ethnopolitical conflict in Transcaucasia that had grown into a real war, especially at the most difficult stage of active and fierce hostilities, right up to the conclusion of a ceasefire agreement, in effect since 12 May 1994. The author, Vladimir Kazimirov, who was the head of Russia's mediatory mission, Plenipotentiary Representative of the Russian President for Political Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (1992–1996), reveals the content of the mediator's very complicated work with the conflicting parties, full of all kinds of vicissitudes, offering characterisations of the participants in that process and an assessment of their positions.

Worthy of note are the judgements of the author, a one-time participant in, and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, on cooperation and rivalry with Western partners which sought, in the guise of conflict settlement efforts, to restrict or curtail Russia's influence in the region.

The book incorporates the author's articles and statements on the Karabakh conflict. The appendix contains international documents on the settlement of the conflict, as well as documents on Russia's mediation and a timeline of Karabakh settlement.

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## In Place of Introduction

Dear reader!

What you can see in front of you now are the author's memories and separate articles about the Karabakh settlement, mostly referring to that period when I was the head of Russia's mediatory mission, Representative of the President of the Russian Federation on Nagorno-Karabakh, and a member and a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group from Russia (1992–1996). The complexity of that period lies in the intensity, protracted character and severity of the hostilities, in the very first peacemaking experiences of a number of mediators on the traditionally extremely complicated material of Armenian-Azeri relations.

At different points during the armed conflict in Karabakh many eminent officials and other Russian figures had displayed their willingness to act as mediators and at times exerted concrete efforts aimed at facilitating a peaceful resolution of this conflict. Much is known about the peacemaking ambitions of Defence Minister Pavel S. Grachev, this book also mentions them. Their initial impulse was sound and correct, but the practical implementation invariably doomed it to failure, especially due to the inappreciation of multi-agency concurrence of action. Few people know that in January 1993 Vice-President Alexander V. Rutskoi in a memorandum to Russia's President informed him that he was ready to head a mediatory mission of the Russian leadership. Among other such persons were Victor S. Chernomyrdin, Interior Minister Victor P. Barannikov, Airforce Marshal Yevgeni I. Shaposhnikov, generals Dmitry A. Volkogonov and Andrei I. Nikolaev, long-time residents of Baku – world renowned cellist Mstislav L. Rostropovich and former world chess champion and now chiefly the possessor of political ambitions Garry K. Kasparov. With some of these persons the author at one time had a chance to maintain contact precisely with reference to Karabakh affairs. The multi-

layer composition of this book (memoirs, articles and addresses, documents, timeline) may require from the reader a great deal of tolerance to the repetitions, practically inevitable in such case, of one and the same statements and episodes. True, this will apply only to those who will set about to read the book 'from cover to cover' and not just leaf through it, to examine documents or find the sought-for data in the chronicle. In order to abridge the text and avoid official long-winded passages one had to use abbreviations, some of which are common knowledge and others explained at the very outset of the book. The author expresses gratitude to the patient reader for his/her attention and makes apologies for inconveniences mentioned or not.

In addition, by dint of this book and its placement on the personal website ([www.vn.kazimirov.ru](http://www.vn.kazimirov.ru)). I would like to give an impetus to a more in-depth treatment of history and the problems of peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

If you bestow attention on the book's subject matter, I shall be glad to receive critical remarks, improvements, clarifications even if aimed at correcting or challenging some of the points made or put certain episodes in a different light. I am ready to perceive all this not from a position of wounded pride but first and foremost as a natural desire to add more authenticity to the description and understanding of events in a quite recent past, which, unfortunately, is already suffering from both involuntary confusion and deliberate distortion.

In this respect, the Karabakh conflict is astounding. Hardly had two decades passed after the period of hostilities and initial peacemaking efforts that so many wild tales piled up that one can only be amazed. And a question suggests itself: how then is the history of the ancient world and the Middle Ages written?

It will only be possible to insert possible readers' amendments and recommendations into the book in case of a new edition. But will it ever come to that?

Yet I am ready and willing to amend the text of this book with due account for comments received at my personal website or even to feature an alternative version there, which you, respected reader, will advance. I have proposed to use the resources of modern informatics in order to jointly pro-

mote the formulation of an objective history of the Karabakh settlement to a number of Armenian and Azeri colleagues participating in that process or closely monitoring it.

And now let me give the floor to myself in expectation of your judgement or critique. As the Soviet poet Alexander Tvardovsky said about the truth: 'I do wish it were unvarnished, be it bitter as it may.'

*Vladimir Kazimirov*

## Abbreviations Used in this Book

ArmSSR	–	Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic
AzSSR	–	Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic
CC CPSU	–	Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CIS	–	Commonwealth of Independent States
CIS CHS	–	Council of Heads of States of the Commonwealth of Independent States
CIS IPA	–	CIS Interparliamentary Assembly
CSCE	–	Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (till 1995)
CSO	–	CSCE Committee of Senior Officials (until 1995)
HLPG	–	High-Level Planning Group (in the OSCE)
ICRC	–	International Committee of the Red Cross
KGB	–	USSR State Security Committee
1 <sup>st</sup> LAD	–	The First Latin American Department of the USSR Ministry for Foreign Affairs
2 <sup>nd</sup> LAD	–	The Second Latin American Department of the USSR Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MC	–	Minsk Conference of the CSCE/OSCE (since March 1992)
Minsk Group	–	Minsk Group of the CSCE/OSCE (since June 1992)
NAR	–	Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic
NGO	–	non-governmental organisations
NKAO	–	Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
NKR	–	Nagorno-Karabakh Republic
OIC	–	Organisation Islamic Conference
OSCE	–	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (since 1995)
OSCE CO	–	OSCE Chair-in-Office
PC	–	OSCE Permanent Council (in Vienna since 1995)
SeC	–	OSCE Senior Council (one session in Prague, 30–31 March 1995)
StC	–	CSCE Standing Committee (in Vienna till 1995)
UN	–	United Nations
USSR	–	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

**PART ONE**  
**TOUCHES OF REMINISCENCES**

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## Why?

Many of my colleagues and fellow workers at the USSR/Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs ventured, mostly after retirement, to set forth their reminiscences and considerations on matters they had to deal with earlier. Some published them under brightly-coloured book-covers, others silently placed them, possibly forever, into their desk drawers. My friends more than once prodded me, too, to start writing down my memories. At times they would say, not without reproach, that over the years of diplomatic service not all had a chance to see so many diverse and frequently rather significant events. But I clearly lacked sufficient courage or robust motivation to take the plunge.

Furthermore, I was not sure if it would be interesting for others to know. In the meantime, something was beginning to slip from memory, remaining there merely in the form of dotted lines of separate episodes. Thus left far behind were the tragic events of October 1956 in Budapest, Brazil with the military coup of 1964 and Costa Rica of the 1970s with the institution, full of amusing incidents, of the first Soviet embassy in Latin America, the war in Angola with the first tentative of a transition to peace in the late 1980s – all of this receded into the past along with many other developments. Alas, I did not keep diaries... What remains is sundry writing pads, newspaper clippings and books published in various years, somewhat stingy on truth.

To be honest, I was also abashed by the fact that authors of memoirs often, whether intentionally or purely unwittingly, exaggerate their own role, vaingloriously exerting themselves to highlight their figure in their accounts of the past... Certainly, no one is impervious to subjectivity if he relates not only extraneous circumstances but things that happened with a degree of his participation or in front of his very eyes. I was a little afraid lest I, too, should fail to avoid these lapses or, worse still, lest I should begin to fill the shell holes

in my memory with wild guesses or to stretch the narrative upon some pattern preset by myself.

But all of a sudden a stimulus came from an unsuspected corner. Having developed an irresistible, drug-like addiction to the range of Karabakh problems, I continued to follow the progress of the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in which I had to be engaged in earnest not so long ago.

As I read what others were writing on the war in Karabakh, I started to be repeatedly confronted by tedious inaccuracies, accumulations of confusion, false versions, pretentious claims and so on, especially with regard to Russia's role. Yet from 1992 to 1996 I chanced to be the head of the Russian mediating mission for Karabakh, representative of the RF President for the settlement of that conflict – in turns personal, special and finally plenipotentiary. I likewise chanced to represent Russia in the CSCE/OSCE Minsk Group<sup>1</sup> and co-chair it. In short, few people happened to know more about that process and Russia's role in it than myself. Like an alarm-clock, an idea struck me each time: surely you know how it happened – quite contrary to the way it is written here! But for some reason you keep silent...

Meanwhile, people who know many things only from hearsay, who were far from the events they are describing, who had read or heard something somewhere and put it together the way they understood it, have roughed out and fearlessly set out to write the history of this conflict and how it was checked. It would be fair enough if these were journalists who work in a rush – they are more or less excusable for certain infelicities. But researchers who ought not to be content with references to dubious sources also make a mess of things. And even some parties involved in the events entrench upon the truth – whether out of forgetfulness or out of the desire to bulldoze their own version. Here is one of the many examples: a legend that the agreement on the ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) was allegedly signed in Bishkek on 5 May 1994 has gained currency and already taken root. Few people know that this is not the case at all, nor could it be. But this is a relatively innocuous distortion, although there is some premeditation going on here too, and how many bedtime stories have been planted by the parties to the conflict with an axe to grind!

What kind of research or reminiscences are these if they lack the main thing – veracity? The ringing of these alarm-clocks has already begun to

merge into an insufferable shrill. One cannot tolerate the profusion of falsehoods and wrongful accusations concerning Russia's role in the process of settlement in Karabakh...

Soon one more stimulus appeared. The conflicting parties lapsed into a clearly excessive toughness and, despite efforts by mediators, have failed to attain not only major improvements in the settlement process but even meaningful incremental changes of any sort. Fifteen years have passed since the signing of the ceasefire agreement on 12 May 1994, but in that process it has remained the only achievement which is tangibly felt by the peoples. The Moscow Declaration of 2 November 2008 has become another major landmark, but it sparked a lot of debate, more so in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh than in Azerbaijan, which, it would seem, after many years of persistent bellicose rhetoric was set to 'lose more' from the fact that the Declaration was focused on a peaceful, political settlement of the conflict.

It is noteworthy that both the armistice and the signing of the Moscow Declaration were achieved through Russia's own effort and are not owed to international organisations with a share of Western involvement. Western diplomats dug in their heels in opposition to the conclusion of a Russian-mediated truce, so as not to allow Russia to keep its clout in the region. They were compelled to welcome the Moscow Declaration but with mixed feelings, as it was signed three months after Saakashvili's August venture in South Ossetia and many libels by a number of Western countries against Russia. The armistice and the Declaration in fact tell a great deal on the real role of both Russia and Western powers in resolving the Karabakh conflict. A curious reader is entitled to know from those involved in that process how the ceasefire was really achieved.

Strange as it may seem, writing these essays was likewise motivated by the aforementioned doggedness of the conflicting parties in asserting their overstated claims. In the negotiating process they did not progress very far from positions of 1996, when I left Karabakh affairs, having left for Latin America. Consequently, despite the more than ten-year interruption, an old-timer found it relatively easy to assess the present state of affairs.

I shall cite a rather cogent example of how intransigent are the parties to the conflict in their claims, and how, being unconscious of it themselves, they

are at variance with elementary logic. It is absolutely obvious to all that the main dispute is about the fate of Nagorno-Karabakh, on its future status. But just try to secure from any of the parties a recognition that Nagorno-Karabakh is a disputed problem. Each of them, as it were, removes Nagorno-Karabakh from the realm of disputes, stating that it indisputably belongs to Azerbaijan (as Baku will say) or is unquestionably long since independent (as Armenians will say). Meanwhile, recognising Nagorno-Karabakh as a disputed problem would be a major step forward, it would eliminate exorbitant overstatement of demands by the parties, bringing them closer to realism, towards a search for mutual concessions. In essence, the parties stick to the same positions as 15–17 years ago. Even the harmonisation of some of the settlement principles does not change the situation, as on the principal issues there is no real progress.

Unlike the events of the distant decades, the 1990s are rather fresh in my memory. And there are more materials and documents from that period than from previous decades. In view of the totality of circumstances mentioned above I ventured to publish this series of essays on Karabakh. Initially, I placed much of what was written on my personal website. Then, at the suggestion of Akop Avetikyan, editor-in-chief of the Armenian newspaper *Azg*, I published extracts from them in both Russian and English. At the suggestion of journalist Eynulla Fatullayev I published a series of essays in his weekly *Realniy Azerbaijan*, which had the largest circulation among the Russian-language newspapers in Baku some two years back. From January 16 till April 20, 2007 it featured ten essays which drew public attention.

But in late April 2007 Eynulla Fatullayev was sentenced in Baku first to 2.5 and then to another 8.5 years (a total of 11 years) in jail. These reprisals spurred an eruption of protests among journalists and human rights activists in Azerbaijan and beyond.

Given the poor credibility and even absurdity of the charges brought up against Fatullayev, a surmise has arisen: could the publication of a series of these essays by him be among the reasons behind his persecution? Of course, this did not figure during the trial, but it is known that their publication in Armenia (especially the blasphemy of encroachment upon the ‘leader of the entire nation’) had caused a good deal of anger among the top leadership in

Baku. In addition, the imprisonment of Eynulla Fatullayev in itself put an end to the existence of *Realniy Azerbaijan* weekly, including these publications.

The disruption of the publication of the essays in Baku prompted me to publish them as a separate book. For Russian readers they would not be of as much interest as for Azeri and Armenian ones. People living in Transcaucasia can hardly feel indifferent about the extremely hard times of war in Karabakh. Many Azeris and Armenians show keen interest in the events of those years, in the termination of hostilities and in the origins of the armistice. This is also obvious from the number and location of visitors to the quite modest website mentioned above.

On this I would like to end my answer to the question of why in the world this collection of recollections and articles on Karabakh ever came into existence.

## Prologue

For me personally the beginning of the whole Karabakh affair was plain to the point of banality, having nevertheless significantly transformed my life for several years running. On April 24, 1992, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei V. Kozyrev summoned me and suggested that I become involved in the settlement of the armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

By that time I had almost 40 years of work experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to my credit. During the preceding year and a half I served as the head of the Department for African Countries at the Ministry, but still could not possibly consider myself an expert on African studies as I only had experience of working in one African country – Angola – to my credit. True, that was a rather complicated – but very interesting for a Soviet ambassador – period of transition from war to peace in South-Western Africa – both in Namibia and in Angola itself (1987–90). But this was, in my view, plainly not enough to equip me for active involvement in the African sector of our country's foreign policy, still less for directing it.

Besides, my appointment as ambassador to Luanda had been largely the result of my personal conflicts with Deputy Minister for Personnel Valentin M. Nikiforov. Those manifested themselves not infrequently in current affairs, but particularly at sessions of the Communist Party Committee of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for instance, as part of the campaign against nepotism and other examples of excessive bureaucratic zeal. In the summer of 1987, following the scandalous and unwarranted dismissal of Vladimir Ya. Plechko from the position of Head of the Consular Department, I, despite the lure of membership in the Collegium of the Ministry, flatly rejected the offer to stepping into his shoes. No one had renounced that distinction yet, and I naïvely kept insisting on keeping up my engagement in Latin America (even though, it seems, I should have realised that I had been

in charge of the First Latin American Department (LAD) of the USSR Ministry for Foreign Affairs for seven years already and had to prepare myself, at least mentally, for a different appointment).

After two strained conversations that he had during the day, Nikiforov summoned on the same evening the head of the personnel service and the secretary of the Foreign Ministry's CPSU Committee to his cabinet, so as to put pressure on me, by joint efforts, as a member of the party committee, and wring consent from me. When that did not help either, he took a break for roughly four to six weeks and then resorted to employing what is today, in the post-Soviet Russia, branded 'administrative resource' by proposing to appoint me as ambassador to Angola. It would have been unseemly to turn down a proposal to go to a country at war, even though I – again rather naïvely – believed that in order to work there I really needed to know Africa which I had never even visited before.

In our farewell conversation, Eduard A. Shevardnadze mischievously 'sweetened the pill', so to speak. Contesting Valentin Nikiforov's claims, he said that the suggestion about my appointment as head of the Consular Department was not originally his but rather came from Valentin Mikhailovich himself, although he, Shevardnadze, had ostensibly told him that it would be better to put Kazimirov in a diplomatic position. Moreover, the minister 'soothed' me by saying that I knew the Cubans, while the Cuban leadership, he said, knew me, too, which was important as there were a strong Cuban military presence in Angola. It was possible, he continued, that one would have to effect their withdrawal, and that would have to be done without detriment to the existing common grounds with Havana. This is precisely how it was indeed done later on, despite a myriad of difficulties.

Despite all this, the 'honorary exile' to Angola had turned out to be an exciting and absorbing professional experience. Later, after three and a half years, I did not at all feel like I wished to abandon it and return to Moscow, much less so – to take up the position of the head of the African sector at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for which I still felt myself unprepared.

There is no telling what was behind the considerations that motivated the Ministry's executives. I am not in the position to know what had induced Eduard A. Shevardnadze to recall me from Luanda in order to appoint as



Head of the Department of African Countries. Likewise, I cannot say why Andrei V. Kozyrev had decided in my favour when choosing to establish Russia's mediatory mission to work on the political settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Now, whatever made me stray off so far from the subject of Karabakh by reverting to my time in Angola? Some claimed later that my experience in the peace process in South Western Africa had ostensibly played a certain role in favour of my appointment as head of the Russian mediatory mission in Karabakh at its formative stage.

This time it was not a question of some distant continent but of Russia's own newly emerged 'near abroad.' It seemed that as recently as yesterday, the Trans-Caucasia was one of the provincial corners of our country, the image of which in the minds of those who were far away from it was even that of a very cozy and attractive location. But now the fires of violent conflicts were blazing, destroying thousands of lives. As it was, I found myself face to face with the first and largest-scale conflict – the 'oldest' of the active political 'volcanoes' in that region, nay, on the whole territory of the Soviet Union. I never had to deal with such problems before – that is to say, not while on a mission abroad but in what used to be our common homeland not so long ago.

My role as that of a member of the Mandate Commission of the 28<sup>th</sup> CPSU Congress was a rather casual one. That Commission, in particular, immediately had to review the mandates of the three 'extra' delegates to the Congress from NKAO. The same Congress marked the beginning of the correspondence between me and the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Ayaz N. Mütalibov concerning the events in Sumgait. Those were my first, not very deep immersion in the Karabakh affairs – two years prior to my assignment to Karabakh.

Indeed, earlier I had only visited Trans-Caucasia twice, spending only one or two days there each time, while accompanying in my capacity of the head of the 1<sup>st</sup> LAD Venezuela's Foreign Minister Ramon Escobar Salom during his trips to Tbilisi and Cuban Foreign Minister Isidro Malmierca during his trip to Yerevan, – both of them had visited the USSR back in 1976 and 1983 respectively. In short, my background knowledge of Karabakh was extremely poor.

What then did the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict mean for us at that time, in early 1992? The ‘friend-or-foe’ method of definition, widely used in military aviation, would have no longer worked here. At that point, we were instructed not to view the conflict as ‘our own’: both Azerbaijan and Armenia had already proclaimed their independence. But it was impossible to treat it as a foreign affair either: both the Azeris and the Armenians were still our own fellow countrymen for us – our own lads were dying! And this later proved to be one of the distinctive features of our peacemaking efforts in Karabakh. It made our work easier in many ways, but also incredibly complicated it in others, creating hindrances at every single step.

But at that moment – reverting to the starting point, – in April 1992, sitting in Andrei V. Kozyrev’s cabinet, rather baffled by his proposal concerning Karabakh, all I could do was to mutter without picking words: ‘Frankly speaking, I don’t feel all too enthusiastic about it. But I shall start get down to this work if I should.’ To all appearances, the minister did not deem my refusal to be sufficiently convincing. On May 5, 1992, he signed an order on the establishment of Russia’s mediatory mission in Nagorno-Karabakh, to be headed by roving ambassador Kazimirov.

Later on, I would recall an amusing incident, a casual talk I had with my friend and university chum, Ambassador Vsevolod Oleandrov. He informed me that he had just received a new appointment which would envisage work in Armenia among other aspects. ‘Not a mission to Karabakh by any chance?’ I asked with a touch of sympathy. Vsevolod explained that he had been assigned to deal with the Russian-Armenian bilateral relations. ‘Well, thank goodness!’ I was indeed glad for his sake. That was exactly on the eve of that very conversation with the minister about my transfer to Karabakh.

In order next to come to the point, I shall at once say a few words to describe the nature and the specifics of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. One might think that it is hardly in need of any particular presentation. The shock from the first violent convulsion that shook the foundations of a giant superpower – the Soviet Union – is still too fresh in the memory of my generation. But the later generations know nothing about that.

The very word ‘Karabakh’ has become a common noun for armed conflicts on the territory of the former USSR (due to its duration, severity, intrac-

tability and irrationality) – for conflicts that have ensanguined the lands in various corners of Eurasia in the past and for those that are still smouldering.

Its particular malignancy lies in the fact that more than one similar conflict has been in many ways encouraged, almost 'legalised' by the Karabakh precedent. Its destabilising effect has somehow overstepped the borders of the region. But, in some way, Karabakh's role in history was that of a warning – in some places the memory of it has precluded the eruption of smouldering political confrontations into bloody feuds and open hostilities.

Nevertheless, one cannot omit to mention a number of salient features of the Karabakh standoff, which in many respects distinguished it from the other post-Soviet conflicts.

First, unlike other conflicts in the recent history, the problem of Karabakh has **long-standing historical roots**: for instance, clashes between Armenians and Azeris at the beginning of the XX century are a well-known historical fact. This had predetermined a certain degree of mutual animosity and mistrust between the two sides, the emotional and psychological intensity of the current conflict, as well as its bitter and protracted nature. The military hostilities in Karabakh were specific in that there were exceedingly few prisoners compared to the number of casualties: prisoners were taken by way of rare exception. Therefore, the ethnic cleansing pattern observed there during the years of war was rather peculiar: as the adversary forces approached, the civilian population fled by hundreds of thousands becoming forced migrants. The parties often accuse each other of forced deportations, but such were more characteristic of the first phase of the conflict. In the years of open fighting the numbers of those deported were much lower than of those who had left their native places for fear of deportation or cruel treatment by the adversary forces.

Another feature of the Karabakh conflict was the gradual (especially beginning with the late 1991) escalation of isolated outbreaks of violence eventually turning into a **real war** – a war in which large-scale offensive operations unfolded and extensive territories were overrun. The fighting had spread far beyond the Nagorno-Karabakh territory, reaching the borders of third countries and approaching the dangerous brink of internationalisation of the conflict. A transport and energy blockade had deformed the economy

and the environment of the whole region. The interests of Russia, Georgia, Iran and Turkey were directly affected.

Third, it was in Karabakh that the most massive-scale use of **modern heavy weapons** has taken place, this includes tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems, and even aviation used in bombardments. Not infrequently strikes were made against population centres and civilian targets, which led to a great number of victims among the civilian population, and to increasing flows of internally displaced persons and refugees. This conflict was marked by **multiple grave violations of the norms of international humanitarian law**, and those were numerous even after the end of the fighting.

One other characteristic trait of the Karabakh conflict was the **phenomenon of mercenary warfare**. On the one side there was widely practised enlistment of Armenians – and not only Armenians – who were ready and willing to fight from abroad, thus giving them the status of either volunteers or mercenaries, and on the other side – paid recruitment of officers via military enlistment offices in a number of Russia's regions and direct enlistment of mujahedeen mercenaries.

The **specificity of the political configuration of the Karabakh conflict** has generated, and continues to generate, additional complications. Unlike the 'two-dimensional' intra-state conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan, where the two parties directly confront each other on ethnic, clan-based or other grounds, in Karabakh the pattern of confrontation is not that simple – here there were two sides to the military conflict, yet politically there were three: Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. Interlocking here are the hallmarks of both internal and external conflict (to say nothing of the Soviet period of 1988-91). Furthermore, this is the only conflict in which two former Soviet republics, which are presently two independent states, members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), were directly involved.

All these salient features of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh and around it made a compelling case for preventing its further escalation, let alone internationalisation, bringing it to a halt as soon as possible, initially terminating at least the bloodshed, and then to ensure a gradual de-escalation of the con-

flict, a transition towards political settlement in the context of cessation of belligerent actions. Unfortunately, the ruling elites of the conflicting parties, notably one of them, were for a long time unable to abandon illusory hopes of achieving their goals with military means, displaying intransigence and inflexibility.

Should it be further explained that the specific features of this conflict had only aggravated the matter making the peace-making efforts more difficult? The general destabilisation of the situation in the region erected additional hurdles in the way to a ceasefire and peaceful settlement.

Of course, the above listing does not exhaust all the highlights of the Karabakh conflict, but a lot has already been said and written on that subject. Much less has been written about its resolution, the peace process, but there are more absurdities and distortions involved. Thereupon one must repudiate the lies and confusion associated with the settlement of the Karabakh conflict and Russia's role therein.

## The First Encounter and Early Contacts with Heydar Aliyev

As was mentioned above, by the spring of 1992 my knowledge of the Karabakh situation was only rather superficial, and poorer still as far as Transcaucasia in general was concerned. I urgently had to plunge into the details of the situation in Karabakh and, certainly, to mobilise my acquaintances among Armenians and Azeris in order to gain better understanding of what was happening. I still needed to establish contacts with the majority of prominent figures on both the Armenian and the Azeri sides.

Heydar Aliyevich Aliyev was the only one among them whom I had met before. However, at that time he found himself at the periphery of the key events – in Nakhichevan. True, he had already returned to the political arena by founding the *Yeni Azerbaijan* ('New Azerbaijan') party and becoming the Chair of the Supreme Council of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic (NAR), which *ex officio* made him the vice-speaker of the Milli Meclis in Baku. Later he stood in a sort of semi-opposition to President Abulfaz Elçibay and the Popular Front that took the power in Azerbaijan following the elections of June 7, 1992. This, coupled with the fact that he kept his distance from the centre stage of the Baku politics, was the reason for certain limitations and inconveniences with which contacts with him were fraught.

It so happened that my first meeting with Heydar A. Aliyev in April 1982 was in connection with... Latin American affairs.

After serving as a USSR ambassador in Costa Rica (1971-75) and Venezuela (1975-80), I was appointed to head the First Latin American Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (from July 1980 till September 1987), which was responsible for our relations with Mexico, the Central American countries and the Caribbean region.

The Ministry had two departments for Latin America at the time (presently there is only one). The employees of both departments were jokingly

referred to with an acronym *KVN*, very popular in those days, after a humor Russian TV game *Klub Vesolykh i Nakhodchivyykh* (The Club of the Merry and the Resourceful). This nickname might have been a kind of homage to the temperament of Latin Americans, but it clearly divided the ‘club members’ into the merry and the resourceful ones. The First LAD was called ‘merry’ due to its competence covering the countries known for their revolutionary regimes and movements (Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada, Salvador), while the employees of the Second LAD, responsible for the whole of South America, were called ‘resourceful’, as the situation in South American countries was more stable and the local currency (certainly rather weak anyway) was still stronger than in the turbulent countries of Central America and the Caribbean. It is true that, as the head of the First LAD, I was sometimes referred to with the acronym *KVN* as it coincided with my initials – **K**azimirov **V**ladimir **N**ikolayevich.

The ties between the USSR Supreme Soviet and the parliaments of other nations, – the countries of Latin America included, – grew closer with every passing decade. In 1982, the plan of inter-parliamentary exchanges provided to send an official delegation of our parliament to Mexico upon an invitation from the National Congress. When I was informed of the person who was tentatively appointed to head it (no need for me to mention it), doubts arose as to whether the level of the delegation would match that country’s standing in the region and our traditional ties with it.

The question was a delicate and sensitive one both for the bilateral relations with Mexico and at a personal level. This was what I had to emphasise in a confidential manner in a conversation with Leonid I. Brezhnev’s assistant on foreign policy – Andrei Mikhailovich Alexandrov-Agentov (himself a Foreign Ministry official in the past). He showed appreciation of my arguments and let me know that he would bring them to the notice of the CC CPSU Secretary-General. (The principle of separation of powers, so relevant in our times, was not of great concern to us then – it was clear where exactly decisions on important or even relatively important questions were made).

The need to upgrade the level of that delegation of the USSR Supreme Soviet was recognised a few days later. I was informed that it was to be headed by Candidate Member to the CC CPSU Politbureau, First Secretary of

the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Heydar A. Aliyev. The composition of the delegation was likewise extended: in addition to the rank-and-file MPs M. S. Samatova, Kh. A. Sultanov and N. F. Tatarchuk, it now included Deputy Chairman of the USSR Gosplan (State Planning Committee) P. P. Anisimov and A. M. Alexandrov-Agentov himself. I was charged with accompanying the delegation. Among the attendants there was also A. F. Dashdamirov, an assistant to Aliyev.

The decision was a correct one. Heydar Aliyev was a rising figure on the Kremlin horizon. By that time he already had 13 years (1969-82) of experience of presiding over the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, and, before that, of heading the KGB of the AzSSR to his credit. Becoming a Candidate in 1976, in that very year of 1982 (a few months after Aliyev's visit to Mexico) he became a full Member of the Politbureau, was transferred from Baku to Moscow and appointed the First Deputy of the USSR Council of Ministers.

For me personally, the fact that his promotion to the a primary role in Azerbaijan and his subsequent transfer to Moscow could not have taken place without a direct involvement of Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov was of great importance – he was 'my Ambassador' during the troubled times of 1956 in Hungary where I began my diplomatic service (1954-59). Yu. V. Andropov for many years held the office of director of the Soviet KGB (1967-82), then became number two in the party, becoming its top leader after Brezhnev's death and, finally, the head of state.

Those who knew Andropov not from hearsay – who were familiar with his intelligence, his businesslike manner, exactingness (self-exactingness, above all) and disinterestedness – unwittingly projected these merits on those who were his promoted as well (later on life would more than once punish us for that naïveté, in the case of Mikhail S. Gorbachev this 'punishment' was particularly harsh).

As for Heydar Aliyev, everything seemed to augur well for him at the time. By that time he had earned a reputation of an uncompromising fighter against corruption in Azerbaijan. Incidentally, it was the first promotion from a Trans-Caucasian republic into the supreme Areopagus of the CPSU (later, in 1985, Eduard A. Shevardnadze entered it, too). Previously, only the leaders



of the largest republics (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan) had been promoted into the CC CPSU Politbureau.

The visit of the delegation was very important for our relations with Mexico at the time. Meetings with President Jose Lopez Portillo and the country's other top leaders were all held in a warm and cordial atmosphere. The visit had received wide coverage in the Mexican and Soviet press. But this is another story altogether.

During my first meeting with Heydar Aliyev I formed a very favourable impression of him. While still on-board the airplane heading for Mexico we had established a normal working contact. His manner was devoid of any habits characteristic of a dignitary, he was easy to communicate with, a modern, hard-headed and demanding man. His conduct in front of the Mexican partners was always full of dignity but without a trace of arrogance or conceit.

With his transfer to Moscow Heydar Aliyev unwittingly did a kind of good turn to me, too. More than once had I turned to him for assistance in matters of official concern. Members of either the Cuban or of the Nicaraguan leadership, – and less often other Latin American public figures. – would frequently visit the USSR at the time, and summit talks with them had to be arranged. It was easier with the Cubans as they were taken care of by the CC CPSU Department for Socialist Countries, while the Sandinista leaders most often had to be attended to by Foreign Ministry officials. Sometimes in these cases I phoned Aliyev's assistant Ukhov asking him to find out whether his boss would be prepared to meet with a particular guest. As a rule, Mr. Aliyev would indicate his consent and we would draft a memorandum for the Politbureau proposing that he receives yet another visitor.

But it was not really a question of relative accessibility of this scenario of receiving distinguished guests at the Politbureau member level. Mr. Aliyev was much better at conducting talks than some other members of the Soviet leadership. He was quick at grasping the gist of our materials, kept them close at hand during the talks, but did not consult them as he tapped the resources of his remarkable memory and kept to the chosen line with remarkable consistency.

Many people remember how Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev was unable to speak in public without holding the texts of his speeches printed out in front of his

eyes in the form of so-called ‘firewood’ – this was what people at the Foreign Ministry called big letters, not capital letters, no, just unusually large ones, printed on a special typewriter. This has later resulted in many ridiculous situations and still more jokes in popular folklore (for example, in one of them, after a knock on the door Brezhnev, having rustled up a slip of paper and – reading from a prompt – inquired ‘Who’s there?’). It must be acknowledged that few of our leaders possessed the skill of engaging in discourse in those days. One of those who did possess such a skill was Alexei Nikolayevich Kosygin (I was present during many of his meetings, which were all most instructive not only for us, but equally for his seasoned foreign partners like, say, Fidel Castro).

As for Heydar Aliyev, he had chosen just the right tone in his communication with foreign colleagues, sounding neither moralising nor saccharine. All that had contributed to a most favourable impressions from my infrequent, but nevertheless pleasant contacts with him during the 1980s.

And literally nobody could tell that only a few years from there the Karabakh conflict would make our contacts far more frequent, both via the phone or in person (I have had a total of more than 50 meetings with Heydar Aliyev, plus the very nature of mediation required, as a rule, holding face-to-face talks as well).

## Karabakh at the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU

As was noted above, my two brief visits to the Trans-Caucasian region were of little help in giving me insight into the brewing conflict in Karabakh. The tight schedule of official visits did not leave us time to discuss other matters. That was all in the times before the perestroika, which had resulted in generating great political ferment instead of necessary socio-economic changes.

Matter of fact, though, later I recalled a conversation I had had in Yerevan. John Kirakosyan, Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs (the father of the current Armenian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Arman Kirakosyan) was the first to enlighten me in respect of the complexity of the relations between the Armenians and the Azeris. In an informal and private evening talk, when the Cuban visitors headed by Minister Isidro Malmierca had left us to take a rest, Kirakosyan complained that the animosity towards Armenians was still being cultivated in Baku. To support his words he handed to me on the following day some pages from a short novel by Jalil Mamedkulizade 'A Bearded Child' published in 1983 by *Ganjlik Publishers*. As I remember, the characters of the novel were discussing among themselves why Armenians did not want to convert to Islam. One of them suggested this argument: if they become Muslims, why then did Allah have to create hell and who would he send there? Hell was created for Armenians. 'But this is just literature,' I thought.

My belief in internationalism was unshakable at the time and I did not attach much importance to what seemed to me to be merely John Kirakosyan's grudge on account of the literary attacks. At that time I naïvely considered my own blithe understanding of the friendship of peoples to be all but universal in our country.

Earlier still, in the early 1980s, the stories told in confidence, in a close circle of friends, by Leon Onikov who had grown up in Tbilisi were also

wasted on me. A competent analyst, who had spent many years working as a consultant of the Department for Agitation and Propaganda, and later the Ideology Department of the CC CPSU, Leon Arshakovich was one of the first people who, long before the Karabakh conflict broke out, began to sound the alarm trying to call the attention of the party leadership to the dislocations and tensions with which the inter-ethnic relations in the USSR, especially in Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus region, were riddled. But that, too, was then taken by me with reserve, as a friend's possible emotional extremes caused by certain adverse phenomena.

I spent the period of actual escalation of the Karabakh conflict in Angola (1987-90). The Karabakh clashes left the greater part of Soviet people (even those living abroad) bewildered or even outraged, but a Soviet ambassador in a country mired in decades of civil war and international complications had quite enough pressing business to attend to in the country of his current assignment. The troubles in Karabakh were a matter of concern, but still way too distant from Luanda and very much overshadowed by the local anxieties.

As a participant in the last, 28<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU (July 2-13, 1990), I had a very close but again merely indirect contact with the subject of the Karabakh conflict. I was elected a delegate, first at a conference of members of our party in Angola where I served as the Soviet ambassador, and then at the forum of representatives of party organisations abroad, which was specially convened in Moscow. At the opening of the Congress – I am not aware whose suggestion it was – I was elected to serve on its Mandate Commission.

We were already aware of the problem with the mandates of delegates from NKAO, from which six delegates had arrived for the 28<sup>th</sup> CPSU Congress instead of three provided by the quota for NKAO. The Communists representing the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast – NKAO (whether they did this on their own or had been prompted by Yerevan is more than I can say) made a shrewd move. Their delegates to the Congress in Moscow were to be elected at the republican congress in Baku. But the Karabakh Armenians refused to send their representatives there. Then the Baku congress had three delegates elected into the larger Congress in Moscow by the NKAO – one Azeri, one Armenian and one Russian –

apparently, General V. N. Simonov, military commander of the Special District of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenians had come to hate him for his active part in the *Ring* Operation in the spring of 1991 on behalf of the USSR Ministry of the Interior. The formal objective of that operation was to disarm the illegal Armenian armed groups operating in the areas north of NKAO. In actual fact, however, it had led to mass reprisals against civilians and the expulsion of ethnic Armenians from many villages in that area. (In April 1991, a group of Armenians organised an attempt on his life in Rostov-on-Don killing, as a result, a completely different officer who happened to be near his house).

As soon as the congress in Baku was over, the leaders of the Karabakh Armenians organised independent elections of three delegates from NKAO to Moscow, doing this according to a direct election scheme – the most democratic option at the time. I do not remember the identity of those three Armenians but among them was Oleg Yesayan (who later headed the government of the unrecognised NKR, then its parliament, and later still moved to Yerevan becoming in 2006 Armenia's ambassador in Belarus).

Naturally, the Mandate Commission of the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress had to come to a decision concerning the representation of of the NKAO Communists at the forum.

At the very first plenary session of the Congress, short contributions of delegates burst forth over the microphones in the hall, generating a heated argument between the Azeris and the Armenians. This disrupted the customary semi-solemn routine of the forum's opening. In this context the task of the Mandate Commission (it was presided by the then Secretary of the CC CPSU Yuri Alexeyevich Manayenkov) had assumed significance that was no longer merely organisational and technical, but now truly political as well. Within the Mandate Commission the second secretaries of the CC of the respective Communist Parties of Armenia and Azerbaijan, O. N. Lobov and V. P. Polyanichko, spoke as advocates of the parties. These officials played an important role in Yerevan and Baku as virtual appointees of Moscow, though on the ground everything was legalised through their election.

Any proposal by the Mandate Commission submitted to the plenary session could again disrupt the regular work of the Congress. What was

needed was tactical resourcefulness: it was important, on the one hand, to avoid any discussion of that problem at plenary sessions claiming that it was ostensibly being examined by the Mandate Commission already, and, on the other, to eliminate any haste in announcing even a compromise decision – for both sides would be automatically displeased with it. There was no way to avoid a fierce debate on the vexing issue, but it nevertheless had to be kept to a minimum.

In the very first days of the Congress we had to ‘let off steam’ by issuing a brief interim statement to the effect that the Mandate Commission was in the process of examining the validity of the mandates of delegates from NKAO. In substance, the Commission found a compromise solution relatively quickly – to recognise the mandates of the three Karabakh Armenians, yet grant them only a consultative vote. However, one had to choose the right moment for declaring this solution in public.

I suggested to Yuri A. Manayenkov that this was better done at the end of the day, when, contrary to the Congress’s procedural rules, the session would be drawn out beyond 6 p. m. It was expected that many delegates, especially those who had arrived from the provinces, would keep the evening reserved for meeting relatives and friends living in Moscow, attending cultural events – in a word, they would not be inclined to sit in session longer still for the sake of debates over the three mandates from NKAO. Yuri Alexeyevich welcomed that plan.

In the end, we acted accordingly when the evening session dragged out for more than an hour and everyone was eagerly anticipating its closing. All of the delegates were glad to hear the ‘gong’ but not a single person rushed to the microphone to risk challenging the conclusions of the Mandate Commission. Quite unexpectedly all came off with success. This episode was not so significant in itself, but it taught me something about the intransigence and trickery of the parties to the Karabakh conflict which was just gaining momentum at the time.

Another episode occurring at the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress, which I found interesting, was concerned with the speech by the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Ayaz Niyazovich Mütalibov. I was sincerely surprised, simply astonished, in fact, that a Communist, a Communist leader of a republic, had

shifted all the blame for the Karabakh developments onto the Centre and the neighbouring republic, that he had not heeded any errors on his own side, nor uttered a single word of condemnation with regard to the events in Sumgait that had shocked the whole of the country. I immediately sent him a brief note expressing my bewilderment in that connection.

The next day I received a lengthy reply on seven pages. Mütalibov accused me of being insufficiently informed with respect to the Karabakh conflict and the Sumgait events and insisted on the exclusive guilt of Moscow and Armenia. I was flattered by the attention devoted to me by a prominent statesman in connection with my short memo and his desire to enlighten me, an ordinary delegate, on that score. His letter (I have kept it) gave me an idea about the sharp divergence of views that existed even with regard to the assessment of the grievous events in Sumgait – for my part, I had no doubts or hesitations there.

But if all my former contacts with the subject of the Karabakh conflict (both before its outbreak and during its initial period) are to be summed up, that was all still far too insufficient to equip me for effective mediatory work in admittedly hard conditions. So what remained for me was to rely largely on previous experience and intuition and to learn, learn eagerly.

## In a 'Prep School'

The goal of the Russian mediatory mission was defined at the time of its establishment on May 5, 1992 as systematic work of the RF Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the interests of a peaceful resolution of the armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (as distinct from the policy of one-time actions pursued earlier).

From the very start this envisaged Russia's mediation, which dated back to the Soviet times when it began with a visit by the Presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan, Boris N. Yeltsin and Nursultan Nazarbaev, to the conflict zone and their meeting in Zheleznovodsk with the leaders of the parties to the conflict on September 23, 1991.

Needless to say, by the spring of 1992 we all had only a most general understanding of the strife between the Armenians and the Azeris – which had grown into an armed conflict. It is little use to exaggerate its role in the collapse of the USSR – there was a myriad reasons behind it and some ran far deeper than this – but it is equally impossible to belittle the role of this extremely dramatic form of split of a state. Even so, general acquaintance with the pattern of the conflict is pathetically insufficient to enable anyone to work on its resolution.

First of all, we had to find out what had already been undertaken by Russia earlier, starting from the 'Zheleznovodsk Initiative'. On December 30, 1991, Russia addressed an appeal to Azerbaijan and Armenia calling for a resumption of the negotiating process. On January 30, 1992, Russia's Foreign Ministry made a statement in connection with the escalation of the conflict.

On February 20, 1992, on Andrei V. Kozyrev's initiative, a number of arrangements were negotiated in Moscow between the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia – a step which was welcomed by both the UN and the CSCE.



On March 20, in Kiev, on the initiative of Moscow and Alma-Ata, the Council of the CIS Heads of States made a crucial decision declaring its readiness to send a group of observers and joint peacekeeping forces to the Karabakh conflict zone, but that decision was destined to remain merely a declaration of intent.

During the first ten days of April 1992, Kozyrev made two visits to the conflict region. His special representatives were dispatched to Baku and Yerevan. On April 13, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated a two-stage plan of a peaceful settlement in Karabakh, forwarding it for consideration to the UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali and the CSCE Chair-in-Office, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister of the Czecho-Slovak Federal Republic Jiří Dienstbier and the then to the leaders of the parties to the conflict.

Contrary to the beliefs ingrained in the West (and in Baku, as well) that Russia's ultimate dream was to deploy its armed forces in the conflict zone, the active correspondence between Kozyrev and Dienstbier during the month of April indicates quite the opposite – Moscow placed decisive emphasis on a ceasefire and deployment of observers from the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and subsequently of international peacekeeping forces. However, there was no real readiness yet behind Europe's verbal promises in that respect. Indeed, Karabakh was for the CSCE the very first experience of its own peacemaking efforts– the organisation was clearly unprepared for it.

Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed to the parties to hold a meeting with its mediation in Mineralnie Vody on April 23 or 24 to discuss an approximate pattern of the Karabakh peaceful settlement. The Azeris agreed to discuss the procedure for the conduct of the meeting, but the Acting Chair of the Nagorno-Karabakh Supreme Council Georgy Petrossian shied away from the meeting, referring to the fact that April 24 was a day of national mourning in connection with the 1915 events in Turkey, and put forward a number of conditions: to reach 'preliminary agreements' and recognise the parties' equal status in the conflict.

The latter demand smacked of naïvety: in conflict situations no one suffers from the generosity of granting their adversary the cherished status, unless this is profitable to themselves or compensated by something else.

Often the status is born out of the actual situation, out of those very meetings which the Karabakh side evaded. A meeting between the parties is in itself a little brick in the foundation of such status laid without fuss or clatter. An outright demand not infrequently leads the matter into a deadlock, for the adversary is not eager to accord such status in exchange for nothing.

On May 2, 1992, the details of a two-stage Karabakh settlement were informally discussed in Moscow at separate meetings with the representatives of Azerbaijan (Rasim Nasreddinovich Musabekov) and Nagorno-Karabakh (Levon Grantovich Melik-Shakhnazaryan) in the presence of the Armenian representative (Suren Tigranovich Zolyan) and Russia's First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Fyodor Vadimovich Shelov-Kovedyaev. The Armenian side again refrained from participating in a joint meeting with the Azeris.

Such is a short list of Russia's main mediatory efforts prior to the establishment of its mediatory mission and prior to the emergence of the so-called Minsk Group of the CSCE in June 1992.

On April 30, prior to signing of the decree on the establishment of our mission, I held an inter-ministerial conference on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, introducing myself as a future mediator in that conflict. We set forth the background of Russia's mediatory role and touched upon the CSCE's decision taken a month earlier on the convocation of the Minsk Conference. Many of those present took the floor: officials from the Ministries of State Security, Foreign Economic Relations, Social Security, Transport, Finance, Labour, and the State Committee for Cooperation with the CIS member states. Alas, the Russian Ministry of Defence did not vouchsafe to send its representative to the conference. The conference did not add much clarity to the situation – it gave me a very broad outline of the problem from these agencies' standpoint. The only thing I had come to realise was how great the number of problems permeating our relations with Baku and Yerevan alike was.

A little later, in May 1992, there was an episode that stuck in my memory. Before my departure for Helsinki for a session of the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials, I got an unexpected call on the government phone line from

Yevgeny Arshakovich Ambartsumov, the newly elected Chair of the Committee for International Affairs of Russia's Supreme Soviet. We had no

personal acquaintance with each other as yet. He apparently deemed his status to be sufficient to give his rather primitive 'admonitions' to the head of the Russian mediatory mission, which were, to be sure, in favour of the Armenian side. I heard him out somewhat coldishly and made it clear that our position would depend on the specific substance of the matter. His lobbying attempts were a patent demonstration of a lack of tact. But one had to get accustomed to such unwanted solicitors, too. It turned out that we also had to be on the alert with 'our own men', all the more so since a circle of well-known personalities willing to meddle in the Karabakh 'mediation' had already taken shape.

The decree on the establishment of Russia's mediatory mission in Karabakh in actual fact established it merely on paper conferring on me a high-sounding office but not much more than that. It listed the mission's participants, but all of them retained their former functions and could not dedicate themselves completely to Karabakh affairs. So that was rather a group of consultants, but a real team was still to be knocked together. Some time later, Counselor Sergei A. Panchehkin, who had a perfect command of English and Portuguese, a shorthand typist and still later a second secretary – Vladimir I. Muzychenko – were assigned to me. And that was it! On the plus side, I was provided with various technical appliances which enabled me to maintain telephone and radio communication with the conflict region, including a line of high-frequency government communications – fortunately, that communications network had been functioning in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert, just like in the other major cities of the Transcaucasus, since the Soviet times.

I shall make no secret of my cautious attitude at the early stages of our work: there was too little knowledge, no vital connections, nor real understanding of Armenians and Azeris, who had by then become external partners already, – nor even a common touch in dealing with internal partners, especially with the Russian Defence Ministry which carried itself like a state within a state. My urgent task was to examine carefully the details of the situation and most certainly to mobilise my Armenian and Azeri acquaintances, so as to have a better grasp of what was actually happening.

I shall give a brief overview of the major upheavals that demonstrated the degree of severity of the conflict shortly before my assignment to Karabakh.

A black chain of mournful events in a still peaceful setting (Sumgait and Baku) continued amid escalating hostilities (Khojaly and Maraga). It became clear that the intensity of bitterness was generating massive violations of the norms of international humanitarian law, and the only way to remedy the situation was to put an end to the military operations as soon as possible. This, and the need to create more favourable conditions for negotiations, predetermined Russia's conceptual approach to the ceasefire as the top priority task.

For a comprehensive description of the Karabakh conflict, one has to weave together two conflicting flows: the progress of military operations and the steps taken in search of a peaceful settlement. It is impossible to separate them from each other, as the situation on the battlefield greatly affected the position at the negotiating table (or around it, for it always took an incredible amount of effort to bring representatives of the parties to gather at a single conference table). Sometimes the opposite thing happened: stalling talks prompted the two sides to relapse into illusions that a solution based on application of military force was possible. There was a lot of instances where what had already been signed during negotiations was ruptured on the battlefield. That is why it was so vital to ensure above all a ceasefire and a termination of hostilities.

But contemporaries are hardly able to adequately reflect the condensed antagonism of the two flows. It is true that many, particularly in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, remember the progress of the armed struggle just as well as I do. Therefore, I mostly confine myself to a description of efforts towards seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict, providing only a most generalised view of the war timeline.

During the initial phase of the Karabakh conflict, the search for a political settlement was carried on in parallel and intermittently by a number of intermediaries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran and later the CSCE. It is worth noting Iran's activity up until the fall of Shusha on May 9, 1992. Its representatives had more than once succeeded in negotiating a ceasefire with the parties, but only in principle. Thus, the tripartite communiqué (Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan) of March 16 provided for a week-long ceasefire. The best known achievement is the joint statement by the three heads of states signed in Tehran on May 7, 1992. It envisaged a week-long trip by

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Makhmud Vaezi to the conflict region for the signing of a ceasefire arrangement. But that time, too, the plans fell through – with the fall of Shusha (which took literally no more than 48 hours!) the document completely lost its significance, and Iran suspended its mediation efforts for a good many years. We maintained contact with Tehran but had no joint work with it.

Our cooperation with Alma-Ata in our mediatory efforts was useful but proved to be not very lasting.

In the same month of May 1992 our mediatory mission was additionally entrusted with work within the CSCE framework, which meant a double workload. From that time on, the two lines of our activity had also merged and partly conflicted with each other: the mediation efforts of Russia proper and our contribution to the CSCE efforts as part of the Minsk Group formed in the middle of 1992.

It is little wonder that Moscow showed signs of involvement earlier than anyone else and more than all the other intermediaries: The Joint Communiqué signed in Zheleznovodsk had already offered prospects for a ceasefire and other significant measures to be implemented before January 1, 1992, but such a large time frame – more than three months – amid the escalation of conflict immediately proved to be fraught with complications, and the goal was never achieved.

As the head of mission, I had some experience of peace mediation as the USSR ambassador in Angola (1987-1990) but I clearly lacked skills in multilateral diplomacy needed in work involving the CSCE (almost all of my work had been in the field of bilateral relations, I only had a brief contact with multilateral diplomacy when I took part in the work of the Joint Commission on South-Western Africa and in a trilateral USSR-USA-Portugal mediating body for a settlement within Angola). It took me about a year to grasp the mere rudiments of that conflict. I remember that it was only at some point during the first half of 1993 that I felt sufficiently confident, both with respect to the conflicting parties and in contacts with many foreign partners from the Minsk Group, which had been formed in the framework of the CSCE in the interests of settlement of that conflict. But even now, many years later, time and time again one becomes aware of one's ignorance

in some particular aspect – so multifaceted is the pattern of that tragic standoff in the Trans-Caucasus which has by now reverberated far beyond the limits of the region. Not infrequently its echoes now reach us from across the ocean as well.

One of the basic problems of any armed conflict is the definition of the parties thereto – the opposing forces. Without sufficient clearness on that point one cannot expect a breakthrough in mediation. The recent break-up of the USSR had added new complications to the Karabakh conflict, which had begun in a single state, by turning it from purely internal strife also into a largely interstate one.

In ethno-political conflicts there are usually two parties directing and pursuing hostilities. But sometimes there are conflicts with a more complex configuration. Thus Angola's government troops were opposed not only by *UNITA* but also by South African forces. The Cuban troops bolstered the Angolan government; they not only ensured its logistical support but at times got directly engaged in combat. Hence in the conflict in South-Western Africa one could not but take multiple factors and many parties into account, not to mention the presence of the USA and the USSR behind the scenes who backed the opposing sides in the conflict.

In this respect, the Karabakh conflict was more complex than ordinary ones, though not as complex as the conflict in South-Western Africa. We were rather quick to understand its configuration: we saw that it had not two parties to it, as usual, but three, one of which was opposed to the other two at once. In other words, in terms of military confrontation there were two parties but politically there were three.

Moscow was the first to recognise the trilateral nature of the conflict. From the onset we regarded both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia as parties to this conflict, though the latter was for a rather long period trying to confine the conflict to the Azeri-Karabakh format, bringing Nagorno-Karabakh to the forefront and camouflaging its own role in it. The positions of Yerevan and Stepanakert were similar but not identical. Nagorno-Karabakh had its own armed forces and commanded them. It was virtually in an alliance with Armenia, in many ways dependent on it but more than once – and not just for show but quite in earnest – it took an independent stand.

The Western countries were for a long time unable to make a final decision on the matter, falling into self-contradictions, and did not recognise Nagorno-Karabakh as a third party until later, in the autumn of 1993.

The struggle over the configuration of the conflict and the status of the conflicting parties proved to be quite protracted, lasting as long as to this present day, and will obviously continue for some time. The interest of each of the sides is obvious. For Stepanakert the status of a party to the conflict was important in order to be able to take part in the negotiating process, to enhance the liberatory character of the movement and the armed struggle which Baku has been branding as separatist. For Armenia it is important to avoid the responsibility for its part in the conflict or to diminish it and eliminate the impression that has been formed of outright territorial claims on Azerbaijan (*miatsum*). What is advantageous to Baku is just the opposite – to accuse Yerevan of such claims, to offset the suppression of separatists by force and to make it more difficult for Stepanakert to participate in the talks despite the fact that during the war almost all limitations on military actions were formalised precisely between Baku and Stepanakert (as a rule, without the participation of Yerevan). Therefore, the Azeris prefer to refer to the decision of the additional meeting of the CSCE Council in Helsinki on March 24, 1992, and both Armenian communities – to the decision of the CSCE Budapest summit of December 6, 1994.

The problems of configuration of the conflict and the parties thereto were merely one of the first questions along which we started to tuck into the intricate fabric of the Karabakh conflict. Moscow's reference points and attitudes on that issue proved to be the most correct. Practice gradually compelled Western diplomats in the CSCE/OSCE to make adjustments to their positions bringing them closer to the Russian approach.

I shall not dwell here too much on how the members of the Russian mission had been preparing themselves for active work in the Karabakh peaceful settlement: for the first actions of their mediatory work and later as part of the CSCE Minsk Group. Our efforts to get in touch with the situation coincided in time with an important landmark in the progress of the armed conflict: the Armenians captured Shusha on May 8-9 and Lachin on May 19. The war thus transgressed the limits of former NKAO. Psychologically, these

losses became the most painful thorn in the Azeris' side for the whole period of conflict.

Our inner composure in learning and certain 'timidity' or, rather, caution at the initial stage of our work had nothing in common with the way Westerners now describe Russia's role in the Minsk process in those days. Thus the young Iranian lady Rexane Dedashti, who defended a thesis and published a book in Germany entitled *The OSCE and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, writes in it without a shadow of a doubt: 'In May 1992 the Russian Foreign Ministry set up a working group on the Karabakh conflict and appointed Vladimir Kazimirov as its head. However, on the whole, Russia very feebly manifested itself in the mediation process. Here are the impressions of one of the Western participants in the Minsk process: 'During the first year of the Minsk Group's existence there were practically no Russians there. They were neither heard nor seen. Although they turned up for sessions, they never seemed to generate any initiatives or proposals.'<sup>2</sup> Further on, there is an anonymous reference to one of the participants in the Minsk process.

If only that anonym's opinion was in line with the actual facts to any minor degree! For he must have been deaf and blind at once to have failed to spot the Russian delegation in Rome at the birth of the Minsk Group, when it was precisely them that had submitted a number of concrete proposals. I deliberately precede the story of the emergence of the Minsk Group and our work there with these judgements by an anonym involved in the Minsk process. We shall return to this a bit later. But this is how some 'researchers' write history! Rexane Dedashti may be pardoned for this – she was not present at the meetings in Rome. But can the same be said about the anonym that she quotes?

Members of Russia's mission are by no means ashamed of having had to go through that 'prep school.' Nonetheless, it is not at all difficult to document their activity from the very outset, also in the Minsk Group. Unfortunately, even now a lot of journalists and even political scientists and researchers are still in the process of attending 'prep schools' or pretending to do so in their judgements about that conflict.



## The ‘Illegitimate’ CSCE Minsk Group

The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe became involved in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict straight after the admission of the now independent Armenia and Azerbaijan as its members (Prague, January 30, 1992).

This was in tune with the interests of the USA and other Western powers. Previously they had neither economic nor political positions in the Trans-Caucasus region, they were only setting up their embassies there and building contacts at the time. But they were already keenly interested in ousting Russia from that region. Mediation in this conflict would have allowed them to promptly enhance their presence there and their influence in the matter so sensitive for the parties to the conflict, while surreptitiously superseding Moscow’s influence. Furthermore, from the onset of the conflict the Western powers had become somewhat over-biased in favour of the Karabakh Armenians, sympathising with their movement, perceiving it as opening a possibility to weaken the USSR (in 1988, they were not thinking about its demise yet).

On March 24, 1992, the first auxiliary meeting of the CSCE Council in Helsinki (at the foreign ministers’ level) made a decision that ‘the CSCE should play an important role’ in the Karabakh peace process. For this purpose it was decided in advance to convene, under the CSCE auspices, a conference in Minsk with the participation of 11 countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Germany, Italy, Russia, the USA, Turkey, France, Czechoslovakia and Sweden) , as well as ‘the elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh’, in the capacity of interested parties.

Why did Andrei Vladimirovich Kozyrev, Russia’s Foreign Minister – who, after the abolition of the USSR Foreign Ministry, had returned to its headquarters on Moscow’s Smolenskaya Square – want to get the CSCE involved in the Karabakh affairs? Indeed, he was among those advocating a

greater role for the pan-European conference. My impression was that his calculations were ingenious but nevertheless imprudent, eventually resulting in blunders. He believed that, after all, no one except Russia could ensure real progress there, but that, on the other hand, we could procure for ourselves not only the flag of the CSCE, operating, as it were, on its behalf, but also its material and financial assistance, for Moscow lacked funds of its own for anything at the time. For some time it might have even seemed that Kozyrev's plan was working: the CSCE had repeatedly voiced its support for Russia's mediatory efforts. But this did not last long!

To some extent, Kozyrev's illusions – about the West having allegedly radically revised its attitude towards our country once the USSR was gone – had played an evil trick on him. What he hoped for was support for our mediatory efforts on the part of the CSCE, yet he had clearly underestimated the desire of the West to squeeze Russia itself and its influence into the limits of its new state frontiers. Moreover, it was the Minsk Group that served as a touchstone for the implementation of the OSCE's now fairly obvious orientation against Russia's interests.

The CSCE's involvement in the Karabakh peace process (almost six months after the meeting in Zheleznovodsk) seemingly made the tasks of Russia's mediatory mission somewhat easier, but had in actual fact complicated them. The first CSCE decisions on Karabakh approved the **mutually complementary** efforts of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and the CIS. But in 1993-94, when the mediatory efforts of the pan-European forum were stalling, while Russia was clearly scoring points, the Conference began to lay claim first to **the central role** and then a virtual **monopoly** in the peace process. Not only did the CSCE fail to render assistance to the most pro-active and successful mediator, but it also tried to restrain it, to harness it into the joint team. This was the effect of Washington's geostrategic policies aimed at preventing Russia from entrenching its clout in the region, and at ousting it from there. It was those policies that Kozyrev had really failed to take into account, although on certain issues he even tried to argue heatedly with the Americans.

The basic decision of March 24, 1992 on the convocation of the Minsk Conference turned out to be merely a tentative one and could not have been

otherwise, for it was taken before the escalation of hostilities, before they reached their full climax. The main landmarks of the armed conflict – the takeover of Shusha and Lachin, Martakert, Kalbajar, Agdam and others – still lay ahead. That document by the CSCE did not even contain the clear-cut terms ‘conflicting party’ or ‘party to the conflict’ as yet. But in the very first item of that decision on Karabakh one can already perceive the singularity of the configuration of the conflict: an appeal for restraint was addressed to **all** (not to **both**) the parties. Besides, the reference there was made exactly to the actual parties to the conflict (not to the status of the parties at the Minsk Conference outlined much further below, closer to the end of that document).

The texts of the UN Security Council resolutions of 1993 lacked clarity in respect to the parties to the conflict as well – Armenia’s line was clearly exonerated there, a point to which we shall get back later. The statements contained in these resolutions were contradictory: Azerbaijan was allegedly opposed only by ‘local Armenian forces,’ that is, Nagorno-Karabakh, though the appeals were again addressed to **all** the parties.

Incidentally, the same formula – **all** the parties, not **both** – was used in the December 1994 decision by the CSCE Budapest summit attended by Heydar Aliyev, Hasan Hasanov and other senior representatives of Azerbaijan. On March 31, 1995, the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Hungarian Foreign Minister László Kovács officially replied to Baku’s belated objections concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh status in the negotiation process by confirming the decisions on the status of the parties adopted by the OSCE earlier, having emphasised ‘the participation of two member states involved in the conflict, as well as a third party to the conflict (Nagorno-Karabakh), in the entire process of negotiations, including the Minsk Conference.’

To return to the CSCE’s first steps, one has to mention the trip made by its special mission to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone in February 1992. Based on its results, the conflict was discussed at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) on February 27-28 and March 13-14, 1992. The CSO was then the functioning steering agency of the pan-European conference.

At the CSO’s suggestion, the aforementioned meeting of the CSCE Council, which was held in Helsinki on March 24, 1992, adopted a decision to

convene an international conference on Nagorno-Karabakh in Minsk (BBC along with a number of researchers, including the ever so thorough Thomas de Waal, date the foundation of the CSCE Minsk Group as March 24, 1992. The inaccuracy of these claims will be shown below). On the same occasion, on the initiative of Russia's Foreign Minister it was decided to send the CSCE Chair-in-Office on a mission to the region (March 30 –April 3,1992).

On April 7, Jiří Dienstbier appointed the Italian politician and diplomat Mario Raffaelli, who had earlier achieved notable progress in the peace negotiations in Mozambique, the chair of the Minsk Conference. Active preparations to holding of that conference on June 23, 1992 began, with an emergency rush in Minsk. Both Dienstbier and Raffaelli called for the speediest convocation of the conference.

On May 1, 1992, the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO made a decision on the rules of procedure of the conference and the institution of a mission to monitor the ceasefire.

The 11<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO (Helsinki, May 18-19, 1992), which was to precede the opening of the conference, played a particularly important role. But by then the roadblocks had appeared along the path to it. On May 9 the Armenians captured Shusha, the main Azeri stronghold in Nagorno-Karabakh. Its location roughly 700 meters above Stepanakert was used for keeping the main city of the former NKAO exposed to fire. The Armenian forces were increasing pressure against Lachin, which used to block Nagorno-Karabakh's communication with Armenia. On the second day of the CSO session, May 19, news came of Lachin having been captured and of aggravation of the fighting near Nakhichevan.

Azerbaijan's representative Nadyr Khudaverdievich (Khudaverdi-ogly) Mekhtiev noted that the Armenians had used tanks, heavy artillery and helicopters and – which is the key point – claimed that the spread of military hostilities beyond the limits of Nagorno-Karabakh had changed the nature of the conflict so much that it was no longer possible to hold the Minsk Conference, the preparations for which had taken place under a very different situation. He demanded a re-assessment of the conflict and recognition of Armenia's military aggression (the latter could be within the UN Security Council's powers, but not the CSCE).

Armenia's representatives denied involvement of their regular military units in the fighting outside its territory, claiming that there were no tanks or heavy artillery there at all. One of them admitted in a conversation that their military units had occupied only a section of the demilitarised 5-kilometer long strip located along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, on its Armenian side. This included a high point lying 200 meters from the Azerbaijani border and dominating the surrounding area. And even that came only in response to the bombings of the Armenian territory from Nakhichevan.

Almost all of the delegations participating in the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO, including the USA, Russia, the EU, and Armenia, called for a speedy convocation of the conference. But Azerbaijan put forward a precondition that the Armenians should withdraw from Lachin and Shusha. This was backed only by Turkey and led into a deadlock – the session of the CSO had to be adjourned until May 21.

Following consultations with the delegations of the EU countries, Russia and Turkey, the US delegation suggested a draft interim decision. Noting the spread of hostilities 'to other regions of Azerbaijan' (Nakhichevan was left without a mention), the Americans suggested holding an extraordinary preparatory meeting of representatives of the 11 member states of the Minsk Conference in order to 'urgently discuss all aspects of the situation, with a view to resume the dialogue between the conflicting parties.'

Armenia deemed that it was now its turn to object and did not give its assent to the draft decision, citing the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh had been deprived of a chance to take part in the discussion as the reason for this move (the mention of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity in the text of the American draft was not taken kindly by Armenia either). Here consensus required for a decision to be taken was lacking. The US draft resolution was never adopted.

But, considering it sufficiently balanced, a number of delegations proposed to include it in journal No 4 of the CSO session, so that the chair of the conference could use it as a guideline in preparations to the extraordinary meeting. No one objected to placing the draft text on record or to holding the meeting.

At the invitation of the Italian delegates who presided at the conference, the meeting of representatives of the 11 states was held on June 1-5, 1992 in

Rome. Alas, the debates between the two delegations were equally heated, but ended with equally no progress. Another meeting had to be arranged in the same place. The result was the same. Then came the third round of the meeting, followed by consultations of the neutral 'Eight' (with Turkey left out); finally, the delegates of the Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh community appeared; the fourth round was held with their participation already, then the fifth... Thus, Rome became, without any prior arrangements, the de-facto birthplace of the Minsk Group.

Many take the existence of the Minsk Group for granted. Few people know about its origins and the extent of its legitimacy. They are unaware of that **the CSCE had never made any decisions on its creation**. (Indeed, all that was decided was to include the text of the unadopted American draft into the CSO journal). But even the latter referred to just one extraordinary meeting and not to a series of rounds, much less to operation of a new subsidiary body of the CSCE on a regular basis. That is why **the Minsk Group has no mandate** (unlike any other CSCE agency, even a temporary or *ad hoc* one). Some people argue about the mandate of the Minsk Group unaware of the fact that such is plainly non-existent. One can only discuss it in an abstract sense, purely symbolically – it does not contain a single word in it.

There is a semblance of a mandate of the Minsk Conference (the decision of March 24, 1992, although that, too, would require improvement). Later on, in 1995, the mandates of the co-chairs of the Minsk Conference and of the first representative of the CSCE Chair-in-Office were approved, but the Minsk Group had no mandate<sup>3</sup>.

I shall say at once that at one of the Minsk Group meetings in Rome, clearly realising the pros and cons of its activity and wishing to regulate it, on March 1, 1993 we submitted a draft of 'Operational Rules of Karabakh Settlement,' but the Western partners 'failed to notice' them – by actually failing to react. On October 14, 1994, with the consent of the minister, I published in the Moscow newspaper 'Segodnya' a very frank article entitled '*Russia and the CSCE Minsk Group*.' We disseminated it at the CSCE headquarters in Vienna as well, calling attention not only to the shortcomings of the Minsk Group, but also to its barefaced attempts to hinder the mediatory efforts of Russia, which had already secured an armistice.

At the sessions of the CSCE Standing Committee in Vienna on October 24 and 31, 1994 we proposed that that anomaly be eliminated, the Minsk Group mandate adopted, and suggested a draft of the latter. This would not normally seem to be a problem. The CSCE/OSCE practice contains dozens of cases of elaboration and adoption of mandates of various bodies within that framework! Why then did the adoption of just another mandate have to be so vehemently opposed? But the mandate was of no use to the Western states, for its limits would have impeded interference into any matter, all with the purpose of hampering or obstructing Russia's more successful mediation efforts.

The reasoning offered by my opponents was curious. The American insisted that the Minsk Group already had a mandate – it was merely 'dif-fused' across a variety of- documents by various CSCE agencies; while the German delegate Joetze claimed that there was generally no need for it. A stunning example of cynicism in diplomacy: as if both of them had been unaware of what a mandate is and how it is generally adopted! A mandate is a clear-cut, integral document, not something airy and vague; it is examined in every detail, discussed and only then approved.

This became the subject of correspondence between me and the experienced Swedish diplomat, then President of the Minsk Conference, Jan Eliasson (quite recently, in 2005, he chaired the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly). At that time he had sent me a whole list of quotations from CSCE documents arranged in chronological order, which mainly expressed 'support for the tireless efforts of the Minsk Group.' However, sufficed it to rearrange them not chronologically but by meaning, and one would be able to see that the list was lacking in the crucial element for any mandate – goals and objectives. In a letter dated November 4, 1994 I had to point this out to Eliasson rather bluntly.

His successor Anders Bjurner tried to convince me that the Minsk Group had an 'indirect' mandate. But did the CSCE really have such a practice as issuing 'indirect' mandates? A lot can be said in the framework of these debates concerning the Minsk Group mandate in 1994. And I shall probably have to say it eventually, but not now.

But to conclude the story about the birth of the Minsk Group, let us investigate whether Azerbaijan was actually right to refrain sanctioning the

convening of the Minsk Conference. Now, 17 years later, it seems easier to judge. Have the Armenians withdrawn from Lachin and Shusha as Baku had been demanding? How realistic was that precondition for the conference to open? Would the Minsk Conference have had even less impact on the progress in the settlement of the conflict than the Minsk Group that emerged de facto 'in its place'? These and other questions await meaningful answers, especially from the leadership of Azerbaijan (I wish they would find an answer at least for themselves – this would guarantee a greater degree of realism in their reckoning, which would definitely become more sober).

It is in Baku that contradictory opinions about the work of the Minsk Group are frequently voiced by officials – sometimes almost positive, sometimes sharply negative, and sometimes somewhat overstated, yet at other times clearly understated. It is certainly useful to see both the positive and the negative aspects of the matters we are involved in. But what we have here is not a many-sided approach, nor balanced assessments, but sheer rushing from one extreme to another. And no one (not just officials but political analysts as well) has ever pronounced on Azerbaijan's rejection of the Minsk Conference in May 1992. For, indeed, the Minsk Group is nothing but a 'brainchild' of the Baku leadership. The cause-and-effect relationship is much more evident here than in more complicated matters (say, in the origins of such a phenomenon as occupation).

But let us get back to the first steps made by the Minsk Group since June 1992.



## The First Steps of the Minsk Group

In the summer of 1992, the Azeri forces launched an offensive resulting in the occupation of the Shahumian district, Martakert (gaining control over about 40% of the territory of the former NKAO), and, in addition, the seizure of the Armenian enclave of Artsvashen.

Meanwhile, at the meetings of the CSCE Minsk Group in Rome the debates between the respective heads of the Azerbaijani and the Armenian delegations Nadyr Mekhtiev and K. Ter-Stepanyan was in full swing starting with June 1, 1992. As if by turns, they demanded the denunciation of the adversary's conquests: the Azeris – of the seizure of Shusha and Lachin, the Armenians – of the Shahumian and the Martakert districts. A great deal of time was spent in disputes over procedural matters, the rights of the 'parties concerned,' primarily, the representatives of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian community, who had failed to show up for the first rounds of negotiations. Practically no real headway was made in the actual settlement. After the first fruitless Minsk Group meeting came the second (June 15-20), and the third (June 29 – July 6). As a result, the preliminary extraordinary meeting of representatives of states participating in the CSCE Minsk Conference had turned into a whole series of meetings and spontaneously led to the formation of an ancillary body, the Minsk Group.

Severe contradictions between the two states had precluded the CSCE summit (Helsinki, July 9-10, 1992) from adopting a document on Nagorno-Karabakh.

By the end of the 3<sup>d</sup> round, the representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians did turn up in Rome for the first time, but this was followed by a series of ostentatious walkouts by either the Armenian or the Azeri representatives from sessions. The work of the Minsk Group became more or less stabilised beginning with the 4<sup>th</sup> round (July 31 – August 5) onwards, after

Yerevan convinced the Karabakh Armenians to take part in the Rome meetings (the delegates from Nagorno-Karabakh included at the time Boris Arushanyan, Robert Kocharyan and Hrant Khachatryan). The newly elected Chair of the Nagorno-Karabakh State Defence Committee Robert Kocharyan kept a low profile, leaving it to Boris Arushanyan to lead the delegation. Nagorno-Karabakh's 'lesser status' remained the focus of disputes. Thus was its procedural status denoted within the working group, at the Minsk Group plenary session and at the Minsk Conference (as distinct from the 'greater', definitive one, which would have to be defined in Minsk).

From June to August, the potentiality of convocation of the Minsk Conference remained open to question (with the option of either opening it in two stages or deferring it to a later date), but gradually it became clear that due to the sharp differences on many issues between the parties to the conflict the Conference could not be convened.

The most vociferous figure in the Minsk Group was the US Ambassador Jack John Maresca, himself a very experienced diplomat. Washington's leverage with its allies had facilitated its cooperation with the Minsk Group Presidium: with Mario Raffaelli and his deputy – Mario Sica, a man of indefatigable industry.

The Turks were very active, too. Their support was unambiguously with Azerbaijan, in defiance of the principle of impartiality adopted within the Minsk Group. When the eight 'neutrals' gathered for informal consultations in the absence of the conflicting parties (July 17-21), Turkey did not wish to join them. On August 1, the Turkish diplomats promptly followed their Azeri counterparts in walking out of the conference hall. Under the pressure from the US, they later 'mended their ways' slightly, turning the 'Eight' into 'Nine', but they were in no way striving for objectiveness, which had subjected them to repeated criticism in Rome.

Washington's goal was to mitigate Ankara's excesses, but still in the context of its continued activity within the Minsk Group. The proximity of the conflict to Turkey enabled the United States to isolate it from the other members of the Minsk Group by tacitly backing it and counterposing it to Russia. When the talks stalled, the Americans fostered a 'reserve' format of the most proactive 'Three' – the USA-Russia-Turkey. Within that format all they had

to do was to set the partners apart. Should one of them side with Azerbaijan, the other one would therefore be obliged to side with the Armenians, for the sake of restoring the balance. To themselves the Americans had assigned a 'modest' role of an arbiter: such was the case in the autumn of 1992 in Geneva and in April-May 1993 in Moscow.

Russia's delegation was keeping a close watch on the situation. We were wary of interfering in the feuds between the Azeris and the Armenians, but had nevertheless proposed a number of initiatives. Not all of them were met with understanding, much less – with support from our Western partners. In a press interview, the head of the Azerbaijan delegation addressed Russia with the following accusations, all on account of its impartiality: 'That country is trying to please both Armenia and Azerbaijan at once.'

In spite of his two trips to Karabakh in April, Andrei V. Kozyrev did not regard that problem as a top priority for himself. The minister made no attempts to hinder my work, having entrusted me both with the mediatory work and with the management of the Minsk Group affairs. He himself would only intervene mostly when the political line had to be coordinated with President Boris Yeltsin.

In Moscow our 'Roman holiday' was perceived in a somewhat caustic light. The former Russian Deputy Foreign Minister A. Fyodorov made derogatory remarks published in the mass media: certain people were, as he said, busy creating new agencies abroad and staying there for months on end... Or: 'Some of the diplomats are making no bones about the fact that they are ready to stay in Italy and busy themselves with negotiating on Karabakh for several years running.' (That was how he had interpreted my apparently clumsy joke.)

As far as specific steps by the Minsk Group were concerned, I particularly remember Maresca's brainchild – the so-called 'zone-based programmes' for zones occupied by one of the warring side or the other (Shusha, Lachin, Shahumian, Martakert). Each programme was in the form of a list of measures aimed at the normalisation of the situation in each given locality. A set of programmes was envisaged to be included in the final document by the Minsk Group, or even turned into materials for the opening of the Minsk Conference. It mapped out '*what is to be done*' but gave no specifications as

to 'when' and 'how': there was no sequence of actions, the balance of the parties' interests had not been ensured, even though this was extremely important, given the deep mutual distrust between them. Even today they continue to insist on the urgency of implementation of their demands, spending less time on arguing about the substance of the measures than about their order of priorities.

In early September 1992, the Minsk Group had to discontinue its 'zone-based programmes.' Our delegation superimposed on them a calendar of measures with a time breakdown and gave due consideration to the parties' interests. Measures in favour of either side were alternating like teeth in a gear ensuring motion. Should one or two of them fall out, everything would come to a standstill. The calendar was a peculiar one – it did not have specific dates but only conditional ones. The key date of the ceasefire (Day X) was taken as a point of reference. What had to be done two days before that was designated as 'X-2', five days before – 'X-5' and what had to be done later – say, 'X+3' or 'X+10' (we used such a scheme in the Angolan settlement). Subsequently, a whole series of Minsk Group diagrams were built upon that principle. Timid tentatives to introduce real dates were quickly disrupted by the parties to the conflict. Maresca was digging in his heels even on the issue of a letter to be used – he tried to impose the letter D on us, according to the pattern prevailing in the United States, but did not succeed. We kept the X.

The problem with the deployment CSCE observers had entered a vicious circle. With little faith in their own ability to make the ceasefire last, the parties were pressing for the observers' swift arrival, but such could only be deployed provided a durable ceasefire was in effect. Kozyrev held consultations with James Baker and Mario Raffaelli as to whether Russia and the United States should propose to the CSCE Chair-in-Office to urgently set up an observer mission and gradually build up its presence in the conflict zone. The CSCE's lack of experience in peacemaking and the clumsiness of its mechanisms had generated a lot of difficulties. Due to the excessive propaganda activity by the parties, the conflict had come to be surrounded by myths, fallacies, erroneous and plainly fallacious stories and opinions.

It was precisely Russia that had undertaken the main efforts for scaling down the hostilities and the cessation of bloodshed at the initial stage of the

settlement negotiations in Rome. I venture to declare that these efforts were far more significant than those of all the other Minsk Group members together. Here are the basic facts.

As early as on June 12, 1992 we handed over to the parties in Moscow, and on June 15 – to the Minsk Group members in Rome, proposals concerning de-escalation of the armed conflict and gradual normalisation of life for the civilian population. Armenia and Azerbaijan reacted positively, although they, especially Baku, delayed with communicating specific comments to us. The Italians and the American delegates paid little attention to our proposals, all the more so considering that such had already been forwarded to the parties without the Minsk Group ‘stamp’ on them, but on behalf of Russia alone.

On June 20 we submitted a proposal on the suspension of all active military operations for a period of 30 days beginning with June 23 – the initial date of the planned conference opening in Minsk. That is to say, we proposed to renounce all offensive operations, attacks and reconnaissance raids, rocket, artillery and mortar attacks against population centres, roads and positions of the enemy, combat employment of aviation and any armour, movement of armed units in the zone of conflict (except for pullback into the rear) for that period. It was naturally planned to extend the truce later and open negotiations on a definitive ceasefire. However, the Minsk Group, i. e. the US and the Italian delegations that controlled it, stopped short of accepting our proposal then, having shut it away into the package of measures for consideration.

During the third round, it was only on the third try that our delegation achieved its inclusion onto the current agenda. One had to overcome the opposition by the representatives of Baku and Ankara. On July 3 the appeal to suspend hostilities for 30 days, starting from July 9, at 01.00 am Moscow time, was finally approved. The date was timed to coincide with the day of the CSCE summit opening in Helsinki. Mario Raffaelli addressed these appeals to the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Abulfaz Elçibay and Levon Ter-Petrossian, and copies of such – to the ‘elected and other representatives’ of Nagorno-Karabakh Georgy Petrossian and Nizami Bakhmanov. This became the first concrete and significant step made by the Minsk Group in respect of the conflicting parties.

On July 8, before my departure for Moscow, Nadyr Mekhtiev informed me of Abulfaz Elçibay's assent. Time was running out on us, but Yerevan and Stepanakert kept silence. I had to rush to the Smolenskaya Square right from the airport to get in touch with the presidential apparatus in Armenia on time. It was nearly 10 pm – about three hours until the proposed deadline for the suspension of military actions.

The telephone call to Yerevan made via high-frequency communication line was answered by Shagen Karamanukyan, Chief of Levon Ter-Petrosian's Secretariat. He pretended to know nothing of the appeal extended from Rome. I told him that even if failure of delivery had indeed been the case, the head of the Armenian delegation was obliged to inform Yerevan. He had been at the Rome meeting and known about the appeal since July 3, that is, five days ago. Karamanukyan promised to report everything to the president in the morning, as if he did not understand that the deadline was to run out in about two hours. A proposal already accepted by Baku was on the point of falling through. A very sharp conversation followed, but it could no longer yield any results.

Yerevan and Stepanakert gave their answers on the following day – July 9 (it turned out that they had in fact received everything alright!). But both answers were very ambiguous. Armenia sheltered itself behind the claim that it was ostensibly not a belligerent party and even somewhat playfully called upon Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh to suspend the hostilities. I suspect that the Armenians did not support our initiative because of the tough situation for them at the front – they wanted first to drive back the Azeris, who had occupied almost half of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory in June.

On July 11 I urgently travelled to Yerevan to clarify the situation. I met with President Levon Akopovich Ter-Petrosian, Chair of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Armenia Babken Gurgenovitch Ararktsyan and the head of the Armenian Foreign Ministry (Arman Dzhonovich Kirakosyan). All of them spoke in favour of resumption of our initiative in July.

On July 13–14 I had a conversation in Moscow with Hikmet Hajizade, the Azerbaijan Vice Premier and Permanent Representative, and one over the phone with the representative of the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership Georgy Mikhailovich Petrossian. The agreements reached in both cases were identical.

In Rome the representatives of Italy, the United States and Turkey opposed my proposal to once again call upon the parties to suspend the armed hostilities. They declared that the former appeal was still valid! Someone suggested that the appeal for a 30-day truce could even be extended.

The Minsk Group leaders only began to ponder over a new appeal after receiving information from me that during our trip on July 21–27 to Baku, Nakhichevan, Yerevan and Stepanakert, the top leaders of all three parties expressed their readiness to put the suspension into effect beginning on August 9 (a month after the first appeal). At the same time we proposed to the parties a schedule of measures in preparation for such a suspension of hostilities. Having duly received comments from Yerevan and Stepanakert, we had to wait long for a response from Baku (just as was the case with our initiative of June 12).

During the fourth round we made a statement expressing our concern over the escalation of the conflict, denouncing the incessant use of armed force and calling upon the parties to simultaneously declare their commitment to the resolution of the conflict exclusively through negotiations.

At last, on August 3, at our suggestion the Italian-led Minsk Group Pre-sidium proposed to suspend armed hostilities, but this time for 60 days. This time Maresca backed the idea; however, the discussion was evolving in a contradictory manner. Mekhtiev kept repeating that Baku had already given its consent to the suspension, but that the Armenians had refused to do the same. A fresh appeal would not work either. The Azeris had the right to be the last to respond. After consultations with Baku, Mekhtiev set forth a condition: to examine the new appeal only together with the resulting document adopted at the meeting in Rome, although the latter no longer had a chance of being adopted (while in a conversation with me he already began to backtrack on President Elçibay's promises, proposing a postponement – to make the ceasefire arrangements effective not from August 9 but from another date of the same month). The ethnic Armenians (both in Armenia and in Karabakh as two of the conflicting sides) supported this.

After lengthy debates, on August 5 only, shortly before the completion of the round, an agreement was reached that Mario Raffaelli would personally hand over to the parties an appeal from the CSCE Minsk Group for the sus-

pension of the fighting and, should everyone consent, he would set the date for it in advance. This, as he said, was necessary to enhance the Minsk Group's prestige and role in the contacts with the parties.

But he only visited Baku and Yerevan on August 24-26, three weeks later! The Italians neglected the date of August 9 negotiated by us with all the parties, choosing instead to waste time on 'puffing out their chest' and... made a rod for themselves.

Nonetheless, Russia had extended maximum possible support to their initiative. On August 24 I passed on to the permanent representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Moscow President Boris Yeltsin's addresses to Abulfaz Elçibay and Levon Ter-Petrossian expressing his support for the Minsk Group appeal and his willingness to send the head of Russia's mediatory mission on an assignment to Baku and Yerevan.

No sooner had Raffaelli returned from the Trans-Caucasus when on August 27, on the initiative of Nursultan Nazarbaev, a meeting of the foreign ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan was held in Alma-Ata, with the participants signing a memorandum on the ceasefire to take effect from September 1, 1992, but only along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border (not in Nagorno-Karabakh).

On August 29, Yerevan and Stepanakert agreed to suspend the offensive actions. Levon Ter-Petrossian proposed to cease fire beginning with September 1.

On September 2 the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry informed Mario Raffaelli that, with due account for the wishes of the Armenian side, military activities along the entire stretch of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border were terminated at 5.00 pm, on September 1. President Abulfaz Elçibay made it clear in his letter of September 5 that he would suspend the hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh only after the withdrawal of the 'Armenian expeditionary corps' from there, as well as from Shusha and Lachin. Correspondence between Raffaelli and Elçibay concerning the 60-day suspension of military operations continued until November 1992, but even after the Azeri president gave his consent, the Italians never availed of the resulting right to declare the date of the ceasefire.

(Rexane Dedashti's anonymous Western interviewee apparently did not realise that in 1992 the entire substantive part of the Minsk Group efforts



aimed at terminating or suspending military activity was undertaken solely on Russia's initiative. The fact that our proposals met with opposition is quite another matter. Even when our Western partners were compelled to accept them, the Italians, backed by the US, would fail to implement them properly. Is this not the reason why the work of the Minsk Group did not produce the desired result? The anonym's bilious comments on Russia's role in the Minsk Group during that period merely reveal the Westerners self-seeking approach in their cooperation with Moscow.

## **Baku – Nakhichevan**

On July 20, 1992, before my first trip to Baku (which I had never visited before that), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vitaly I. Churkin sent to his Azeri counterpart Tofik Gasymov a personal letter asking him to assist me with organising summit meetings and a trip to Nakhichevan. I was accompanied by an assistant – Counselor Sergei A. Panchekhin.

On July 21-23, talks were held with Tofik Gasymov, with the Chairman of the Milli Meclis Isa Gambarov and with his deputy Afiyaddin Dzhaliyov. I was received by President Abulfaz Elçibay who had won the presidential elections on June 7. The conversations, though taking place for the first time, and held in an outwardly friendly atmosphere, were nevertheless very tough as far as the substance of the conflict settlement-related issues went. The conversation with the vice-premier was somewhat more realistic than the rest.

During our evening conversation at the president's residence, I told him about the work of Russia's mediatory mission and presented our proposal to suspend hostilities for 60 days starting with August 9 (a fortnight earlier Abulfaz Elçibay had agreed to a similar proposal made via the Minsk Group concerning a 30-day suspension of military activities starting from July 9). I passed on to him the specific proposals on the mechanism for preparation and implementation of that step.

Citing poor command of the Russian language as an excuse, the president chose to communicate through an interpreter – his assistant Gulshad Zarbaliyev, – but he did not need interpretation from Russian into Azeri. He declared that he had always stood for the suspension of hostilities, but made a dig at Levon Ter-Petrossian: 'He is essentially a diplomat, he is into playing games.' According to him, any talks with Armenians were always followed by intensification of fighting on their part: this was the case with the fall of Shusha and Lachin. President Ter-Petrossian had proposed direct contacts and

negotiations, but those had, in Elçibay's view, first to be prepared at the level of experts, then of the foreign ministers, and maybe even prime ministers, and only then taken to the presidential level.

In any case, Azerbaijan, he said, would only be able to countenance the signing of any agreement with Armenia provided this was done under guarantees of the United States, Turkey and Russia ('so that they could be held to account should they fail to honour the treaty') and only within the framework and in compliance with the principles of the CSCE.

Abülfaz Elçibay repeatedly stressed that his origins made him a man of the people, that he was no diplomat, but instead he really knew the aspirations of his people, preferred to play fair, in the manly fashion, without tricks or subterfuges. He suggested that 'micro-zones of peace' be established at locations along the border with Armenia (in Qazax, Akstafa, Taz, Sadarak), but not around Nagorno-Karabakh. 'People will find ways to understand each other by themselves, the main thing is to launch this process, to set it off.'

By the end of our conversation, the president had mellowed somewhat demonstrating both kindness and friendliness in his demeanour: he agreed to the suggested date of August 9, promised to appoint his authorised representative in charge of operational contacts with us (about three days later Nadyr Mekhtiev, whom I had already met during the meetings of the Minsk Group in Rome, was named as such person. His role was that of my 'guide' in Baku.)

President Elçibay began to list changes for the better in their relations with Russia, to assure us of his desire to establish honest and friendly relations with it. He welcomed with great enthusiasm the news that Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was considering launching an initiative by adopting a joint statement by six countries of the region – the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Turkey and Iran – in favour of a peaceful settlement of all vexed issues and a creation of a zone of neighbourliness, stability and cooperation there: 'I had such ideas myself. The main concern is to avoid conflicts.'

On the whole, the first conversation with Abülfaz Elçibay made a mixed impression on me: there was a little bit of everything in it – impulses toward frankness, lack of sophistication in politics, cunning and fickleness, and even a touch of mystique. Those riddles remained unsolved until subsequent meetings with the president of Azerbaijan.

After this, Panchekhin and I went to Nakhichevan, where we had a meeting with Heydar Aliyev planned. The Autonomous Republic was under a double layer of blockade. Since the outbreak of the conflict, Azerbaijan had blockaded Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, while the Armenians had, in their turn, blockaded Nakhichevan (where hardly any of their fellow countrymen, who had at one time constituted more than a third of the population, remained. Armenia still kept an outlet to Georgia, Iran and the rather hostile Turkey, and so did Nakhichevan with respect to Iran and Turkey.

The conditions in which we had to live in Nakhichevan were primitive but complaining was out of question. Power blackouts were an ordinary ‘joy’ for the locals. I remember very well how we had to boil tea like tourists do – on a bonfire in the yard of the little house where we were welcomed and put up for the night.

I met with Heydar Aliyevich at the modest residence of the NAR Supreme Council. Aliyev was in the habit of arranging his personal interviews as consisting of three parts (the first – in the presence of the press; the second – with a restricted audience; and the third was a face to face interview). In that provincial centre journalists were scarce, three or four of them were present during our conversation. Then they were given to understand that they had to leave. Only the assistants stayed on with us: I don’t remember the name of his assistant (a few years later I met him again at a conference in Berlin where he made himself conspicuous by loud and spiteful yells addressed to me).

I began by telling Heydar Aliyev about the work of Russia’s mediatory mission, the CSCE efforts in preparation of the Minsk Conference, the first three Minsk Group meetings that had taken place in Rome with no progress achieved. Heydar Aliyev inquired to what extent the peacemaking efforts affected Nakhichevan and thanked me for passing on Russia’s mediation proposals of April 14 and June 12, 1992, as well as the schedule of measures proposed by us to be implemented for the suspension of hostilities.

For his part, he offered his own view of the situation in the republic. According to his version of events, during the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh the situation in Nakhichevan proper had until very recently remained normal, it had even seen relative stabilisation after September 1991, in the after-

math of his becoming the chairman of the local Meclis: he settled all clashes at the Azeri-Armenian border, hostage-taking incidents in areas along the Armenian-Azeri railway by speaking directly with the President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrossian over the phone.

But at the beginning of May 1992 the situation deteriorated drastically due to the Armenian forces' advance in the border area in the vicinity of the settlement of Sadarak (with a population of 14,000). Contacts with President Ter-Petrossian were only of limited help in settling the situation, but after May 18 it saw another serious aggravation and had remained grave ever since. Bombardments of Sadarak continued resulting in casualties. The Armenians had captured the adjacent frontier heights on the territory of Nakhichevan. Kiarki, an Azerbaijani enclave in Armenia, had been occupied since January 1990. Villages in the north and east of Nakhichevan (Buzgov, Kiarmachatakh, Shada, Batabat) were under constant fire. Incidents of fire exchange continued also along the border between the Ordubad district in the NAR and the Meghri district of Armenia.

Heydar Aliyev emphasised that he had undertaken numerous attempts to stop the bloodshed. In order to avoid mutual accusations as to who had started the latest shoot-out, Levon Ter-Petrossian proposed to invite Iranians to act as international observers at the Armenian border, but only that with Nakhichevan. Even before receiving his consent, the Armenians launched consultations with Iran, whereas with Aliyev they discussed that matter in a somewhat peculiar way – over the phone, from the cabinet of Ashot Manucharyan, the national security advisor to the Armenian president, in the presence of the Iranian ambassador.

The Armenians were proposing to establish eight border points with 240 Iranian observers stationed there (30 at each point). Heydar Aliyev did not insist on international observers – he felt sure that the conflicting parties could cope with that task using their own resources. He rejected the prospect of involving only Iranians, suggesting that Turkish observers be invited as well. But that did not go down well with the Armenians. About two weeks before this conversation with me he had suggested getting Iran, Turkey and Russia involved. No reply from the Armenians had been received so far.

Later on Heydar Aliyevich told his assistants that we had long been

acquainted and would now wish to speak in private. When we were alone, he asked in the first place whether I had come to him on my own initiative or at the suggestion of President Elçibay. I replied that, of course, I had come on my own decision, in order to see for myself just what was happening in that conflict zone. But, needless to say, I did not want to let down either myself or Mr. Aliyev and had coordinated the approval of that journey – Baku had raised no objections to it.

According to Heydar Aliyev, the Armenian leadership had recently sent him drafts of the official treaties between the Republic of Armenia and the NAR (bypassing Baku). One of them was about developing across-the-border trade involving Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iran and Turkey: the Iranian proposal was to create a kind of ‘international bazaar’ at the junction of the frontiers. He liked the idea but its realisation was so far unfeasible due to political complications.

He duly informed the speaker of the Azerbaijani Milli Meclis Isa Gambar of his talks with Ter-Petrosian. Gambar responded favourably. But the officials in Baku never bothered to inform Aliyev himself of anything – whether it was the events taking place in Karabakh, or the efforts of the international community – all of this he would only learn from the mass media (in Nakhichevan the Ostankino TV Channel and Turkish television were available at the time; Baku sent on a daily basis video cassettes with recorded news of the previous day).

Heydar Aliyev spoke in favour of lifting the blockade of the Baku-Nakhichevan-Yerevan railway through which 70-80% of all cargo with destinations in Armenia used to be transported via Azerbaijan. He even stated that Baku was blockading him more than it did Armenia. He believed that the lifting of the Nakhichevan blockade would automatically relieve the blockade against Armenia as well. The Armenians were ready to let cargoes through into Nakhichevan, which was in an extremely dire situation (there were severe shortages of fuel, electricity and foodstuffs). But there were forces that did not wish the situation there to be normalised).

With respect to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh he read out to me his interview to *Izvestia* dated June 29, 1992, where he described a military solution to it as ‘a blind alley’, called for its peaceful settlement, with due consid-

eration for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, and urged the Armenian leadership to step up the process of negotiations.

Returning to the period since 1988, when the Karabakh conflict was brewing, he stressed the responsibility of former and current leaders in Moscow. He described the efforts he had been undertaking himself to prevent the situation from getting out of control, with his attempts to bring it to the notice of the centre having fallen on deaf ears. He made scathing, rather hard-hitting remarks about Gorbachev, Ligachev and some others.

In Mr. Aliyev's opinion, the conflict in Karabakh was at its climax. It was no't possible in this case to implement the South Ossetian experience of separation of forces. The idea of joint Armenian-Azeri peacekeeping forces was absurd, as there was not a single Armenian in the world that would take an unbiased stance with regard to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. The global Armenian lobby was standing firmly for it. Heydar Aliyev also mentioned somewhat casually that an opinion had been formed, and not without a reason, that Moscow was playing up to the Armenian side.

During our face-to-face talk Heydar Aliyev did not attempt to conceal the tensions in his relations with the new leadership in Baku, despite the fact that he had played a notable role in preventing Ayaz Mütalibov's possible return to power. He spoke of the ungrateful attitude of his proteges – Vezirov and Mütalibov – towards himself, their unwillingness to pay heed to his advice. In order to preclude his election as president, Mütalibov had even gone as far as introducing an age limit for presidency. Heydar Aliyevich claimed that he enjoyed wide support in the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan: about 200 of its members were ready to support his candidacy to preside over this Council, which would pave the way for him later to be elected as president.

But, according to him, the burden of responsibility for the 14 years of being the head of a Union Republic and the 6 years of work in executive positions in Moscow, as well as his 68 years of age and the difficult situation in his family (following the death of his wife and sister) had prompted him to refrain from entering the power struggle in Baku opting instead for staying in Nakhichevan. Here he enjoyed autonomy and was virtually self-determined. That said, he made it clear that his experience was much broader and

stretched beyond the scope of that republic, which, despite being his homeland, was still small, and that he could still find himself in demand for a more ambitious job some day.

Heydar Aliyev said that he expected the Popular Front, which had swept to power, to discredit itself any time soon due to the incompetence of its leadership. As for President Elçibay, he had not spoken to him even on the phone, not even once. He uttered a most unflattering opinion about certain leaders of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan (describing Tofik Gasymov as nothing short of an unbalanced man). He declared that he had not interfered with the PFA's coming to power, so as to let these people expose their true worth. This would not be long in coming, and then Baku would turn to him for help.

Neither of us attempted to hide our satisfaction with the results of this meeting of ours. The three-hour conversation in Nakhichevan marked the resumption of our contacts, which later continued in the form of telephone talks over government high-frequency communication lines. But the topics of our discussions became more heated than had ever been the case in Latin America and then in Moscow.



## **A Face-to-Face Meeting in Moscow (August 7–8, 1992)**

On July 31 in Rome, just before another in the series of the Minsk Group rounds, the head of the Azerbaijan delegation Nadyr Mekhtiev talked to me about some considerations concerning measures for the preparation of a suspension of hostilities. First of all, with reference to the uncertainty of the time frames for the establishment of an observer mission and the convocation of the Minsk Conference, he suggested that the date of suspension of hostilities be moved from August 9 to another day of the same month and that a meeting of personal representatives of the Azeri and Armenian presidents be held in Moscow during the first ten days of August to decide on a new date of suspension and begin to examine the issues related to the normalisation of the Armenian-Azeri relations.

In order to prepare the public opinion for a turn towards reconciliation, Mr. Mekhtiev suggested that the President of the Russian Federation address the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan with a personal appeal to cease the military operations in Karabakh and along the border of the two states and normalise relations between them. Yeltsin could, for example, suggest that they meet under his auspices in one of the cities in the south of Russia and sign an agreement on the suspension of hostilities. In their messages to each other, the Armenian and Azeri presidents would express their assent with the above.

After the experts' preparations to that meeting of leaders were completed, 5-7 days before its actual date, in the presence of Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the agreement was to be initialled by the foreign ministers and the military leaders duly authorised thereto by the political leadership. According to Mekhtiev, that leeway was needed to sway the public opinion in favour of negotiations and peace. He also made a point to the effect that the agreement on the suspension or termination of the hostilities would have to bear the

signatures of authoritative representatives of the Armenian and Azeri communities of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In response to my question whether all of that could be regarded as a suggestion coming from President Elçibay, Mr. Mekhtiev non-committally assured me that such a plan of actions would be acceptable to him.

That gave rise to a good deal of doubt. For all the outward soundness of the complex multi-faceted concept of achieving a suspension of military operations, the suggested pattern was marked by the deliberate procrastination of deadlines for reaching that objective and the likelihood of failures at some stage or other.

A series of proposals made by Nadyr Mekhtiev called his validity as a negotiating partner. After his wobbly statements in Rome I was forced to confront him with a direct question right there on August 3: which of the July 31 proposals were still in force and which had been cast aside? But there was again only vagueness in his answers. Was all this after all not just an attempt to depart from what had been promised by President Abulfaz Elçibay on August 9?

I moreover called his attention to the fact that Baku was clearly delaying the submission of specific comments on Russia's proposals that seemed to have been on the whole approved by them. The same was the case with the proposals of June 12 on the urgent measures for the de-escalation of the armed conflict and gradual normalisation of the life of civilian population, as well as with the schedule of specific measures proposed by us concerning preparation for the suspension of hostilities. Incidentally, respective comments on both documents had already been received from Yerevan and Stepanakert – the Azeri leadership alone kept silence on that matter.

First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Anatoly L. Adamishin had also developed doubts concerning Mekhtiev's proposals. On the one hand, direct contacts between the conflicting parties were still rare, and we decided all the same to organise a top-level meeting in Moscow.

On August 7-8, 1992, on the premises of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the first time since the outbreak of the conflict, a meeting was held between the personal representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents, Nadyr Mekhtiev and David Shakhnazaryan. Mekhtiev and I had just

returned together from Rome (the protracted round of the Minsk Group negotiations had even compelled us to move the meeting in Moscow from August 6 to August 7) and Shakhnazaryan had specially arrived for that meeting from Yerevan.

However, the agenda for their discussions during those two days was drastically narrowed in comparison to what Mekhtiev had himself been proposing in Rome, which once again confirmed our doubts regarding that partner. With our assistance, the parties drew up a draft agreement 'On Measures for Achieving Ceasefire And Suspension of Hostilities in the Northern Regions along the Armenian-Azeri Border.' Despite its obvious verbosity, the full title of that draft agreement immediately defined the final objective – 'with a view to create conditions necessary for launching a peace process in Nagorno-Karabakh.' That agreement was due to be signed in Sochi around August 18-20 and take effect on August 22, which would be the first step towards settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

The agreed arrangements concerned a significant section of the border (roughly 300 km), where clashes and bombardments were frequent. They envisaged the creation of a mixed commission consisting of representatives of the parties at war and of Russia as the mediator, which would meet alternately in Barda and Taz, as well as invitation of CSCE observers. Mekhtiev tried to achieve the inclusion of Nakhichevan in the agreement as well, but that was postponed. Later inclusion of 'other zones of the conflict', i. e. Nagorno-Karabakh, was contemplated. This was clearly a subterfuge on the part of Baku, as they yet had no intention of curtailing the hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh so far.

The draft agreement was sent to Baku and Yerevan for approval (by coincidence, exactly on August 8 the Azeris seized a small Armenian enclave of Artsvashen). After preliminary approval, Azerbaijan and Armenia had to inform the CSCE Chair-in-Office and the President of the Minsk Conference of their readiness to sign such an agreement a few days later and request urgent dispatching of observers from the United States, Russia, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Czechoslovakia. Simultaneously, they were to address a request to Andrei V. Kozyrev and James Baker for assistance with a prompt decision on that issue by the CSCE.

Mekhtiev and Shakhnazaryan proceeded from the assumption that Russia could be the first to give a positive response and send its observers under the CSCE auspices, which would result in immediate (within two days after the ceasefire) dispatching of a Russian forward group of observers to that sector of the border. We all had an idealistic image of the CSCE, presuming that it was possible to coordinate in Vienna the dispatch of observers so promptly.

As ever, odd incidents were not to be avoided. The representatives of both presidents lodged a claim with Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning an information leak concerning their meeting in Moscow, since that could trigger off protests by the 'ultra-patriotic' opposition forces in Baku and Yerevan. They urgently requested prevention of possible further leaks until the signing of the agreement.

But things did not get that far – some far more serious problems had surfaced: Baku simply defaulted on its commitment to reply to the proposal to sign the agreement. The Armenians demonstrated remarkable cooperativeness but were less surprised with Baku's position than I was. The reason was not only the chaos ruling within Elçibay's administration but also the jealousy on the part of Foreign Minister Tofik Gasymov regarding anything perceived by him as intervention into the domain which he considered to be exclusively his own (though Mekhtiev had the status of representative of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic). The same situation repeated twice in early 1993, that time with Hikmet Hajizade.

## **A Fit of the Blues: Was the Minsk Group Created for the Sake of the Peaceful Settlement or Vice Versa?**

The autumn of 1992 stuck in my memory as marked by continued efforts of the Minsk Group to achieve a suspension of the hostilities and by two 'side' attempts at stopping the bloodshed without its involvement (in Alma-Ata, August 27, and in Sochi, September 19). The impulse to wind down hostilities was praiseworthy in itself and the general vector of efforts – correct, but the realisation was unsuccessful and the rapid failure of the Alma-Ata Memorandum and the Sochi Agreement was even instructive in a way.

For the Minsk Group the ceasefire arrangements achieved in Alma-Ata, though affecting solely the Armenian-Azeri border, clearly came as a surprise. Nursultan Nazarbayev had ostensibly made it clear to the Armenians that his initiative was part of the Minsk Group's efforts and allegedly coordinated with Boris Yeltsin, but this is hardly so. It is true that on August 25 Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Rustam Kurmanguzhin informed me in confidence over the high-frequency telephone line of his president's initiative and the coming meetings, first of the foreign ministers, then between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The aim of the Kazakhstani initiative was to achieve a suspension of military operations and the separation of the opposing forces. But he explicitly refrained from more substantive explanations and closer cooperation.

The reaction to the Alma-Ata Memorandum within the Minsk Group was mixed.

Based on the understanding of what was crucial (any winding down of military operations would have meant progress in our cause), the Russian delegation was basically in favour of that endeavour, even though its drawbacks were obvious. For us it made no vital difference who would achieve

progress, if only achieved it were! If only it were done in a competent and lasting manner, though the latter depended to a greater degree on the parties than on the mediator. Anyone who believed that the crucial goal was to stop the bloodshed could not possibly feel jealous about the Alma-Ata Memorandum.

Conceptually, we relied on the principle of complementarity and synergy of efforts, instead of someone's monopoly in the peace process. The CSCE itself was guided by the same presumption in its decisions on Karabakh: it explicitly called upon the countries of the region, especially Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, to proceed with their endeavours aimed at achieving a ceasefire and facilitating talks within the CSCE framework. Complementary efforts were welcomed in the resolutions of the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO on February 8, 1992 and the additional meeting of the CSCE Council in Helsinki of March 24, 1992 (Paragraph 6).

When several mediators are involved, mutual assistance is necessary, especially, support of all efforts of those who have achieved progress, not jealousy, still less obstruction of them. But this is an idealistic point of view. In politics and diplomacy progress is assured by those who sincerely strive for the desired result, and not for passing gains under the guise of mediation. Besides, it is seldom possible to resolve the conflict at one fell swoop. Therefore, one cannot miss opportunities to achieve its de-escalation, gradual downscaling, and incremental progress, even if achieved by a different intermediary.

Moscow was also working on achieving a cessation of the fighting along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This included the above-mentioned meeting between the personal representatives of the Azerbaijani and the Armenian presidents – Nadyr Mekhtiev and David Shakhnazaryan – held at the Russian Foreign Ministry's headquarters on August 7-8, 1992 (three weeks before the Alma-Ata meeting), and the draft agreement concerning the situation along the Armenian-Azeri border that they negotiated with our assistance.

Unfortunately, Elçibay's team had backed out of these arrangements. Mekhtiev hinted to me on August 21 that it was Foreign Minister Tofiq Gasyimov that had taken a firm stand against it. In Alma-Ata, David Shakhnaz-

aryan reminded both of them of what had been agreed in Moscow, but the then Azeri Foreign Minister Gasymov was strongly against this (he altogether opposed Moscow's involvement as a mediator, disapproving of Mekhtiev's and Hajizade's contacts with Russia. Hence, the invitation to Kazakhstan welcoming its involvement. Gasymov did not even wish the memorandum to contain reference to the Zheleznovodsk meeting, since Nazarbajev was there together with Yeltsin).

But let us get back to Alma-Ata. Some of the preliminary arrangements sketched in Moscow might have possibly come in handy for the parties. But still, the memorandum had not been sufficiently elaborated, not clear-cut in terms of fixing the arrangements. The Azerbaijani and Armenian ministers 'confirmed the willingness of their countries to cease military actions starting with September 1, in accordance with the appeal by the CSCE, and to take practical steps for the realisation of its provisions.' That is to say, it was not a question of the cessation of hostilities but merely of the willingness to implement it. The memorandum did not contain a single word to indicate that that would pertain only to the Armenian-Azeri border and not to the main front in Nagorno-Karabakh. There were two more meetings of the parties: on September 3 in Ijevan a protocol was signed to the effect that the Alma-Ata arrangement was allegedly being implemented. But fighting continued in the border region as well. Matters never came to the planned summit meetings of the three presidents.

The reference declaring that 'the mediatory efforts of the Republic of Kazakhstan were undertaken in the context of the peacemaking efforts of the CSCE, its Minsk Group, in line with the spirit and the principles of that organisation' did not spare the parties to the memorandum from the harsh criticism coming from the Western members of the Minsk Group, particularly the Italians and the Americans, who were greatly concerned with the reputation of the Minsk Group or, to be more precise, with their own role in the Karabakh settlement.

They gave vent to their annoyance in the course of informal consultations at the fifth Minsk Group round, held in Rome on September 7-10. Alma-Ata, they said, had muddled up the situation: the mass media perceived the memorandum as the achievement of a general ceasefire; it only covered

some 5% of the current issues but, in their view, jeopardised the settlement as a whole. The Western partners were against dispatching CSCE observers to the border area. Maresca perceived what had taken place in Alma-Ata as erosion of credibility of the CSCE Minsk Group – what would have been its role then? According to him, only the Minsk Group could provide a positive solution, while the Alma-Ata initiative should either become part of it or be pushed aside.

Azerbaijan came under sharp criticism, as Elçibay still withheld his consent to a suspension of hostilities in Karabakh for 60 days and had, furthermore, agreed to the border arrangements bypassing the Minsk Group. It was no coincidence that in that context the bombings of the residential quarters of Stepanakert and other violations of humanitarian law by Azerbaijan had drawn more attention from the Western diplomats than was usually the case. Maresca was all 'geared up' to squeeze consent to a suspension of hostilities out of Baku. It was arranged that Elçibay would be again addressed on that score. An appeal to him to stop the bombings was being drafted. The blame for a deadlock in which the Minsk Group found itself was falling upon the Azeris. Their position at the Rome meeting grew visibly more complicated.

And yet they were rescued by... the Armenians. Having upset the situation which was indeed advantageous for them, they again began to press for a 'minor' status for Nagorno-Karabakh, this time themselves becoming a target of criticism. The Karabakhians disapproved of the Alma-Ata meeting as they were not represented there.

All this meant that the first crisis in the history of the Minsk Group was looming. Incidentally, the Italians complained that they had already wasted roughly \$2 million on organising meetings in Rome with no tangible results achieved through them.

A still greater surprise for the Westerners (though quite unexpected for me, too) was the agreement made in Sochi on September 19, 1992 by the defence ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Rahim Gaziev and Vazgen Sargsyan, with the assistance of Pavel S. Grachev, Viktor P. Barannikov and Tengiz Kitovani (a total of five signatures were put under it), on a provisional ceasefire applicable in respect of all types of weapons, taking effect at midnight September 25 to 26. A 'moratorium on all kinds of military activity



between the Armenian Republic and the Republic of Azerbaijan along the entire line of state frontier and in the Nagorno-Karabakh area for the duration of two months' was declared. A stage-by-stage withdrawal of armed units and all types of armaments was planned. It was agreed that protocols on the mechanism for the withdrawal of the units and monitoring the implementations of the arrangements would be exchanged by the date of the ceasefire.

The 'signatories' requested from the governments of Russia, Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan to send observers who would be deployed in the border area and on the Nagorno-Karabakh territory after the cessation of fire, along with representatives of the two sides to supervise the observance of the agreement. The parties pledged to assign a contingent of servicemen to accompany the group of observers and representatives of the parties to ensure their personal security. It was stipulated that, at the suggestion of the observers and with the consent of the parties, peacekeeping forces were to be brought in if necessary. Without going into specific details, a provision was also made to submit proposals to the national leaders for them to hold consultative meetings and formulate political decisions on the settlement of the conflict.

The responsibility for violations of the agreement was to be determined by the council of observers (two representatives from each observer party). The council was to establish its ground rules on its own at the first session.

The Sochi Agreement was a product of uncoordinated initiative on the part of the Russian Defence Ministry, and personally of Pavel Sergeyevich Grachev, along with his trusted milieu. He was rather opinionated, the role of a peacemaker clearly flattered his self-esteem. Boris Yeltsin's harum-scarum way of handling matters is evidenced by the fact that his personal representative on the Karabakh conflict, head of Russia's mediatory mission (pardon me for speaking of myself in the third person) arrived by plane in Baku on September 16 to pass on to President Abulfaz Elçibay a personal message from the president of Russia, all unaware of the fact that Grachev was already convoking the Azerbaijani and the Armenian defence ministers in Sochi. Neither the initiative to conclude such an agreement nor its substance, nor again the list of parties thereto had been discussed with Russia's Foreign Ministry. The list of parties was even somewhat odd, as if signatures had been

collected from all those random people who were hanging around there together.

Upon my arrival at the Bina airport in Baku, I accidentally came across and made acquaintance with the Azeri Defence Minister Rahim Gaziev, who was on his way to depart for somewhere. I was not in the position to ask where he was heading for – defence ministers have a lot of affairs to attend to and a good many of them may be of a sensitive nature. Neither he, nor Elçibay had made any mention of the meeting in Sochi when talking to me. Nor were they obliged to. They may have well believed that the Russians had ‘the head in charge of all of the body’s movements’, so to speak, and coordinating them... If only that had been really so!

It is not a question of resentment or jealousy but of sheer chaos as far as management of the state affairs is concerned. Characteristically, despite our repeated requests, the Ministry of Defence delayed with passing on the text of the Sochi Agreement to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – we sooner managed to obtain it from the conflicting parties!

The agreement took no account of the efforts undertaken within the CSCE, nor did it provide for the assigning of observers under its auspices and at its expense. The Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian community was altogether overlooked by it. A number of provisions were not phrased with sufficient clearness, which could potentially result in problems with their implementation. There was even a diplomatic gem in the text – an appeal (without prior consultations) to Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to send observers from their countries (Georgia had at least been represented in Sochi by Tengiz Kitovani). Little wonder it was that Kiev, Minsk, Alma-Ata and Tbilisi not only refused to send observers, but were also utterly surprised to receive such an appeal without any previous negotiations.

Yet at the Defence Ministry all arrangements had been made in order to dispatch 50 or 56 observers (I do not remember the exact number) to the conflict zone in a week’s time. On September 25-26 Moscow hosted a meeting of military representatives from Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, and a corresponding protocol was signed. On the same night the observers were dispatched to the conflict zone and stayed there for about a fortnight. Alas, the ceasefire was not achieved and they had to be recalled.

The enviable operational efficiency demonstrated by the Ministry of Defence in deploying its observers represented a stark contrast with the replies that we used to receive from them when asking to assign a group of military observers in connection with the preparations for ceasefire agreements in Karabakh. Ordinarily, First Deputy Minister of Defence, Chief of the General Staff M. P. Kolesnikov would formally reply to us that this matter could only be examined after a sustainable and lasting ceasefire is achieved. That is to say, it was inappropriate for them even to examine that matter in advance, as the circumstances of an armed conflict required. Such was the case with many requests from us! But once their own minister turned peace-keeper had requested that, everything was arranged in no time – the observers were already in place!

Nonetheless, before the Sochi Agreement crumbled completely, due to the non-observance of the suspension of hostilities, we had made an attempt at rescuing it. We suggested that it should be regarded as a purely military-logistical agreement (as it should have been, had it not been for the defence minister's ambitions) and 'overlapped' by another, a truly political one, eliminating the deficiencies of the former.

## The Early 1993

It will be recalled that in 1992 the Minsk Group had twice (in July and August) called upon the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh to suspend hostilities first for a period of 30 and, later, 60 days. After our prolonged correspondence with Mario Raffaelli, in November 1992 President Abulfaz Elçibay finally agreed to a 60-day suspension of fire demanding, however, a 'withdrawal of the foreign troops from Nagorno-Karabakh and the Lachin zone during that suspension period but before the opening of the Minsk Conference (Yerevan and Stepanakert on second try indicated their consent to a 60-day suspension, later confirming it).

Thus, since the late 1992 Mario Raffaelli had the consent of all the parties for the date of a 60-day suspension of hostilities to be fixed, but he avoided taking the risk of enforcing it (there was no certainty in the seriousness of the parties' commitments and the issue of CSCE observers was still unresolved).

Then, at the suggestion of Yerevan, in order to give renewed impetus to the work of the Minsk Group, meetings were henceforth held with a more restricted attendance (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, USA and Turkey – the so-called 'Five'). On December 7-9, 1992, at one such meeting in Geneva, vital arrangements were reached on the schedule of activities and the CSCE observers' mandate. However, in a week's time, on December 14, in Stockholm, upon the pretext of incidents at the border with Armenia and with Turkey's endorsement, the Azeris retracted them.

The situation in Azerbaijan and, even more so in Armenia, in the winter of 1992-93 was critical. Baku was refusing a ceasefire in the belief that the Armenian side would not make it through the extremely harsh winter. The Azeris felt disillusioned with the CSCE. Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry criticised 'the emerging Azerbaijani diplomacy' for supporting the Minsk Conference mandate of March 24, 1992.

On January 3, 1993 the presidents of Russia and the USA adopted a joint statement on Nagorno-Karabakh. On January 7 came Abulfaz Elçibay's reaction to it: it was positive but not too constructive, while the Armenian President and the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership responded somewhat more flexibly.

At a meeting held in Moscow on January 5-8, 1993 in the '5+1' format ('the Five' were joined by the Italian Chairman of the Minsk Group), the representatives of Baku and Ankara attempted to pursue the policy of separating 'the Five' from the Minsk Group, pressing for an agreement between the five countries on guarantees of some uncertain future arrangements between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia to be extended by Russia, the USA and Turkey. This did not meet with support from the rest, and so they began to disrupt work: Baku failed to approve both documents agreed upon in Moscow (the draft statement by the 11 foreign ministers for their meeting in Paris and the draft mandate by observers).

In Moscow we raised a question of the need to ensure the stability of the peace process despite fluctuations in the military situation. A draft calendar of mutually coordinated measures (from the suspension of hostilities to the opening of the Minsk Conference) and other initiatives proposed by us were submitted to the parties.

The Turks immediately tried to fix the next meeting to be held in Istanbul on January 20-21, but Russia and Armenia backed out of it and that had to be cancelled. Whereupon Mario Raffaelli was able to make a tour of the region that had been planned for those dates. On January 21 he visited Ankara, on January 22-24 – Baku, on January 24 – Yerevan, on the 25<sup>th</sup> – Moscow and on the 26<sup>th</sup> – Stockholm where he met with the CSCE Chair-in-Office. At Baku's request he postponed the Minsk Group meeting in Rome from January 28-30 to February 22-25, 1993. In Moscow Raffaelli was received by Andrei Kozyrev. Anatoly Adamishin met with him for a breakfast. The Italian diplomat expressed his high opinion of Russia's mediatory efforts and its constructive contribution to the work of the CSCE Minsk Group. Later on, Mr. Raffaelli documented his appreciation of Russia's role in the peaceful settlement in Karabakh.

As early as on January 21, the Italians informed us that Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Tuleutai Suleimenov wished to send his own observer to the

Minsk Group meeting, inquiring the opinion of the Minsk Group members on that score. We declared that we welcomed his involvement. However, Rome, in collusion with Washington, denied this right to Kazakhstan, even though the latter had twice become involved in the Karabakh peace process.

(This did not prevent Finland, Switzerland and other Western countries from later becoming fully-fledged members of the Minsk Group. In my conversations with the Italian diplomats I pointed to their contrasting approaches. This could possibly account for Rome's reserve in relation to Britain when the latter sounded the possibilities of acceding to the Minsk Group. After declining to take part in the Minsk Conference in 1992, the UK was the only major power in Europe remaining outside the Minsk Group, despite having its own interests in the region).

The meeting of 'the Five' in Rome on February 22 was expected to lay the foundation for the session of the Minsk Group held there on February 26 which marked, in fact, its reanimation after a six-month break (since September 1992). The delegates were to discuss the fine-tuned drafts of three documents: the statement by the foreign ministers of the 11 Minsk Group member states and the mandate of the forward CSCE group of observers (both had been discussed and adopted in Moscow on January 5-8, 1993, but failed to receive approval in Baku), as well as a comprehensive calendar of the Minsk process. The easiest of the three seemed to be the modest draft mandate, which had already been discussed more than once at various CSCE forums and at informal meetings of 'the Five'. Notably, it had been fully approved by 'the Five' earlier in Geneva with Gasymov's personal participation. It was not without effort that he was persuaded to begin the process of consensus building with the draft mandate, which still had chances of going through. Nevertheless, Gasymov put forward a number of fresh demands, some of which were admittedly unacceptable for the Armenians (for instance, speedy disarmament and the disbandment of 'the irregular groups,' i. e. 'the Nagorno-Karabakh self-defence forces,' even prior to the Minsk Conference). Besides, he brought forward alternative drafts of the statement by the ministers and of the calendar and, additionally, a draft agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the termination of the conflict. The Armenians likewise put up certain obstacles during the discussion, but were noticeably more flexible.

After heated discussions lasting for many hours on end— several rounds of discussing the same matters over and over again, during the night of February 26 it became clear that finding solutions to two or three crucial issues was not possible.

Everything worked out relatively well. For the first time substantial progress was achieved. However, in Rome the matters practically never reached the point of discussing other documents. In a brief interview to M. Ilyinsky (Izvestia, March 3, 1993) I had the following to say:

‘The meeting in Rome was held amidst the aggravation of the conflict, certain destabilisation of the situation in both Azerbaijan and Armenia, which was caused by the military defeats of the Azeri side and the harsh winter in the blockaded Armenia.

Despite the difficulties that kept arising, the Minsk Group approved the draft mandate of the forward observer group to be submitted for consideration by the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials. The Minsk Group intended to negotiate in the near future a calendar of balanced and mutually coordinated political and military/technical measures that would make it possible to put a ceasefire into effect and embark upon a full-scale settlement of this long-drawn-out and obdurate conflict.

At the Rome session the Russian delegation brought forth a number of specific proposals, notably one concerning a calendar of measures for the termination of hostilities and proposals on the operational rules of settlement.

Curiously, on March 11 the ‘Presidium of the Nagorno-Karabakh Supreme Council’, after hearing a report by the head of its delegation B. S. Arushanyan and a delegation member G. Hachatryan on the February 26 – March 2 session in Rome, noted that ‘the delegations participating in the work of inter-governmental organisations are obliged to observe the state policy of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh’ and tasked [the NKR government bodies] to develop and approving documents for all such events involving Nagorno-Karabakh.

## Heydar Aliyev – In Moscow Again

During the first ten days of February 1993 I got a phone call from Heydar A. Aliyev, President of the Supreme Council of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. He told me about the dire economic situation in the enclave. The nine months of the blockade had aggravated the shortages of foodstuffs; flour and fuel oil had become particularly scarce. The republic was receiving food supplies from Iran, but in most insufficient quantities. A small amount of electricity was likewise supplied from there. 70-80% of the forests had been cut down for firewood. The credit extended by Turkey was running out. Mr. Aliyev wrote a letter to Bill Clinton asking for aid. It was apparently on the latter's instruction that the US Ambassador Richard Miles arrived from Baku to Nakhichevan on February 4 on a fact-finding mission. But as for the military and political situation there, that was described by Heydar Aliyev as more or less tolerable. At the end of the conversation he informed me that he would soon come to Moscow to visit his ailing daughter and would possibly meet Abulfaz Elçibay for the first time while passing through Baku. Consequently, we arranged to meet and talk upon his arrival.

Upon his arrival in Moscow Heydar Aliyev phoned me and confirmed that on February 13 he had a conversation with the Azerbaijani president, and a very long (about 4 hours long) and rather meaningful one it was, according to him.

On February 15 I wrote a draft memo addressed to my minister on behalf of his First Deputy Anatoly L. Adamishin, proposing to meet with Heydar Aliyev at a high level (options included: Alexander V. Rutskoï, Andrei V. Kozyrev, Sergey M. Shakhrai, Arkadi I. Volsky) and also to arrange a breakfast with him on my behalf as the head of Russia's mediatory mission. In that memo I called attention to the weight Heydar Aliyev had on Azerbaijan's political arena (both because of his status and because of him being a figure



well known in the USSR). I noted that he was maintaining relatively normal relations with Armenia and keeping contact with its leadership (albeit low-key and sometimes through us). I mentioned his complicated relations with the president of Azerbaijan and his meetings in Baku with Abulfaz Elçibay and the speaker of the Azerbaijan Milli Meclis Isa Gambarov (who had got rid of his Russified surname and was now known as Isa Gambar).

I stressed that, despite his 70 years of age, Heydar Aliyev had retained political ambitions, while the *New Azerbaijan* party founded by him had fair chances of winning the upcoming parliamentary elections. I mentioned that he was ready to meet confidentially with representatives of Russia's top leadership (although he had asked it to be taken into consideration that his visit to Moscow was viewed with certain jealousy in Baku, where he was believed to be an 'agent of Moscow'.)

But despite all my reasoning, Anatoly Leonidovich Adamishin was skeptical about the advisability of meeting with Heydar Aliyev in the proposed format, he marked the draft of the memo as 'Not sure' and chose not to submit it to the minister.

Luckily, I had one other supervisor, who was specifically in charge of country studies – Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin, another Deputy Minister who was in charge of the Trans-Caucasus region at the time (and who is currently Russia's ambassador to the United Nations). I had amended the draft memo – this time on his behalf – turning it into a more modest request: should the minister OK it, we would just try to find out if Sergey M. Shakhrai would be willing to meet with Heydar Aliyev.

Churkin signed the memo and, on the following day, February 16, he received Kozyrev's angry scribble, with no remarks on the merits of the proposal. The minister's assistants had barely managed to decipher his inscription addressed to Churkin: 'I ask you to submit papers with clearly phrased requests and deadlines for proposed events, not riddles.'

It was not quite clear why this had provoked such irritation in response, but the meeting with Heydar Aliyev at a proper level had been aborted. All that was still possible was to arrange a lunch for him on my behalf. Vitaly Ivanovich, who had practically been let down by me but who was also puzzled, put his 'I approve' on a note requesting a breakfast with Aliyev to be arranged.

I dare not ascribe Adamishin's hesitation and Kozyrev's irritation to the fact that they may have known about Boris N. Yeltsin's aversion towards Heydar Aliyev, but neither can I safely rule out this possibility. It is well known that in his book *'Against the Grain: An Autobiography'* the future president of Russia pulled no punches in describing Heydar Aliyev. He wrote that Gorbachev *'was long reluctant to deal with the issue of Heydar A. Aliyev, whereas it had already become clear to all that it was simply impossible to keep that man, mired as he was in petty and major sordid dealings, in the Politbureau. I had specifically come to Gorbachev with a file of documents and spent almost an hour trying to convince him: 'Mikhail Sergeyeovich, it is a disgrace to sit next to him, we cannot discredit the Politbureau that far.' He never heeded me. True, Mr. Aliyev was finally dismissed into honorary retirement with a merit pension. But why did it take so long to solve this blatant problem which had only one obvious solution?'*

I phoned Aliyev to invite him to the Russian Foreign Ministry's mansion at Spiridonovka street (right near the house where his daughter lived) for a lunch. Accepting the invitation, Heydar Aliyevich hinted that it would be worth inviting someone from Boris Yeltsin's secretariat in view of the interest that might be generated by his first conversation with Abulfaz Elçibay in Baku.

This aspect would have been of greater interest to Dmitry Borisovich Ryurikov, the president's assistant for international affairs. He had chosen not to reply to my invitation to take part in our breakfast straight away, apparently deeming it better to report the matter to or consult his superiors), but later called me back and shied away from it.

The next day, an hour or so before 1 pm – the schedule hour of the lunch, I went to the minister's secretariat on some business or other only to find everyone there literally in a turmoil: the staff were trying to ascertain who had arranged a breakfast with Heydar Aliyev. They explained to me later that the minister had just received a call from the president's assistant Viktor Vasilyevich Ilyushin pouring out his resentment regarding the fact that someone at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had come up with an idea of honouring Heydar Aliyev by arranging a breakfast for him, and ordering to cancel it. Andrei Kozyrev and his apparatus had already forgotten yesterday's memo

from Churkin, while the latter had not reported to the minister about the meeting planned (his deputy's assent would have sufficed for it). Purely accidentally I caught them right in the middle of that turmoil of trying to sort this out.

My admitting to having arranged the lunch meeting made things a great deal easier for them but more difficult for me in a lot of ways. My colleagues would not listen to my reasoning that the invitation had already been extended and the guest was expected at the mansion in about an hour and a half, demanding that the event be cancelled right away. My attempts to explain the situation to the minister was quickly smothered by the peremptory tone of his assistants. I had to retreat, though I was by no means pleased to do so.

I now urgently needed to find and intercept Heydar Aliyev. The easiest solution was perhaps to claim that no one from the president's secretariat was able to make it on that day, as an excuse, and to suggest putting the meeting off until a later date.

I rang up his daughter's home number and she told me that her father was somewhere out in town and would only return in the afternoon. The only thing that I could do was to drive up to the place agreed and meet him in front of the mansion, ahead of the arranged time, offering him my version of excuses right there on the street. Still, all that was most embarrassing, verging on impropriety...

I was already about to set off for Spiridonovka when Heydar Aliyevich himself phoned me suddenly. It turned out that, speaking on the phone to his daughter, he had learnt that I was looking for him. In the most delicate way I could I suggested to him that we postpone our meeting and get in touch with each other by phone later on. But Mr. Aliyev soon returned to Nakhichevan.

Next time we saw each other was in Ankara on April 20-22, 1993, at the funeral ceremony of the Turkish President Turgut Özal. Among the foreign guests attending it were both Abulfaz Elçibay and Heydar Aliyev, as well as Levon Ter-Petrossian, Nursultan Nazarbaev and others. As for me, I was a member of the Russian delegation headed by Vice-Premier Georgy Khizha.

As the funeral procession moved along the streets of Ankara, I deliberately chose to walk side by side with Heydar Aliyevich. I wished to explain to him the circumstances of the breakdown of our meeting in Moscow as

closely to the truth as possible. But he restrained me almost in the middle of a sentence: 'I understand everything – after all, I have many years in politics behind.' There seemed to be no bitterness of any kind in his words, at least towards me.. Or, perhaps, he was really good at concealing it. We continued to be on fairly good terms with each other for a long time after that, sometimes making phone calls to each other over the Moscow-Nakhichevan high-frequency telephone line. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turgut\\_Ä-zal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turgut_Ä-zal)

In June 1993, Heydar Aliyev even surpassed my modest forecast: he returned to power in Baku. Some time later I reminded my superiors about that whole ludicrous episode involving a clearly counterproductive cancellation of the meeting in Moscow. They had come to realise it themselves but could not possibly repine, much less so – disobey, for Boris Yeltsin was still omnipotent.

It remains somewhat unclear what exactly happened after Dmitry Ryurikov reported to his superior about my invitation to a breakfast with Heydar Aliyev. It may well be that Viktor Ilyushin had in his turn reported this to Boris Yeltsin and was ordered to drop the idea of 'honouring Aliyev.' It is also possible that being aware of the president's stance on that matter, he had himself decided to make an angry call to the foreign minister. As a matter of fact, this makes no fundamental difference. Whatever the case, this was of no benefit to us but had definitely resulted in a certain amount of damage.

Here is all the more reason to consider just how justified it is to determine state policies solely on the basis of personal judgement or whims of a chief executive. Unfortunately, we have not learnt other ways as yet!

## The Russian-Turkish Initiative and Its Collapse

The Karabakh settlement had presented a lot of instructive elements worthy of being considered in other cases, too. For example, rather curious is the story of Russia's and Turkey's joint initiative that was never realised – a joint trip by Andrei V. Kozyrev and Hikmet Cetin to the conflict region with the sole aim of achieving a ceasefire.

Whilst the meeting of the Minsk Group, where we got bogged down in disputes over the calendar of peace keeping operations, was underway in Rome (February 22 – March 1, 1993), on March 1 Andrei V. Kozyrev received Turkey's Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin in Moscow. His guest spoke to him about the utility of cooperation between the two countries regarding the settlement of conflicts in Bosnia and Nagorno-Karabakh, proposing even to institutionalise somehow the cooperation between the two countries and their joint responsibility for the security in these regions. Both Russia and Turkey, Cetin said, were more than anyone else interested and able to successfully cope with those conflict situations which defied settlement on a multi-lateral basis. He was skeptical about efforts at the level of experts as far as settlement in the Karabakh conflict was concerned and proposed, to rely on the political authority of the leaders of the two countries and undertake joint high-level efforts, possibly in the form of visits to Baku and Yerevan, so as to secure a ceasefire at the political level and continue the discussion of other problems of the settlement at the logistic level.

Rather unexpectedly, Kozyrev agreed to visit Baku and Yerevan together with him, adding: 'And, possibly, Stepanakert too' (Cetin had no intention of going there). He proposed to begin bilateral consultations at the senior experts' level straight away and suggested me as such an expert. Pleased with his consent, Cetin said: 'If we manage to achieve at least a ceasefire, this alone will mean great progress.' And he invited Kazimirov to Ankara to begin the

consultations. Cetin proposed to announce a plan of the visit, but Kozyrev suggested that it should first be developed in detail.

To be frank, Kozyrev's consent to travel to the conflict region together with Cetin surprised me a lot. Since the session of 'the Eight' in Rome in July 1992, a wealth of evidence had appeared proving that Ankara was unable to play a constructive role in the Karabakh affairs. Exactly three weeks earlier, on February 9, I had expressly invited Turkey's Ambassador in Russia Volkan Vural to come over, in order to address, – with reference to the understanding on closer interaction in the framework of the peaceful settlement in Karabakh reached earlier, – a number of reproaches to the Turkish diplomats (a manifest bias in favour of Baku, the unreliability in our interaction, attempts to wrench 'the Five' from the Minsk Group, deliberate delays with answering our proposals, and failure to use their capacities for prompting the emerging Baku diplomacy). Naturally, I reported to our Ministry's superiors about that conversation.

But it is the ministers who make decisions, not the ambassadors. Kozyrev instructed us to urgently submit a plan for the implementation of the Russian-Turkish initiative. Of course, had the ministers secured prompt and unconditional ceasefire, this would have made it possible to consider the problems related to the settlement under more favourable conditions. But, considering the experience of the earlier, unrealized, ceasefire arrangements, it was necessary for all the parties to approach the task of resolving that key problem with full responsibility.

Cetin enthusiastically launched teeming activity. At a press conference held at the press centre of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the same day he hastened to announce the idea to a wider public, although nothing had been finalized yet. He immediately left for Baku with a view to preparing a joint tour. In a follow-up to that visit he informed Moscow, Washington, Paris and London that Azerbaijani President Abulfaz Elçibay welcomed in principle the initiative of Russia and Turkey.

In an interview to the Turkish *Hürriyet* newspaper Elçibay declared that Cetin's work for the settlement of the Karabakh crisis deserved to be awarded a Nobel Peace Prize and proposed that the United States come forth as a guarantor of the ceasefire agreement, along with Turkey and Russia. In that

interview he set no conditions for a ceasefire, save the need for a mechanism for its monitoring.

However, on March 10 the US embassy in Ankara sent to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs the State Department's reservations concerning the Kozyrev-Cetin initiative. On the following day, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher expressed the same doubts in a phone call to Cetin himself. The latter defended himself by saying that this initiative was aimed not at undermining the Minsk process but rather at giving it renewed impetus, being primarily oriented on achieving the suspension of hostilities. In order to iron out the tricky situation, Cetin welcomed possible US involvement in this initiative in some form or other. After that, Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to press me to come to Ankara as soon as possible.

Before beginning consultations with our Turkish partners, I informed Kozyrev that, unless I got instructions to the contrary, I intended to focus all my efforts on achieving an unconditional ceasefire and suggest to the Turkish partners that they work more closely with Baku, it being understood that we shall work with Yerevan and Stepanakert. The minister approved of this. On March 15 we sent two documents to Ankara: a succinct one for the ministers and a more expanded one for experts. Both contained a provision for political and organisational measures in preparation for a ceasefire, steps towards the de-escalation of hostilities, formalisation of the cessation of fire, military and hostile actions, as well as measures to ensure its maintenance.

An appointment with Turkish experts could no longer be arranged in Ankara, as from March 18 to March 23 both them and us had to be in Geneva at the informal '5+1' consultations. It was there that consultations and discussions (in several stages, one of them lasting for five hours) of the Russian-Turkish initiative took place between us and Ambassador Selçuk Korkud and Head of Trans-Caucasus Department at Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Candan Azer.

All of a sudden, we were confronted with quite a different picture than the one that Mr. Cetin used to depict in Moscow. Now, in the Turkish diplomats' interpretation, the goal of the joint trip by the two ministers was not only to achieve a ceasefire but something else as well – the withdrawal of the Armenian forces from the occupied territories. In practice that brought the

matter back to the well-known demands of Azerbaijan, the principal of which was the withdrawal of the Armenian armed units from the Lachin zone in exchange for a promise to allow humanitarian assistance from Armenia through the corridor under the CSCE supervision (although it was precisely the Lachin issue that had previously been an obstacle to agreeing upon the calendar of mutually coordinated arrangements for the period following the suspension of hostilities).

In Geneva, the approach of the five participants in the Russian-Turkish initiative was already beginning to emerge. Azerbaijan was biding its time, demonstrating interest not so much in a ceasefire as in enhancing Turkey's role in these matters. For that very reason, Armenia took a sharply negative stand. Despite the obvious risk, the Turks were exciting expectations concerning the planned trip. The United States feared that this initiative could become disconnected from the Minsk process, becoming a factor of its own. And we alone were concerned with building a realistic basis for the ministers' trip.

In the meantime, I got a message from Moscow that Cetin, in his letter to Kozyrev of March 16, had made a point that the Russian proposals contained an excessively detailed treatment of the main elements of preparation for, enforcement and maintenance of the ceasefire. In view of this remark, I had to write to Moscow that what was needed was precisely a most detailed treatment of all aspects of the ceasefire – there had been quite enough haphazard attempts to resolve that conflict, enough disruptions due to incomplete treatment of unavoidable issues. The position of Turkish experts helped to shed some light on Cetin's vague formulations to the effect that the document for the trip had to reflect 'fundamental understanding of the main premises for a compromise.' To put it in simpler term, Cetin had, after a visit to Baku, departed from the position taken in Moscow and embarked upon achieving an 'exchange' of a ceasefire for the satisfaction of Azeri demands. It was as if the Armenians alone were interested in putting an end to the bloodshed...

The reasoning of the Turkish colleagues was also curious. Korkud and Azer asserted that by a ceasefire Cetin 'naturally' always understood also the fulfilment of a series of demands, therefore, there could be no question of any unconditional ceasefire. This would have been, said they, tantamount to a 'surrender' of the Azeris; the Armenians presumably had to exchange Lachin



for peace. They called it the 'fundamental element.' They even hinted to us what great risks they themselves were taking by failing to concurrently insist on a withdrawal of the Armenians from Shusha.

It is perfectly obvious that if, with a certain balance of forces on the battlefield in place, one side rejects unconditional ceasefire trying instead to correlate it with the fulfilment of its demands, the side opposing it will act likewise, putting forward demands of its own. It was not hard to guess that in response to the demands concerning Lachin the Armenians would at once make a 'counterclaim' regarding Shahumian and Martakert. Instead of stopping the bloodshed without any conditions in order to examine the vexed problems in a more favourable situation, we would again get bogged down in the search for an extremely intricate balance of interests, in a vicious circle of debate and litigations, while blood would continue to spill. Ankara's steep turn confirmed its unreliability as a partner and immediately called in question the purpose of the two ministers's visit to the zone of conflict.

At the end of March and during the very first days of April, as if by inertia, we still continued our work on the three alternative versions of the final documents in Moscow. The optimistic scenario included preparation of a draft agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the prevention of incidents along the Armenian-Azeri border and the promotion of a peaceful settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Conference; the middle scenario provided for a joint statement by the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan; while the minimum to be achieved envisaged final communiqués on the mission by the two ministers.

On April 4, in Geneva (during the days of the new informal '5+1' consultations), we held one more preparatory meeting with Korkud and Azer, this time in a situation severely complicated by the capture of the Kalbajar district by the Armenians. The partners' mood was far from cheerful but they were still trying to save the two ministers' visit. They almost implored us: it was impossible to renounce that idea, the ministers had assumed a particular commitment, it was under close watch of the public, cancellation would have been tantamount to a collapse, and other arguments to that effect. But now another 'fundamental element' was required for a ceasefire (as they saw it): a withdrawal of the Armenian forces not only from Lachin but also from Kal-

bajar. But this was later followed by something akin to repentance – my counterpart at the Turkish Foreign Ministry in charge of Karabakh affairs, Omer Ersun, once remarked that we'd better act 'as agreed in Moscow.'

The idea of a joint tour was dropped for good soon after the seizure of the Kalbajar district by the Armenian forces and the announcement by Boris Yeltsin on April 8 of Russia's peacemaking initiative (as far as I remember, Kozyrev later set forth his arguments in favour of postponing it until better times in a letter to Cetin). The birth of a child, so long-awaited and widely advertised in advance, never happened, ending in 'a miscarriage.'

This whole story is most instructive in many respects.

First of all, this was a lesson of realism, which is so important in mediation – the indispensability of thorough understanding of what is necessary and sufficient in a specific situation. One has to know the line which is not to be overstepped.

Second, it serves as yet another confirmation of the priority of putting an end to bloodshed (in practically any conflict). No matter what the details of the situation are, one always has to do all that is possible to achieve a cease-fire, put an end to military operations (or, at the very least, suspend the hostilities for any period of time – preferably for a month, two or three). Even in a most unfavourable situation this will be rewarded with allowing to proceed to dealing with other tasks in a calmer, more rational atmosphere (as Cetin himself once aptly put it, 'the rest can be dealt with later.')

The twists and turns of the military situation should not divert from this goal. Any urges recover one's losses at the front first do not bring one closer to it, may result in an escalation of the conflict and in one's own people paying an undoubtedly high price for them.

Third, it is sheer truism that, when seeking a ceasefire, a most detailed work over all aspects of this extremely important and delicate undertaking is necessary, while premature advertising of any steps towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict is not only needless and unwarranted but also, as a rule, contraindicated, because in the event of failure this will yield a completely contrary result.

Fourth, among the primary obstacles to the planned joint trip were the differences between Moscow and Ankara as far as understanding the con-

figuration of the conflict was concerned. Moscow deemed it to be trilateral, while Ankara, playing up to Baku, did not wish to recognise Stepanakert as a legitimate party to the conflict (the reason why Cetin did not want to visit Nagorno-Karabakh and initially disapproved of Kozyrev's visit there even on his own).

Fifth, it is virtually impossible to act as a mediator for someone who is unable to rise above their own bias in respect of the conflicting parties, because links to one of them almost inevitably deforms the basis of the mediatory action, making it unacceptable for the opposing party (thus, the desire to play up to the 'Azeri brothers' had deprived Cetin of a chance to come up with a potentially helpful initiative and somehow enhance Turkey's role in that settlement).

Sure enough, it cannot be said that had the Turks not invented the 'fundamental elements' (had they not tied the Armenian withdrawal from Lachin to the ceasefire), the joint visit by the two ministers would have already taken place, they would have achieved their real goal – a ceasefire – and thereby would have prevented the capture of Kalbajar. There are too many 'ifs' here...

But the logic is correct: a cessation of hostilities is the only effective method of ensuring that no unpleasant surprises occur at the front. Ankara had obviously failed to understand this and was unable to give Baku a piece of sound advice on that score – to persuade it that that chance was not to be missed. Was this due to a request from Baku, when Hikmet Cetin discussed the idea of the two ministers' tour with Abulfaz Elçibay, or perhaps it might have been due to sheer desire to 'oblige'? How come that Cetin always implied in a 'matter-of-fact' manner by unconditional ceasefire also the simultaneous resolution of other issues, all this in the context of an extremely complex range of disputed problems? I leave it all to researchers and historians, Turkish and Azeri ones in the first place.

## **The First Thing to be Achieved is Limitation of Hostilities**

The bulk of the hostilities, especially in terms of offensive operations in Nagorno-Karabakh, fell on 1993. This fact in no way diminishes the significance of the events in Shusha and Lachin (May 1992) and the offensive undertaken by the Azerbaijani army in the same summer on the territory of former NKAO, as well as the fierce fighting between the parties in the winter and spring of 1994, shortly before the truce of May 12.

On the whole, 1993 was marked by military advances of the Armenian side. In late March, the Armenian forces seized Kalbajar district resulting in the creation of a large territory connecting Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. In the summer they laid siege to, and then captured two crucial strongholds of the Azeri forces near Nagorno-Karabakh's eastern borders – the towns of Agdam and Fizuli, and the town of Martakert in the north. Then the Armenian-Karabakh forces surrounded the south-western districts of Azerbaijan (Jabrayil, Zangelan, Qubadli), threatening to reach the border with Iran along the river Arax. In October 1993, taking advantage of a localised violation of the ceasefire regime by the Azeri side, they launched a major offensive and first cut off and then occupied the entire south-west of Azerbaijan.

In the winter of 1993/94, the Azeri troops made a number of attempted counter-offensives. But those had either ended in a failure (notably in Kalbajar district), or had brought only localised success (e. g., in the area of Goradiz, near the Iranian border).

\* \* \*

The first year of the CSCE Minsk Group's operation (since June 1992) demonstrated to us its inability to effectively play the part of a mediator, to

curtail or, at least, contain the spillover of the military conflict involving more and more regions with all the ensuing consequences: the augmenting number of victims and physical destruction, the growing wave of refugees and an increasing danger of internationalisation of the conflict. This was all the more so since other Minsk Group members clearly underestimated the importance of putting an end to the bloodshed, which was so obvious to us. We pursued our work in the framework of that group, striving to rectify its line and opposing the attempts by the West to use that format in their own geopolitical interests, primarily in order to restrict Russia's influence in the Trans-Caucasus.

In this situation we had to reinforce our own mediatory efforts, more actively approach the leadership of the conflicting sides on our own initiative, urging them to contain the flames of war. It is necessary to trace, even if only in bare outlines, the line of our actions aimed at achieving a ceasefire starting from the mid-1993. It goes without saying that in real life they were intertwined with our work within the Minsk Group and may in fact not be understood in isolation from it.

The summer and autumn of 1993 were marked by a whole series of temporary ceasefires or other limitations on hostilities negotiated through Russia's direct mediation. Sometimes they were quickly aborted, sometimes we managed to make them last for a bit longer. This was a time of hopes and disillusionments, nervous strain and depressing fatigue. The tasks we had set initially were not too ambitious – it was important for the parties to become gradually accustomed to the fact that, believe it or not, it was possible not to lob shells or rockets on cities and not to open fire for at least a few days.

I cannot honestly claim that we clearly realised – we rather intuitively felt – that no miracles were to be expected here, that we would not be able to achieve an end to the massive bloodshed at one fell swoop, as Defence Minister Pavel S. Grachev had reckoned in Sochi in September 1992. This had to be achieved through persistent efforts, in defiance of the frequent evasion or even disruptions of armistices, – which were at any rate short-lived at the time, – on the part of the warring sides.

The 'chronicle' of limitations of hostilities and ceasefires in Karabakh may seem rather tedious but, without it, it is hard to understand how it later became possible to secure an extended ceasefire and relative stabilisation of

the situation in the conflict region. The lengthiness of this narrative can only be excused by the fact that each day of limitation or suspension of hostilities saved more than one human life. The account mostly covers the period from the middle of 1993 until May 1994.

It must moreover be mentioned that this period was also marked by a grave internal turmoil in Azerbaijan. Its outlines are widely known: the dramatic resignation of Abulfaz Elçibay and Heydar Aliyev's coming to power with his return from Nakhichevan to Baku in connection with the tumultuous events in Ganja in early June 1993. On June 15 he became Chair of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan and – after Elçibay's fleeing to Keleki on June 18 – the first person in the nation (since June 24 'exercising the powers of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic'). I shall not dwell upon the course of events in Baku (this is another story altogether), but everything that you will find described below was happening in that context.

The Russian mediatory mission had managed to achieve, by its own efforts, the first substantive understanding between the conflicting parties on June 17, 1993 (literally a few hours before Elçibay's flight from Baku). That was a period of fierce fighting in the districts of Martakert, Askeran and Agdam, as well as of persistent mutual accusations of offensives and shelling attacks. Despite the repeated warnings to the Karabakh Armenians (including those coming from Moscow) to refrain from attempts to take advantage of the internal political crisis in Azerbaijan for stepping up military operations, they could not forebear the temptation and launched an offensive on the central front on June 12. (On the eve of it, Surat Huseynov had withdrawn some of 'his' forces from the Karabakh front due to the controversies that had arisen between him and Elçibay after the bloody events of June 4 in Ganja). At that time the Azeri troops actively resorted to shelling attacks on, and air bombardments of, Armenian population centres. Thus, on June 17 Stepanakert came under yet another in the series of heaviest bombings.

The understanding between the parties reached during our telephone conversations with Baku and Stepanakert was a rather modest one but meant a great deal for the population of the two long-suffering towns that had become targets of military hostilities. It was a mutual commitment not to expose the towns of Agdam and Stepanakert/Khankendi to bombardment.

Some time ago I discovered that the documents I had kept – half forgotten but, one might say, having historical significance in respect of this conflict – had begun to hopelessly fade and turn yellow, with no chances of being restored. The text on some pieces of paper is almost impossible to make out now.

Among the means of transmission of texts over long distances available to us in June-July 1993 fax communication was the most up-to-date as well as the swiftest one. Telephone communication – even via high-frequency lines – sufficed only for talking, coaxing and negotiating, but whenever the need arose to formulate proposals more clearly and convey them to the partners in an authentic and recorded form, then one had either to dictate the text via a high-frequency telephone line (but that was not so reliable as it all depended on how it was recorded at the other end of the line), or transmit the text by fax, which was clearly preferable. Electronic communication was not yet available to us and to our partners in those years, even in the capitals of highly developed countries. We used fax for transmitting texts, especially in contacts with Baku, Stepanakert and also Yerevan so widely that we had unwittingly created a new genre of work which we had jokingly dubbed ‘fax diplomacy.’

There were also other reasons for such active use of fax. The parties to the Karabakh conflict would normally eschew direct meetings, whether in the presence of a mediator or without such. Bringing their representatives together at one table or, at least, in one place for the signing of already agreed upon documents had taken a good deal of effort and was hardly ever achieved. The hostilities as such were likewise an impediment for direct communication. The transportation possibilities in the conflict region were very limited. Still, many things had to be done urgently and at a distance, frequently directly from Moscow. As the mutual mistrust between the parties was immense, they needed an intermediary in order to have something to depend on, and also to have a witness in case of perfidy on the part of the other side. True, the mediator was not infrequently viewed by the parties with caution, each of them suspecting him of playing up to the opponent. Therefore, even despite his involvement, in serious matters it was better not to content oneself with telephone conversations but to obtain texts in writing,

especially for reporting to the superiors. In a word, the reasons were many. But the main thing was that the rigidity of the parties' positions turned them into slaves to their own intransigence.

Alas, fax paper is not very durable. Recently I decided to retype the text of the first documents in order to preserve at least their very essence, even if that would be without the elegance of letterheads and emblems, without the 'flavour' of autographs.

The mechanism of long-distance communication between the parties via a mediator when the latter was in Moscow was usually as follows at the time. Taking the telephone negotiations – sometimes lasting for many hours – with the parties as a basis, the mediator would draft the text of an arrangement and send its identical copy by fax to Baku and Stepanakert for signing. In case of acceptance of the wording, the parties would fax the signed document back to Moscow, while the mediator was then supposed to forward it to the other side for the sake of authenticity. The mediator also acted by roughly the same pattern, when Armenia would later feature in similar arrangements as a third party to the conflict.

Of course, it was far from always that the parties would sign the same version of the text that the mediator had sent to them. There were a lot of instances when one party or the other would introduce its amendments, which is only natural before the signing of the document. But sometimes this was also done during the signing, that is, without prior notice, without prior discussions or consultations with the mediator or coordination via such or directly with the other side. Such 'creative itch' demonstrated by representatives of the parties revealed a deficit of political standards and culture or, at least, a lack of relevant experience. Sometimes those were minor details that did not affect the very substance of the arrangement, but in some cases such 'arbitrary zeal' of the parties would undermine tentative arrangements that seemed to have been already reached verbally, or even lead to their breakdown. We shall yet return to a textbook example of this kind taking place in the mid-December 1993.

In June 1993 the Karabakh leaders did not yet have a formal letterhead in use but they had an uncommonly large (4.5 cm in diameter) round seal with an inscription 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Self-Defence Committee' in the



Armenian and Russian languages. The text drafted by the mediator and signed by the Karabakh military leader ran as follows:

‘Should the adversary consent to immediately assume a commitment not to subject the town of Stepanakert to shelling and bombardment, we, for our part, immediately commit ourselves not to shell or bombard the town of Agdam.

Commander of the Defence Army,  
of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, S. Babayan.  
17.06.93. 22.30.’

And a huge round seal!

The letterhead of the Ministry of Defence of the Azerbaijan Republic bore, in a proper fashion, the state symbols and address: 370601, Baku, 3 Azizbekov Avenue. Here is the full text of the first document from Baku:

‘June 17, 1993, 23.00. Ministry of Defence of the Azerbaijan Republic. Fax 38-30-69 (8922) Moscow, fax 230-24-74 (095) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia To: Mr. Kazimirov

Should the adversary consent to immediately assume a commitment not to subject to shelling the town of Agdam, we commit ourselves not to shell the town of Khankendi.

Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces  
of the Azerbaijan Republic, S. Abiev.’

As soon as I received the signed fax messages in my cabinet on the Smolenskaya Square premises, I immediately forwarded them crosswise to the parties to confirm the documentation of the understanding reached between them by telephone that day: Colonel Abiev’s text went to Stepanakert and Samvel Babayan’s text – to Baku. Soon both addressees confirmed receipt thereof, and it would have seemed that the parties were bound to stick to that understanding.

It is not fortuitous that the texts of June 17 contained no mention of any period of validity of that understanding. Each time when an opportunity presented itself, we consciously sought to secure continuing obligations by the parties, striving to limit or curtail the hostilities as soon as possible.

When comparing the texts of both sides what strikes the eye is their routine wrangling over the name of the main town of Nagorno-Karabakh. But

much more important was Baku's failure to mention the bombardments. To be sure, the Armenians had virtually no combat aircraft, while the Baku leaders were clearly reluctant to renounce further bombardments of Stepanakert/ Khankendi (incidentally, it was bombed right in the middle of June). In the end, the understanding boiled down to the prevention of rocket and artillery attacks on Agdam and Stepanakert only.

True, even this curtailed understanding was soon subjected to a severe trial, but not at all due to some imperfections in it. Only two days later, on June 19, the same Samvel Babayan, this time putting his signature on the letterhead of the Self-Defence Committee of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as the acting commander, faxed to me notice No. 97 (I reproduce it in its original version, that is to say, in the author's own wording):

'Having taken advantage of the earlier agreement between the parties on assuming the commitment not to subject Stepanakert and Agdam to shelling, heavy military equipment, – including *Grad* multiple rocket launchers, which are being used in the massive shelling of the civilian population centres of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, – is currently being accumulated in Agdam . On behalf of the command of the Self-Defence Committee of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic I am obliged to forewarn that, should such actions continue, we shall be compelled to take retaliatory measures for the suppression of firing positions. Retaliatory actions will be undertaken in exactly one hour after the receipt of this message by you.

All responsibility will in this event fall upon the Azeri side.'

A natural reaction to such a notice is annoyance at the lack of common sense and competence demonstrated by its author. But that goes quickly, as one begins to understand that this is hardly the only reason.

It is very evident from this 'notice' just how the two sides were always trying to outplay each other in every way possible. In this case, there was no violation of the understanding of June 17 on the Azerbaijani side (as it had boiled down to the prevention of shelling of two towns only). Surely, shelling and bombardment of population centres directly contradict international humanitarian law, but the Azeris had not undertaken commitments regarding military action in other zones or concerning the prevention of concentration of heavy military weapons in a particular area. Had the heart of the

matter indeed lain in this, the Karabakh leaders could have suggested that the former arrangement be expanded by way of including two such fresh commitments. But this was apparently not part of their plans.

Hardly more valid was the ‘warning’ of retaliation ‘in the event that such actions continue.’ Just how unfounded the adduced motivation was is obvious from the fact that the mediator had not the slightest possibility to negotiate and resolve these issues at a distance within just one hour! Indeed, the very text of this letter by Babayan left no doubt that it was a question of deliberate breakdown of the previous understanding merely powdered by the epistolary finesse of the latter-day Karabakh warlord.

Thus, things were anything but simple as far as the first arrangement between the parties was concerned. However, contacts with them made it possible to keep it afloat. The Armenians called their actions retaliatory measures for the suppression of the enemy’s firing positions around Agdam. In the following days both sides protested against violations. The protests were examined by the parties, discussed over the phone with the Russian Foreign Ministry; certain measures were taken to allay mutual concerns. Nonetheless, the parties’ military command acknowledged that the overall intensity of the hostilities, as well as the use of heavy armament, in these areas had decreased for a while.

On June 24, the Russian Foreign Ministry stressed in its statement the inadmissibility of outside interference into the internal affairs of Azerbaijan and the importance of realisation of Resolution 822 of the UN Security Council. The crux of the matter lay in the fact that the United States, and especially Turkey, pinning their hopes on President Abulfaz Elçibay, in various forms called the legitimacy of changes taking place in Baku in question and subsequently also began to use the human rights issue as a means of pressure upon the new Baku authorities, demanding the release of the arrested members of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan. Things occasionally reached a point of absurdity: for example, the State Department even used such a turn of speech as ‘the so-called Ganja events.’

On June 25 I discussed with the military leadership of the Karabakh Armenians certain measures for restriction of the hostilities in order to allay the parties’ concern regarding the situation along the Askeran–Agdam route and in the area of Martakert/Agdere. And I promptly sent to Safar Abiev my

proposals concerning a balanced withdrawal of the Karabakh Armenians' and the Azeri forces from a number of population centres and from certain heights in these areas. It was my intention to blunt the intensity of the fighting, as well as to bring the parties back to the positions of June 14, when Stepanakert, the last of the three conflicting parties, finally gave its consent to the plan of the Minsk 'Nine', albeit upon a condition of a month-long delay in its implementation. However, the parties clearly found themselves not ready for such conciliatory gestures (later on we had to abandon such proposals for a while). But if the Karabakh leaders frankly informed us that in certain locations they were unable to accept a withdrawal of their forces from the occupied positions, the Azeris delayed the reply (finally the Karabakh Armenians occupied the heights around Martakert forcing the Azeris to abandon it).

Failing to receive a reply from Safar Abiev to my proposals, I was compelled to send on the next day, June 26, the same message with the mark 'urgent' to Heydar Aliyev. At about 3 pm Heydar Aliyev himself phoned from Baku to the head of Russia's mediatory mission and offered his assistance with putting an end to the fierce fighting around Agdam. According to him, the Armenians again tried to encircle and capture that town. Considering the pressure he was under in those days in sorting out Elçibay's 'legacy' and settling matters with the dashing 'colonel' Surat Huseynov, he stressed that in the current internal political situation in Azerbaijan the loss of Agdam would lead to catastrophic consequences. He even deemed it necessary to declare that he intended to tackle the Karabakh problem in a most constructive way, to keep close contact with Yerevan on that score, but that now a pause in military actions was needed.

During the second phone call on the same day in connection with the situation around Agdam Heydar Aliyev additionally informed me that he wanted to promptly replace Azerbaijan's Permanent Representative in Moscow. Heydar Aliyevich inquired about my opinion concerning Permanent Representative Hikmet Hajizade. I answered him that, despite his affiliation with the Popular Front, the latter was sufficiently flexible and constructive and had shown rather active cooperation at the Moscow talks on the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities. I told him how Hajizade was twice disavowed by Baku in the process. Having heard me out, Heydar Aliyev nevertheless

described him as a ‘man from the street’ and expressed his intention to appoint a new ambassador – a more respectable representative – Professor Ramiz Rizaev (A Corresponding Member of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, director of one of the institutes). Literally forthwith, at 5.11 pm, Hikmet Hajizade informed the Russian Foreign Ministry by fax of the suspension of his duties without giving any reason.

While reporting to Andrei Kozyrev about my conversations with Heydar Aliyev, I noted that during my contacts with Stepanakert and Baku I was trying to achieve a suspension of hostilities in the districts of Agdam and Martakert where severe battles were in full swing. I informed the minister that we were promoting broader mediatory proposals as well. By midnight June 26 we had finally managed to reach an understanding between the parties on stopping the hostilities in question for a period of one week (i. e. until the morning of July 4). But it was dated June 27, as the exchange of fax messages was only over by about 2 am.

Here is the first text without comments:

‘230\_24\_74.

Moscow, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

To: Mr. Kazimirov V. N.

Subject to your confirmation of consent by the opposing party, we commit ourselves for a term of one week beginning with 5.00 a. m., June 27, 1993 (Sunday) to cease all offensive operations and attempts to advance forward from the line of contact that had formed as of the above date; any rocket, artillery attacks and also air bombardments in the entire zone of hostilities between the village of Madaghiz in the north and the town of Agdam in the south. This arrangement becomes effective immediately upon receipt of the said confirmation.

Chief of General Staff, Armed Forces  
of the Azerbaijan Republic, Colonel S. Abiev.’  
27 June 1993.’

The same text arrived to us at 1.45 and 1.47 am from Stepanakert signed by ‘Commander, Defence Army, Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, S. Babayan.’ After a crosswise transmission of these fax messages to Stepanakert and Baku, one had to make sure that both signed texts had been received there. One of

them bears my postscript addressed to Arkadi Ghukasyan: 'Have you received Safar Abiev's text alright? 27.VI 1.45. VK. Assurances by the mediator that the document had also been signed by the other party were not enough – each of the sides wished to have a visible confirmation of that at least by fax.

Unfortunately, the understanding achieved in June did not produce effect at once. In the morning the shelling was still in progress, incidents continued to occur and only by mid-afternoon the agreement achieved in the night was finally enforced.

During the same period, the Russian mediator, confronted with frequent violations now by one, now by the other side, began to suggest to them a system of measures for the settlement of incidents arising, so as to ensure the survival of attained understandings even in such eventualities. These measures provided for communication of specific information about a committed violation (its time and place, details and consequences) to the other side via high-frequency telephone line or via Russia's Foreign Ministry. The other side was to give an answer in written form, including a notice on the measures it had taken, within three hours. As soon as such a message reached Russia's Foreign Ministry, we would be obliged to bring it immediately to the notice of the other party (on business days and during business hours – at once, otherwise – as soon as possible).

Though ever ready to accuse each other of both real and imaginary violations (frequently for the sake of sheer propaganda), the parties did not demonstrate too much readiness to avail of the mechanism for the settlement of incidents. Therefore, the Russian mediator more than once had to revert to it, insisting on the proposed system of measures and 'fine-tuning' it.

In the evening of June 27 it was agreed with Heydar Aliyev and Robert Kocharyan that the understanding on the suspension of offensives, shelling and bombardments, that had just been reached, could later be prolonged and expanded. On June 29, by arrangement with Heydar Aliyev, Andrei Kozyrev specifically sent a message to the conflicting parties containing precisely this proposal. The UN General Secretary, the OSCE Acting Chairman, members of the Security Council and the Minsk Group were informed about that message. We endeavoured in every way possible to ensure the implementation of the mutual understanding achieved, but to no avail.

In furtherance of these ideas, on July 2, the Russian Foreign Ministry passed on to the parties a fresh proposal: to prolong the understanding of June 27 by a whole month (until August 4) and extend its effect to the zones of Hadrut and Fizuli which aroused the concern of the parties. We also proposed not to subject to rocket and artillery attacks and air bombardments population centres lying within a radius of 10 km from the centre of the towns of Agdam and Agjabedi, Askeran and Martuni (i. e. two extended security zones on each side) and, moreover, not to emplace rocket launchers and artillery weapons inside population centres or near them. Also stipulated was the operational procedure in case of violation of arrangements by either side. Had these proposals been accepted and implemented, they could have blunted the intensity of hostilities in the most sensitive locations for both parties.

Stepanakert failed to accept a reciprocal withdrawal of troops from several recently captured heights and from the villages occupied the day before, but agreed to the rest of the proposals. Now the ball was on the Azeri side. It would seem that the idea had been discussed beforehand with Heydar Aliyev. However, Safar Abiev, despite repeated reminders, left our proposals unanswered.

In the meantime, news began to arrive that US diplomats in Baku and Yerevan were taking steps against the prolongation and expansion of the arrangements negotiated between Baku and Stepanakert and facilitated by the Russian Foreign Ministry, trying to incite the new leadership of Azerbaijan, as well as the representatives of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, into calling for the resuscitation of 'the Three' (Russia, the United States and Turkey), despite the fact that we had told the Americans quite firmly that we would not continue any work in that format.

Using the question of the legitimacy of changes in Baku as a pressure lever, the Americans were inducing Azerbaijan to over-stress the tripartite initiative of Russia, Turkey and the United States, although it had already been superceded by the 'plan of the Minsk 'Nine' in June. On July 2 Heydar Aliyev specifically appealed to all the countries of the world, notably to the United States, Turkey and Russia as initiators of the peace proposals, placing the bulk of responsibility for their implementation on these three states. On

July 5 he invited the ambassadors of the three countries to his mansion-house and, lamenting the serious aggravation of the situation at the front, particularly as the Armenians had practically reached Agdam, called upon the three states to effectively promote the attainment of the goals set. It is worth noting that Heydar Aliyev was already portraying Russia, the United States and Turkey as guarantors of the settlement of the conflict.

On the other hand, what was the worth of Heydar Aliyev's reproaches made public by the Baku press to the effect that none of these three countries had allegedly undertaken any concrete steps? (And this came after a series of attempts by Russia to scale down military operations and in the context of Baku's evasion of proposed measures!). In the face of these reproaches and vague, to put it mildly, wording as to the obligations and guarantees given by Russia, the United States and Turkey, I had to send Heydar Aliyev's advisor Vafa Guluzade a personal letter indicating that there had been no obligations or guarantees yet, that one should not confuse the role of a mediator with that of a guarantor. I also drew up for him a list of steps taken by Russia in June and early July for the sake of de-escalation of the hostilities.

In the end, the month-long extension proposed by us was not accepted in Baku. The week-long operational term of the arrangement of June 27 ran out on July 4 and the fighting around Agdam resumed. Soon (literally within three weeks) this led to the capture by the Armenians of that strategically important population centre, transport hub and major town in which 30,000 people had once lived. Moreover, subsequently the Azeris sometimes even claimed that the Armenians had thus broken the understanding hushing up the fact that it was Baku that had rejected the suggested prolongation and expansion of the former agreement.



## **With Heydar Aliyev – Finally in Baku**

The first meeting of Russia's mediatory mission with Heydar Aliyevich Aliyev, who returned from Nakhichevan to Baku in early June and, in fact, soon assumed power there, took place on July 20, 1993. We had conversed with him more than once over the government phone, sometimes on his own initiative, but it took quite a bit of time to secure a rendezvous with the 'new' leader of Azerbaijan. In both June and July Moscow repeatedly proposed to dispatch to Baku a personal representative of the Russian president, but Heydar Aliyev delayed with my arrival. Everyone realised that he had to bolster his position first; there were other versions, too, but let us not plunge into speculation. The situation at the front was likewise changeable. Relative lulls were succeeded by systematic pressure by the Armenians. Their troops were already enveloping Agdam, taking the heights around it under their control. A few days later, on July 23, it fell.

The conversation with the 'acting president of the Azerbaijan Republic' lasted for almost three quarters of an hour taking place in the cabinet of the Chair of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan (not yet in the presidential palace where dozens of our appointments with him would be held later on). Outstretched across the oblong room was a long narrow table. Seated around it were people serving the new leadership of Azerbaijan that had already been purged from professed supporters of Elçibay. Among them I remember the president's foreign policy advisor Vafa Mirzoevich Guluzade, Acting Foreign Minister Albert Aliyevich Salamov and Head of the Directorate for International Organisations of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry Araz Beyukagaevich Azimov (now the Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan). Sitting opposite us were our ambassador Walter Alexandrovich Shonia, my fellow mediator Sergei A. Panchekhin and myself. Journalists were present only briefly.

We began with reminiscences about our visit to Mexico and about my missions to Angola. Then we set forth to Heydar Aliyev our view of the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, explaining Russia's approach and stances. We also requested the release of six Russian citizens seized in Nagorno-Karabakh in exchange for Azeri POWs held by Armenians (as proposed by the latter).

The 'new' leader of Azerbaijan emphasized that he was ready to maintain good relations with Russia, stifling the anti-Russian sentiments. 'My strategic line on this score is clear,' said he. Aliyev remarked that their ties with Russia had been multifold since the times of Peter I, that with such ties dating 200 years back one could not suddenly turn one's back on one's it and be friends only with Turkey and the USA. 'I want Russia's interests to be taken into consideration here as well. I would not allow a withdrawal of the Russian troops,' he declared. According to him, it sufficed to compare the life of Azeris in Iran and of those in the USSR for everything to become quite clear.

With regard to the Karabakh conflict Heydar Aliyevich took a somewhat more flexible position than Abulfaz Elçibay and Tofiq Gasymov had before him. With exasperation he acknowledged the disorganisation, fragmentation and inefficiency of the Azerbaijani armed forces, their inability to offer resistance to Armenian armed units. He agreed with the need for a speedy cessation of bloodshed but added to this a withdrawal of the Armenian forces from the territories occupied by them. Unlike the previous leaders of Azerbaijan, he did not make the termination of hostilities directly conditional on the return of these territories but insisted that this be done later on a stage-by-stage basis, starting with Kalbajar district. He admitted that a speedy restitution of Kalbajar would help the new leadership in Baku to establish itself.

Heydar Aliyev appreciated Russia's role as facilitator of 'minor' local accommodations between Baku and Stepanakert and suggested that we continue the search for them with Safar Abiev in order to maintain a relative lull in the fighting and avoid new major military disturbances until the plan of the Minsk 'Nine' is put into operation. Vafa Guluzade made a point that the West was not ready to provide separation forces and did not want Russia to do so either. 'Why so?' – Heydar Aliyevich feigned incomprehension.

Should the parties find that they need it, I told them, this matter could be examined in Moscow. Readiness to do so had once been voiced, but Elçibay

was against it. We arranged with Heydar Aliyev to keep in touch either directly or through his foreign policy advisor Guluzade.

At the same time a distinction in emphasis became obvious. Heydar Aliyev continued to extol the tripartite initiative of Russia, the United States and Turkey, advocating a speedy launch of the implementation of the Minsk Group schedule, whereas I stressed that the process had already gone farther: after the Minsk Group meeting in Rome on June 3-4, the schedule proposed earlier by the three states and later transformed into the plan of the Minsk 'Nine', was, at our request, directly tied up with the fulfilment of Resolution 822 of the UN Security Council (we spoke in favour of this right after its adoption on April 30, 1993, but the Americans and the Turks initially opposed this).

I strove to prove that that resolution and the plan of the Minsk 'Nine' were not one and the same thing. I kept stressing the obligatory nature of the resolution for the UN member-states, for all the parties to the conflict – and that also concerned the entire text of the resolution and not some selected provisions. Our debate in absentia with the Minsk Group implied, this time again, conceptual differences: the latter was striving to adjust military actions, while we sought to put an end to them altogether: otherwise the complicated issues in dispute could not be resolved.

Since Stepanakert, with reference to the events in Azerbaijan, suggested to postpone the implementation of the schedule by one month (Raffaelli gave his assent for a period of six days only but by that time had not put it into operation), it was important to 'hold out' till that moment without fresh escalation at the front. I made a point that for that end one had to keep on concluding and implementing 'mini-agreements' that were periodically signed between Baku and Stepanakert with Russia acting as a facilitator. I spoke of the need for the conflicting parties to set up a joint supervisory commission (JSC) in order to prepare and achieve de-escalation of hostilities, and for the parties to select and nominate military representatives to serve thereon, particularly if there would be no disengagement of troops and deployment of separation forces.

In mediatory work one sometimes has to double-check the whole store of arguments set forth by the parties. More than once did I have to adduce before

Heydar Aliyev the reasoning given by Robert Kocharyan, naturally not because I myself supported it but for the sake of finding counterarguments). Thus, the latter had made a point that whereas the Azeris were mostly using fire and bombardments as means of pressure upon the adversary, the Karabakh people lacked such resources (they had no air force and not enough shells) and were compelled to resort to ‘raids’, that is to say, offensive operations. In Kocharyan’s opinion, the division of roles in Baku was the following: Heydar Aliyev stood for a political solution and Surat Huseynov – for military pressure. Kocharyan noted the lack of direct contact with Baku; he feared that after the Armenian withdrawal from Kalbajar the Azeris could again launch military operations – therefore, a ‘limited contingent to safeguard security’ was required.

However, the arguments offered by Kocharyan in the place of counterarguments provoked growing irritation on the part of his interlocutors and even from our ambassador. Heydar Aliyev dismissed the Karabakhians’ fears that the Azeris would resume military operations after the restitution of Kalbajar. ‘Why should we be interested in proceeding with the war after the Armenians leave Kalbajar?! We would barely have time to catch our breath!’ he remarked in passing. Heydar Aliyev showed greater willingness to lift the blockades (‘I have had my share of suffering from them in Nakhichevan’) than his predecessors did.

I recall that the person most of Heydar Aliyev’s accusations targeted was Robert Kocharyan, not Levon Ter-Petrossian with whom he used to maintain contact from Nakhichevan. He believed that direct contacts with Stepanakert were fraught with a danger of its recognition. Needless to say, I spoke in favour of realism – in favour of recognising Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. Heydar Aliyev pointed out that that aspect had not been taken into account before and now Baku needed time to sort things out. ‘And they are bringing pressure upon us,’ he declared.

On the whole, that conversation with Heydar Aliyev turned out to be rather difficult, polemical, first implicitly and then rather openly. It differed markedly in tone from our earlier conversations – in Nakhichevan, elsewhere and over the phone. Raising his voice, he began to vent his indignation at the Armenian offensive on us. Working himself up to the point of frenzy was not his usual condition – he was usually self-collected.

At one point Heydar Aliyevich's ire overstepped all reasonable limits: having got up from the chair he started pacing the floor behind it and screaming almost hysterically. In a fit of temper he cried out menacingly: 'We will pancake the Armenians, take myworf for it – pancake them!' Nor could he refrain from making a thrust at us: 'Karabakh has Armenia standing behind it and Armenia has Russia behind,' he was shouting, 'otherwise so many Azeri territories would have never been seized.' I can still evoke that scene before my very eyes.

When a leader of a state which is not your own is shouting, this is not so terrible. It was something quite different that was really somewhat terrifying – lest his own health might give way sharply. It is hard to say whether that was simply a nervous breakdown or whether he was just demonstrating to his entourage how uncompromising he could be even when speaking with mediators, Moscow's envoys included, when defence of national interests was at stake. We kept our composure, fearing only for his own condition (true, when we were left alone, Heydar Aliyevich himself apologised for his lack of self-control).

Nothing like that ever happened again during our meetings. However, the somewhat uneasy impression that, when necessary, Heydar Aliyev could skilfully put on such acts, compensating with emotions a lack of weighty arguments, remained. I had occasionally heard similar opinions from those who had meetings with him over Karabakh affairs later (namely, the same was the case many years later during Heydar Aliyev's conversation with the Minsk Group's co-chairs: due to an ensuing scene, the American diplomat Rudolf Perina was unable to defend a quite reasonable idea in his presence. Vyacheslav Ivanovich Trubnikov was compelled to delicately soft-pedal Perina's activity).

It is now time to recount in greater detail than before just how Heydar Aliyevich arranged the course of our talks. Both earlier in Nakhichevan and on July 20 in Baku, just like during our numerous subsequent meetings, he usually constructed a conversation as having three stages, as an ascent from the basic to the complex, from the general to the particulars, from the abstract to the concrete. The first part was a discussion in the presence of journalists – an open one, a show before the press. 10-15 reporters or even more would normally flock to Baku for the occasion.

Heydar Aliyev usually dedicated the first part of conversations to active propaganda broadcasting, and his interlocutors were, too, compelled to respond in kind, albeit in a more modest manner, of course. Then the journalists were given to understand that for them the audience was over and those who were to stay on were the participants therein or delegation members, and, of course, his own team.

The second part of conversations was more to the point, more substantial but seldom more trust-based. For the sake of politeness and from tactical considerations Heydar Aliyev ordinarily let his guests speak out first and then amazed the audience by reacting to each of the issues touched upon by his interlocutors despite the fact that he almost never took notes. As for the substantive ‘filling’ of his statements, now this was not that simple. Here a lot depended on his position which became that of Azerbaijan – at times he, objectively speaking, lacked persuasiveness. His position reflected the interests of Azerbaijan as he understood them, but, for all his coolness, was sometimes based solely on emotional perceptions. He was likewise tolerant to objections but endeavoured not to leave a single one of them without an adequate answer.

An atmosphere of trust, as far as communication with Heydar Aliyev was concerned, could only be achieved in private conversations, and even that did not always happen. That was the most precious part of the any negotiations from the mediation angle, much more so than public shows. The conversation was less formal, more candid, good both for clarifying the positions of the protagonist in the conflict and even for secret understandings, with the only disadvantage being that one had no other choice but to take his word alone (there were no witnesses!) and trust one’s own memory.

Much later, in 1995–96, our partners in co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group (the Swedes and later the Finns) viewed my personal trips to the region of conflict with jealousy and pressed for joint trips and negotiations. I did not wish to offend them with refusal, although I regretted losing a chance to speak with the leaders confidentially, face to face. Then Heydar Aliyevich and I began to resort to the following ploy: after joint conversations with them present there we met once again, usually in late hours or even after midnight, and this time alone. In Yerevan and Stepanakert similar meetings were held with Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharyan.

It is ludicrous for a mediator to content himself with general sessions, missing on confidential contacts with the leader of a state or a conflicting party. Such contacts helped us to be more conversant in the situation and enabled us later to share information with our partners (in a veiled form, of course).

There was nothing personal in it – I simply made use of Russia's unique opportunities which Western powers and the countries that were chairs or co-chairs of the Minsk Group could not then have. The West was disinclined either to admit or to realise Russia's special chances for the benefit of reconciliation, although it would have helped the matters greatly. And without those unique resources we would not have been able to induce the parties to the conflict to cease massive bloodshed in spite of not only the jealousy, but also the numerous hindrances put up by our Western partners.

I am not quite sure that the present form of communication of the three co-chairs at once with the leader of each of the conflicting parties is optimal. They do achieve one goal, demonstrating the unity of the mediator countries, but do they not thus lose the chance of more confidential communication with the sides?

## **Ambassadors, too, have Occupational Diseases**

During the tense, sometimes verging on strenuous, conversation with Heydar Aliyev in Baku on July 20, 1993, I was struck by the conduct of our ambassador Walter Shonia. In a heated atmosphere not only did he fail to support me or else, to keep silent, but he, on the contrary, began to demonstrate loyalty to the new leader of Azerbaijan in every possible way. He deemed it appropriate to openly criticize Russia's mediatory efforts, enmeshing me in internal wrangles in the presence of all of Baku's ruling elite. He would throw poignant remarks, injected acerbic judgements and snorted now and then at what I was saying. All for the sake of show, to play up to the Azeri side, who was far from being free from the blame for the continuing bloodshed, reaching in the end as far as Agdam.

As best I could, I tried to restrain the ambassador in his grotesque zeal. Pretending to be taking notes during Aliyev's lengthy statements, I jotted on a scrap of paper and handed over to Shonia a brief note: 'W. A. I must ask you to stay on the Russian side – and not go over to the other.' Having read the note and thrown it aside, Walter carried on as before. To the delight of some of those present, he demonstrated absolute contempt for appropriate correctness among colleagues, elementary tact, although both of us were there in our official capacities.

Such a situation is particularly out of place in mediatory work, where delicate, and occasionally strained, conversations with the leaders of the conflicting parties are inevitable. Moreover, the ambassador had no competencies in the affairs of conflict settlement and his knowledgeability in these affairs was incomplete and in many ways one-sided. What amazed me were his excessive compliments to Heydar Aliyev, his general adulatory manner. A thought flashed across my mind: does Russia's official representative really need to behave in such an ambiguous and fawning manner to achieve progress in his work?



The sharp 'explanation' between us upon the completion of the meeting was unavoidable. In the 40 years of my work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs I had never even heard about such precedents. One could only wonder if everything was right with the points of reference of those of our ambassadors who strove to create for themselves, at virtually any price, a comfortable micro-climate in communication with the leadership of the 'host country'. This is by all means useful and even important, but not at such a price!

What could have Walter A. Shonia expected to gain through such an unusual display of sympathies or loyalty to the Azeri side in this conflict? Later on, I recalled that in June, when after the events in Ganja Elçibay's position reeled, Walter Alexandrovich was vigorously calling upon Moscow to support the 'president elected by the entire nation.' This argument borrowed from Yeltsin's propaganda for some reason seemed to him to carry greater weight than Elçibay's obvious orientation towards Turkey and his phasing out of the relations with Russia. It was not us that had 'elected' him, nor was it our business to rescue him. At that time we did not yet have enciphered communication lines with the embassy in Baku. The ambassador's communication with Moscow proceeded by fax or via an open telephone line. It is possible that Walter A. Shonia feared lest Heydar Aliyev should get wind of his attempts to lobby the interests of the Popular Front team with Moscow, while he urgently needed to establish good relations with him, to insinuate himself into his confidence. I cannot positively claim that that was precisely the reason for such unorthodox escapades on his part, but neither can I find any other reasons for them.

Upon my return to Moscow, I submitted on July 26 an unusual memo to my supervisor, Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly L. Adamishin. I will not make a secret of its contents:

'Diplomats, particularly ambassadors, also have occupational diseases. Unnecessary 'infatuation' with the country of their stay, uncritical support for its policies, occasionally get in way of sober assessment of the state of affairs in it and prevent the pursuance of our own line, reaching a point where its interests are all but identified with ours. Sometimes certain ambassadors lose the sense of proportion, when it comes to explaining and even defending the policies of the country of their residence. This malady is more often manifested in countries involved in conflicts, which is extremely dangerous.'

It has long been noticed, for example, that our ambassadors in Yerevan and Baku tend to defend zealously the mutually exclusive positions of the countries of their accreditation on Karabakh, even though both are in fact representatives of Russia, and official representatives at that. Surely, it cannot take three 'stances' at once on the same issue: one – when dealing with Yerevan, another – with Baku and a third one back in Moscow.

The excessive bias of our ambassador [in Yerevan] Vladimir P. Stupishin had repeatedly been brought up at internal sessions at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On one occasion he even gone as far as to give interviews to the press expressing one-sided opinions concerning the conflict, – naturally, in favour of Armenia. Walter A. Shonia even seemed to be somewhat more moderate in this respect. However, the change of the leadership in Baku and, presumably, the desire to promptly establish good relations with Heydar Aliyev had apparently prompted him to act so injudiciously.

Further on, it was recounted how the meeting with Heydar Aliyev in Baku on July 20 had gone and the 'part' that was taken in it by our ambassador. In conclusion, rhetorical questions were posed: 'Is tolerance for such conduct at all appropriate? It is not so hard to overstep personal grudges. But is this not something of an occupational disease? Is such frivolity appropriate or helpful in diplomatic work, all the more so at the level of an ambassador and in the presence of the highest-ranking person in the nation? Is indiscriminate complaisance with respect to the country of residence and its leader compatible with the requirements to an ambassador of our country?'

I suggested issuing a warning to Shonia on the inadmissibility of such conduct, stressing that I deemed his participation in my talks with the Azeri side no longer possible. At the same time it seemed appropriate to raise the issue to a broader perspective, that is, to analyse the reality and the critical nature of assessments by Russia's ambassadors of the situation and policies of their countries of residence: to make sure they did not lapse into their apologetics (from the professional standpoint one should think that such analysis of ambassadors' work is unlikely to lose relevance anytime soon).

Of course, no real measures were ever taken with respect to that 'memo'. The atmosphere of bureaucracy, when it reigns at the ministry, is capable of choking both positive and negative impulses. But almost all my talks with

Heydar Aliyev from that time on were held without the ambassador being present. Generally speaking, I do not consider this normal, but in that situation this was the only way that could be.

True, Walter Alexandrovich and I never got back to that incident again. I kept him abreast of the ensuing meetings with Heydar Aliyev, and, on the whole, we had restored rather smooth, normal relations. One can only hope that this story, despite its grain of bitterness, will not harm them, as it is by no means a question of settling personal scores but of an instructive, one might say textbook, example of the manner in which an ambassador and a mediator should not interact in a complex situation of settlement of an armed conflict.

It is somewhat like mathematics – a proof by reduction to absurdity (*ad absurdum*)!

The persistence of this occupational disease was attested to many years later by a similar disposition of another ambassador of ours in Azerbaijan. Falling into the same trap, N. T. Ryabov embarked in 2002 on the public advocacy of the need for a stage-by-stage settlement of the conflict, but precisely in its roguish Azerbaijani interpretation: i. e. by first resolving the problems of concern to the Azeri side and only then examining those that had to do with the Armenian interests.

First of all, our ambassadors permanently accredited in the capitals of countries that are directly parties to conflicts scarcely should publicly go out of their way in defining Russia's position in this sphere – this is the prerogative of Moscow and possibly quite different persons specially authorised to do this. Second, one needs to have a thorough understand the self-seeking stratagems of the line pursued by the country of your residence. Without this one inevitably becomes its mouthpiece, and by no means an ambassador of Russia. In principle, it would not hurt our diplomacy to have a 'preventorium' relieving candidate ambassadors of such diseases.

## The Fall of Agdam

The fall of Agdam became an emblematic military and political turn in the conflict. The importance of this rather large population centre and communications hub is obvious. As has already been noted, Heydar Aliyev had manifested his concern with the situation around Agdam much earlier, from his first days in power, phoning to Moscow from Baku as early as the end of June to speak to me specifically in connection with the situation near that town. For him this would have been the first major loss in the war with the Armenians, as all the previous ones (Shusha, Lachin, Kalbajar) had taken place under Elçibay.

It is also worth mentioning that Agdam was the first Azeri town east of Nagorno-Karabakh, which the Armenians managed to capture. Prior to that, their military successes were scored inside Nagorno-Karabakh (the taking of Shusha and Martakert) or west of it, closer to Armenia (Lachin, Kalbajar). Politically this could still be camouflaged with references to defense needs (putting an end to the shelling of Stepanakert from Shusha, the breach of the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh, the liquidation of the Kalbajar wedge between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia).

In the case of Agdam the offensive ambitions of Armenia were already showing through, which, given the attention of the UN Security Council to the development of that conflict, compelled them to act with increased caution. Certainly, the term 'suppression of enemy firing points' was put into circulation even more actively, and this was not entirely groundless. The Azeris were using air bombardments at the time, as well as rocket and artillery attacks from the Agdam zone, including against Stepanakert. But this time the Armenians needed such motivation much more than the Azeris needed the very use of Agdam as a 'firing point' capable of keeping the adjacent areas under fire.

The beginning of the third week of July 1993 was swept by sharply diverging propaganda efforts of the two sides concerning the fighting in the Agdam area. The Azeris claimed that the town had already been overrun by the Armenians. The Karabakhians' version was that the Azeri troops had allegedly attempted to mount an offensive in the direction of Askeran, but were repulsed and then left Agdam; however, the Armenian forces had merely invested that town but had not yet entered it. At last, on July 24 the Armenians admitted to having taken Agdam under their control.

In his telephone conversations with me Kocharyan at first also denied the intention to seize Agdam. Then he began to admit only its envelopment by way of capturing the adjacent heights. After that time came to mention that the Azeris were leaving Agdam but 'we do not enter.' He finally admitted its seizure only when it was no longer possible to deny it. Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its statement denounced the seizure of Agdam.

This time the UN Security Council reacted with a new Resolution 853 much more promptly than was the case with Kalbajar – only five days later, on July 29. That is the only document to contain one single demand of unconditional withdrawal of the occupation forces, although the Azeri side to this day does not abandon its attempts to create an impression that all of the four resolutions of the UN Security Council contain a demand of unconditional withdrawal.

Characteristically, as early as on July 24 there were direct contacts between the parties on Baku's initiative, by phone and by fax. To a certain extent, this was also helped by the fact that the Russian mediator was not in Moscow at the time – from July 21 Rome hosted a meeting of the Minsk 'Nine' to specify the Schedule of Urgent Measures for the Fulfillment of Resolution 822 of the UN Security Council. The Azeris had to approach the Stepanakert leaders directly and all by themselves.

Upon my return from Rome, from July 28, I had to hold a whole series of phone talks with Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert. Upon Kozyrev's instructions, on July 31, with reference to Yury M. Vorontsov's report from New York, I told Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian in a telephone conversation about the way things stood at the UN Security Council after the seizure of Agdam. The president took note of this and promised to report it at the session of

Armenia's National Security Council, which was due to be held on August 1 in the town of Goris, with the Nagorno-Karabakh leaders present. Simultaneously he expressed his agreement with the proposal to withdraw troops from Agdam, with Russia's assistance, ahead of time, and volunteered to discuss this idea with the Nagorno-Karabakh leaders, explaining it with the fact that the assigned tasks of suppressing the firing points had already been executed.

On August 2, Levon Ter-Petrossian reported to us by phone about that session of the Armenian National Security Council attended by Robert Kocharyan, Karen Baburyan, Serzh Sargsyan and Arkadi Ghukasyan. According to him, the leaders of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian community had taken an even tougher position than expected, all with a feeling of 'dizziness with success', as was the case after the capture of Shusha and Lachin. He expressed his apprehension lest the Karabakhians should continue to present everybody with accomplished facts, similar to the capture of Agdam, complained that they were refusing to obey orders from Yerevan, in the hope of finding support from certain forces in Russia (he personally believed that this was linked to their contacts with Ruskoi and Volsky). At the same time Levon Ter-Petrossian declared that working with them would require enormous efforts, that he had exhausted his resources and pinned hopes on Russia alone, all the more so as the Karabakh people would much prefer to see Russia, and not the CSCE, in the role of a mediator.

According to the president of Armenia, they wished to disrupt the CSCE plan, achieve their recognition by Baku as a party to the conflict and negotiate a limitation of hostilities in a number of locations, including the creation of demilitarised zones. They intended to revert to ignoring the CSCE Minsk Group under the pretext that Mario Raffaelli had submitted to the President of the UN Security Council a biased, one-sided report. They, therefore, did not want to go to Rome, where after the meetings of the Minsk 'Nine' on August 4-5, separate meetings with the conflicting parties were due to be held. He said that Robert Kocharyan and other Nagorno-Karabakh leaders were counting on wresting more concessions from Baku in direct contacts than through the CSCE. Levon Ter-Petrossian himself considered this expectation to be ill-founded, since Baku was promising them a 'summit meeting' only in order to sustain a temporary ceasefire (until August 4) but had so far failed to deliver on its promises.

The situation was getting quite complicated. On the one hand, a risky but rather obvious game played by the Karabakh Armenians. On the other, a more subtle game of the president of Armenia who admitted to his inability to influence them, so as to practically shift the responsibility for their intractability on Moscow.

In general, after the fall of Agdam, two concerns had come to the forefront: to identify and avail of opportunities of direct contacts between the parties to the conflict, especially between Baku and Stepanakert (whether with the assistance of mediators or without them), and to organise a meeting between the leaders of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to consolidate such opportunities.

Meanwhile, our Western partners' concerns lay quite elsewhere. They were rather preoccupied with the fate of the Minsk Group. The Americans and the Italians specifically asked us to take part in the meeting of the 'Nine' on August 4-5, fearing that if Russia again, like it had done at the end of July, scaled down its diplomatic level, this could disrupt the CSCE Minsk Group's operation at a very critical moment. They also feared another deadlock due to the position taken by Stepanakert.

Besides, in early August 1993 I had to discuss with Heydar Aliyev the problems of exchanging six former Russian servicemen convicted in Baku. He informed me that he was ready to take a positive decision on the exchange plan on the basis of a proposal he had received subject to an agreement with the Karabakh Armenians' leadership (the Karabakhians were to hand over pilot Chistyakov imprisoned in Stepanakert to the Russian justice after the trial, and return 5 Azeri POWs and 9 civilians to the Azeri side).

Heydar Aliyev wished to talk on that matter with some of the highest-ranking officials in Russia and complained that he did not manage to get in touch by phone with Yeltsin, Kozyrev and Filatov. He made it clear that he was piqued by the impossibility of direct communication with the Russian leadership. Aliyev emphasized his good will in that matter, as well as his readiness to examine the possibility of enhancing Russia's role in launching the CSCE plan, if it included the withdrawal of the Armenian forces from Agdam and Kalbajar.

## **Direct Contacts between Baku and Stepanakert**

Unlike a number of our Western partners who had a variable attitude to direct communication between the parties to the Karabakh conflict, the Russian mediators viewed such independent contacts and arrangements not only positively and without any trace of jealousy, but, on the contrary, unambiguously welcomed them, encouraging the parties to engage in such. The only thing we asked from them was to keep us abreast of the results. Direct contacts between the parties took on particular significance after Abulfaz Elçibay's team twice (in September 1992 and April 1993) virtually disrupted the Minsk negotiating process. We took this into account in our own mediatory work as well.

At that time the question was primarily about the contacts between Baku and Stepanakert, as Yerevan was still deluding itself with the hope of hiding behind the Karabakhians's back and described the conflict as taking place between Baku and Stepanakert alone, with Armenia being just a member of the CSCE Minsk Group engaging in facilitating a peaceful settlement. The truth is multi-faceted: the objectively correct line favouring direct Baku – Stepanakert contacts was simultaneously a cover-up for Yerevan's not very crafty political and diplomatic game. It took us a great deal of effort to demonstrate to Yerevan the impossibility of retaining that wily position of a 'third party.' Therefore, the task of normalisation of the situation along the Armenian-Azeri border served to enhance the role of Armenia itself in the negotiations with Azerbaijan.

One of the main procedural difficulties of the Karabakh settlement that had long since become political was the deliberate distortion of the configuration of the conflict first rather by Yerevan and then increasingly by Baku. Vain were Yerevan's attempts to claim its near non-involvement in the conflict. Equally vain were Baku's attempts – lasting for many years – to ignore Stepanakert asserting that Armenia alone was involved in the conflict. Fear-



ing Nagorno-Karabakh's claims of statehood and the status of a subject of international law, after some hesitation and contradictory statements, Heydar Aliyev chose not to recognize it even as a party to the conflict and from October 1993, contrary to both 'road maps' and his personal understanding with Robert Kocharyan reached in Moscow at the end of September, avoided direct contacts with the Nagorno-Karabakh leaders.

This had seriously complicated the negotiating process for many years to come, hampering the settlement, running contrary to the UN Security Council's and the OSCE leaders' approach, along with Baku's own earlier approach to contacts with Stepanakert, as well as to the practice of political resolution of many other conflicts. The paradox is that Baku seemingly strove to accelerate the settlement but in actual fact dragged it on, practically aiding the Armenians, whom it itself accused of 'stalling for time.'

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Russia's former ambassador in Armenia, Vladimir P. Stupishin, in his memoirs *My Mission to Armenia* gives a rather detailed (but with a number of inaccuracies) account of the genesis of contacts between Baku and Stepanakert, combatively throwing spears at Russia's Foreign Ministry, which had allegedly failed to notice or even ignored the inception of direct contacts. The Russian word *napraslina* (wrongful accusation) is perhaps the mildest of terms befitting the situation.

He may be unaware of the fact that it was in Moscow that the first confidential contacts between the official representatives of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh took place (on September 15, 1992 a meeting was held between the Azerbaijani Ambassador in Russia Hikmet Hajizade and 'the Advisor to the Chairman of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republican State Defence Committee on Foreign Policy' Arkadi Ghukasyan).

Another similar meeting took place on April 10-16, 1993. In those days private negotiations were underway in Moscow between the personal representatives of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the top leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh (Hikmet Hajizade, David Shakhnazarian, Arkadi Ghukasyan), with the Russian Foreign Ministry acting as a mediator, with a view

to developing a ceasefire agreement. Just as it was in January 1993 during the '5+1'-format negotiations in Moscow, Baku again disavowed its representative Hikmet Hajizade who had dared to agree with the draft documents under examination. And that was despite the fact that this time he even had a mandate signed by President Abulfaz Elçibay himself!

Both these precedents took place during his presidential term still. Just like Heydar Aliyev in his earlier days, Abulfaz Elçibay did not refuse contacts with the Karabakh Armenians as flatly as the former did later on. During the escalation of the armed conflict, especially when things at the front looked badly for them, the Azerbaijani leadership sanctioned contacts with the leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and, under Heydar Aliyev, began to seek such contacts by itself, sometimes directly, bypassing the Russian Foreign Ministry. These two conflicting parties gradually began to communicate with each other by phone or fax. More often it happened on Baku's initiative; the Karabakhians more rarely volunteered to make contact themselves so as not to look like applicants.

It is clear that, psychologically, the path to these contacts was not an easy one. It was not so simple at the time to a member of one party to ring up his opposite number. The first telephone conversation was held, with our indirect encouragement, between the top military commanders – Acting Defence Minister of Azerbaijan Safar Abiev contacted 'Defence Minister' of Nagorno-Karabakh Serzh Sargsyan on June 27, 1993 via high-frequency line (this all-Union network still covered the capitals of the former Union republics and some other cities, including Stepanakert).

In the second half of 1993, the Azerbaijani side began to show a certain interest in the limitations and temporary suspension of the fighting, as the initiative on the front line passed to the Armenians. It has already been noted above that it was with Russia's mediation that Baku formalised the first arrangements on the limitation of hostilities or ceasefire precisely with Stepanakert (without any involvement of Yerevan whatsoever). Furthermore, soon a referendum on Elçibay's mandate was set for August 29, followed by the new presidential elections in Azerbaijan (scheduled for October 3). Heydar Aliyev and the Baku authorities clearly did not want any aggravation of the military situation during that period.

In their correspondence with the Karabakhians (both direct and through the mediator) the Azeris tended to use official letterheads, referring to the Karabakh Armenians as 'party'. Gradually, the addressees were becoming more specific (e. g. 'Defence Ministry of Nagorno-Karabakh'; 'To the Leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh').

Once Heydar Aliyev (most likely by oversight) even signed the credentials for holding talks with the 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic'. Realising the pointlessness of politicising the clearly inadvertent inclusion of an excessive letter, I phoned him up and soon received by fax a new mandate with his signature under it, this time without the letter 'R'. But later it turned out that the first version of the mandate had already been sent to Stepanakert. True, the Karabakhians did not start to capitalise on this omission by Baku in any way. Needless to say, it would be naïve exaggeration to perceive in these forced steps or incautious slips of the pen any sprouts of recognition of the 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic', much less its statehood, but it confirmed that Baku was viewing the Karabakhians as an opposing party.

The Azeris portrayed Armenia as such a party mostly in their propaganda at the time and did not even try to incorporate any elements involving Yerevan into the operational documents on the limitation of hostilities at the front. A turnaround towards proclaiming Armenia a conflicting party and a refusal to recognise Nagorno-Karabakh in that quality came later, after the capture by the Armenians of the south-western districts of Azerbaijan in the autumn of 1993. We shall deal with that below.

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Vladimir P. Stupishin admits that in July-August 1993 he was on leave in Moscow and, therefore, describes the course of events as he had learnt it from documents and as told by eyewitnesses and those directly involved. During the fall of Agdam I was not at the place of events either but in Rome, at the meeting of the CSCE Minsk Group, but upon my return I was able to get a fuller grasp of them.

Contrary to Stupishin's version of events, direct contacts between Baku and Stepanakert began not with the July 24 message from the Commander of

the Nagorno-Karabakh Self-Defence Army Samvel Babayan to the Acting Azerbaijani Defence Minister Safar Abiev. There was first a telephone call on that day from Safar Abiev to Karen Baburyan, who had recently replaced G. Petrossian as head of the Nagorno-Karabakh parliamentary body. In fact, Abiev did send the first message by fax but to a strange addressee: 'Supreme Council of the Republic of Armenia, for the attention of Mr. Karen Baburyan.' He proposed to stop all offensive operations, rocket, artillery attacks and air bombardments on that same day starting from 4.00 pm, for a period of three days, and mentioned the possibility of appointing a meeting, but did not specify any further details.

The Karabakhians corrected Safar Abiev somewhat both as regards the recipient and the sense of the message. Samvel Babayan in his fax message to Colonel Abiev deferred the agreement's entry into force by eight hours (i. e. from 00 a.m. on July 25) and specified that within these three days 'an understanding would be reached concerning the meeting between the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.' Exactly at midnight on July 25 Abiev, having included these corrections into the text, sent a new fax message to the 'Defence Ministry of Nagorno-Karabakh, Army Commander S. Babayan.'

At a briefing a representative of the Armenian Foreign Ministry noted with satisfaction that this was the first attempt by the parties to the conflict themselves to deal with the question of an armistice independently – without mediators.

As you can see from the fax messages, some formulations worked out with them by the Russian mediator earlier stood them in good stead, but they allowed sheer imprecision in arranging that on reaching an appointment for a summit meeting 'the ceasefire shall be automatically prolonged to 24.00 of the date of the holding thereof.' In fact, their arrangement did not make a provision for a complete ceasefire! Potentially, in some cases such laxity might lead to dangerous misunderstandings, but everything turned out well.

On July 27 Baku and Stepanakert exchanged the lists of participants in the direct meeting and mutual guarantees of security on the territory under their control in the near-front zone close to height 482.2 in the Martakert district.

It was there, near the road fork, at 4.00 pm on July 28, 1993 that the meeting of 'officials of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh' took place. On behalf of Azerbaijan there were Acting Defence Minister Colonel Safar Abiev, a government minister I. Aliyev, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for the Affairs of War Prisoners and Hostages I. Kyazimov, representative of the Foreign Ministry T. Zulfugarov and, as secretary, N. Talybov; on behalf of Nagorno-Karabakh: 'Defence Minister of the NKR' Serzh Sargsyan, Arkadi Ghukasyan, appointed 'Foreign Minister of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic' literally the day before, 'President of the Main National Security Directorate' K. Abramyan, 'Deputy Interior Minister' A. Agasaryan, and secretary A. Melik-Shakhnazarov.

During the one hour and twenty minutes that the meeting lasted the two sides had discussed the issues related to prolonging the previous limitations of hostilities, the dates for the meeting of the top leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, to the exchange of war prisoners, and other matters. The Karabakhians submitted drafts of the corresponding arrangements, but the Azeris referred to the fact that they were not authorised to sign any document on the spot. Then Serzh Sargsyan handed over the text of the agreement on prolonging the limitation of hostilities signed by him, which Safar Abiev finally signed in Baku in the early morning hours of July 29 (apparently, upon receiving the assent of Heydar Aliyev) and then faxed to Stepanakert. It extended the arrangement of July 24 by 7 days, during which the official representatives of both sides were expected to reach an agreement on the upcoming summit meeting of the Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh leaders. (This time the imprecision as to the ceasefire – prohibitions were extended only on such military actions on which agreement had been made earlier). The following details were of no minor significance: the document was called an agreement, while under the signatures of Safar Abiev and Serzh Sargsyan respectively stood the inscriptions: 'On behalf of Azerbaijan' and 'On behalf of Nagorno-Karabakh.'

Subsequently, the focus of interest of all meetings and contacts between Azeris and Karabakhians were the problems of a ceasefire and recognition in some form or other of the Karabakh side on the part of the former parent state.

After the capture of Agdam by the Armenians in July 1993, the Minsk 'Nine' sent a false signal to Baku on that issue. During the preparation in Rome of the proposals for a draft resolution of the UN Security Council, the Westerners turned down our appeal for direct contacts between the parties. In response to our proposals John Maresca stated that it would be an 'encouragement of invaders.' (Luckily, that mistake of the Minsk 'Nine' managed to be corrected in New York: the UN Security Council in Resolution 853 called upon the parties to launch direct contacts!).

In the summer and autumn of 1993, the Karabakhians continued to press for a 'summit meeting' but its timing was delayed by the Azeri side under various pretexts. Baku confined itself to getting political figures involved in the preparatory contacts with Stepanakert and raising their level somewhat.

On August 4, Safar Abiev in yet another fax message on behalf of 'Defence Minister of Nagorno-Karabakh' Serzh Sargsyan proposed to resume the same limitation of hostilities for another ten days with a view to reaching an understanding 'on the meeting of the elders of the Armenian and Azeri communities of Nagorno-Karabakh and henceforth the meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.' The Karabakhians did not need a preliminary meeting of elders. They were aware that that meant a delay of the 'summit meeting' and even began to publicly accuse Baku of these prevarications, but did not turn down a new prolongation of the arrangement on the limitation on hostilities.

On August 5, Safar Abiev was compelled to sign such an agreement, but only for three days and with a commitment (yet again!) to reach in the meantime an understanding on the meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh (this time without an interim meeting of the elders).

It has to be said that the agreements on limitations of hostilities were observed by the parties to a partial degree only or, more exactly, in places. In some zones a truce was indeed established and honoured, in others it never went into effect – shelling attacks, bombardments and even offensive operations did not almost stop. Nonetheless, the general intensity of military actions were somewhat decreasing, and therefore the signing of such agreements cannot be considered an inanity.

On August 16, fresh contacts were resumed and on August 17 an agreement was signed between the 'official representatives [of both sides] duly authorised thereto' on the resumption of the universal ceasefire. On the Azeri side it was signed not only by Safar Abiev representing the military command, but also by Deputy Prime Minister Rasul Guliev representing the political leadership. It was Heydar Aliyev himself that had signed the written credentials for Rasul Guliev to 'conduct negotiations on arranging a meeting between the top leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.' This time from 6.00 pm on August 18 it was precisely a universal ceasefire that was proclaimed, including the cessation of any offensive operations, rocket, artillery attacks and air bombardments for a term of 5 days. Unfortunately, however, it was quickly disrupted.

We later had to reestablish the armistice, this time with Russian mediation and with an addition of a certain safety mechanism. August 30 saw an exchange of fax messages on the resumption of universal ceasefire from August 31 to September 10 inclusive, with copies forwarded to the Russian Foreign Ministry. In Baku Vice-Chair of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan Afiyaddin Dzhalilov and Safar Abiev affixed their signatures under this fax message. The text ran, in part, that 'the parties confirm that the earlier arrangements for a meeting between the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh will be coordinated by officials specially authorised thereto until September 5 and definitely held before September 10.'

This time the parties committed themselves to take the most resolute measures to ensure the observance of the ceasefire by the field commanders, up to and including the prosecution of violators and their immediate superiors in command. Additionally, the text contained a commitment to identify uncontrolled formations, remove them from the line of contact, disband and disarm them. The parties pledged to continuously maintain direct telephone contact at the top military leadership level with a view to preventing and settling violations. At our suggestion all these elements were included into the text of the arrangement. Of course, this mechanism could not serve as a durable guarantee of the agreement observance either, but one had by all means to reduce the risk of another disruption to a minimum. In fact, this time span was not marked by any major violations.

But Baku continued for the umpteenth time to dally over holding the meeting of the top leaders. To get things going, Russia's Foreign Ministry proposed to hold in Moscow a meeting of respective authorised representatives of the Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh leadership.

On the same day, August 31, Heydar Aliyev signed what seemed to be very odd, deliberately amorphous credentials: 'The leadership of Azerbaijan authorises (this is how it was in the text) the Vice-Chair of the Supreme Council Afiyaddin Dzhililov to conduct negotiations.' Naturally, this struck the eye, and on September 3 Heydar Aliyev had to sign another version thereof: this time Afiyaddin Dzhililov was authorized to 'conduct negotiations on organising a meeting between the leaders of Azerbaijan and the NKR.'

Quite predictably, this time, too, the Azeri side failed to comply with the deadline for holding the 'summit meeting' until 10 September. Even for the organisation of the meeting of 'representatives of the leadership' the ceasefire had to be extended for another three days – from September 10 to 13 inclusive. 'During this period, negotiations will be held in Moscow between officials specially authorised thereto for the purpose of preparation of the meeting negotiated earlier between the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh,' thus ran the identical messages signed respectively by Afiyaddin Dzhililov and Safar Abiev, Arkadi Ghukasyan and Samvel Babayan, and transmitted crosswise 'To the Leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh' and 'To the Leadership of Azerbaijan,' with copies forwarded to the Russian Foreign Ministry.

The meeting of 'representatives of the with under our mediation. The Azerbaijani leadership was represented by Afiyaddin Dzhililov and Nagorno-Karabakh was represented by Arkadi Ghukasyan. Safar Abiev was also present. Military, and, primarily, political issues were discussed. Afiyaddin Dzhililov pressed for extending the ceasefire for a lengthy period, to allow the presidential elections of Azerbaijan to be held on October 3 in the context of armistice. This was only achieved at 11.55 pm on September 13, that is, literally 5 minutes before the expiry of the ceasefire deadline negotiated earlier. At long last, Arkadi Ghukasyan consented to an extension of the ceasefire until October 5. In conformity with our draft, a final joint communiqué was adopted for the first time.



The Azerbaijan – Nagorno-Karabakh summit meeting eventually took place as late as September 25, 1993. It was held in Moscow on the Russian Foreign Ministry's premises on Spiridonovka. Azerbaijan was represented by Heydar Aliyev – who, until the October 3 elections, remained 'acting president', – and Nagorno-Karabakh by Robert Kocharyan, who was Chair of the State Defence Committee of the internationally unrecognised Nagorno-Karabakh Republic at the time.

In contrast to the conversation between Heydar Aliyev and Levon Ter-Petrosian held at the same location, on the insistence of Heydar Aliyevich we agreed to consider his meeting with Kocharyan as a restricted one. Having ushered the guests into the hall, I left them for a face-to-face talk. Rounding up an almost hour-long conversation, they invited the mediator to join them and somewhat grudgingly related the results, the most certain of which was an agreement to continue with direct meetings. This was the first personal contact between Heydar Aliyev and Robert Kocharyan. Much later it would prove to have been a precursor of a whole 'marathon' of their meetings held at the turn of two centuries, but with the latter acting in the capacity of president of Armenia, no longer a leader of Nagorno-Karabakh.

(By coincidence, a meeting of two vice-premiers for the economy – A. Abbasov and Zh. Pogosyan, – took place on the same day, in accordance with the 'road map', near the frontline in the Agdam district.)

We managed in advance to extend the term of the truce by a whole month at a spell– until November 5. A week after the October 3 elections, on October 10, Heydar Aliyev assumed the position of the president of Azerbaijan. First Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin and I flew to Baku for his inauguration. I did not, however, have an occasion to attend it – I stayed on the phone at the mansion-house settling between Stepanakert and the Azerbaijani military an incident occurring near the village of Kujjak which almost wrecked the armistice. Ten days later, though, on October 21, it was finally broken: the Armenians took advantage of a fresh, albeit local, violation of the ceasefire by the Azeris in the Jabrayil area and set about the capture of all the districts in the south-western Azerbaijan.

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The private meeting between Heydar Aliyev and Robert Kocharyan in Moscow came not only as a culmination, but also as a termination of the direct contacts between Baku and Stepanakert. Despite their understanding to continue the meetings, the Azerbaijani side abruptly curtailed contacts with the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh after this. During our face-to-face talks, Heydar Aliyev explained this by 'bad faith' of the Armenians who had seized in the autumn of 1993 a number of districts of Azerbaijan outside Nagorno-Karabakh, with the Armenian desire to use these contacts for propaganda purposes – to boost the 'NKR's' weight. Baku's abrupt turnaround towards urging that the Republic of Armenia (and not Nagorno-Karabakh) was a party to the conflict was caused not only and maybe even not so much by the increased engagement of Armenian forces in military actions. Given the fact that in this conflict the parties clearly overrate the significance of propaganda, Baku no longer wished to consider Nagorno-Karabakh an opposing party. (One may recall the rhetorical question which was used almost as an argument: could 100,000-strong Nagorno-Karabakh stand up to 7 million-strong Azerbaijan?). It was much easier to ascribe in propaganda the military failures and the capture by the Armenians of large territories to a massive engagement of Armenian forces, to Armenia's aggression. A sober, realistic assessment of the situation was once again sacrificed for the sake of the dubious needs of propaganda...

In our subsequent conversations Heydar Aliyev made believe that he did not object to resuming direct contacts with the Karabakhians, but only on discreet terms. Having received guarantees on that score through the mediator, he promised a total of eight times (!) over to resume unofficial contacts but always found pretexts for delaying this, referring mostly to the difficulties of selecting his representative for these meetings or to an inopportune moment. He knew that we would not be able to avoid that subject during our rendezvous and during the last two broached that issue himself in order to let it drop.

I drafted the text of a letter in which Baku and Stepanakert would undertake to hold meetings of their representatives in a restricted regime, neither confirm nor deny them in the event of leaks, and so forth. Kocharyan was ready to sign it provided Heydar Aliyev did likewise. But the latter balked...

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Baku's sharp about-faces in political and procedural matters from direct contacts with Stepanakert to their rupture and non-recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict have had a negative impact on the entire negotiating process. For Azerbaijan this has mainly political and propagandistic significance, allowing to spin a version of the conflict of greater benefit to itself – by claiming that the conflict is waged with Armenia, to accuse it of occupation and tone down the conflict with Nagorno-Karabakh. This is also of value to Baku as a kind of psychological compensation for the military setbacks and occupation, seemingly confirming that at the negotiating table it is gaining the upper hand over the Armenians.

The talks on Karabakh – with Russia's direct mediation in 1993–94 and in the OSCE framework since 1995 – were no longer carried on in accordance with the outdated Minsk Group scheme (on the basis of the CSCE decision of March 24, 1992: 11 states and 2 parties involved: 'the elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh') but on a completely different basis – between three conflicting parties (in full conformity with the most comprehensive decision of the OSCE system on Karabakh adopted by the Budapest summit, at a higher level and at a later period than the decision of 1992).

At these talks the delegation of Azerbaijan, to the detriment of the objectives of negotiations and frequently to their own interests, doomed itself to lengthy procedural discussions so as not to recognise the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as a conflicting party or oppose to the Karabakh Armenians a representative of Nagorno-Karabakh's Azeri community (to the point of rather grotesque attempts to position it as yet another – a fourth! – party to these negotiations). This only hindered the discussion and dealing with the real problems of settlement. Despite the obstructions and much as they spared the Azeris' sensibilities, the chairs firmly adhered to the decision of the summit in Budapest (incidentally, the OSCE summits in Lisbon and Istanbul did not revise it and generally did not touch upon the mechanism of negotiations).

In Bishkek the Azerbaijani parliamentarians made an awkward attempt to put up the leader of Nagorno-Karabakh's Azeri community Nizami Bakhman-

ov as a self-standing figure, although he could by no means pass off even as a municipal level representative, having merely headed the executive authorities in Shusha for less than two months.

The position taken by Azerbaijan later also precluded the signing of a full-fledged, juridically correct **agreement on a ceasefire taking effect on May 12, 1994**, which holds to this day. At that moment all three parties displayed a political will to stop the bloodshed. However, Baku did not wish a meeting of plenipotentiary representatives to be held for the purpose of regular signing of the document proposed by the mediator and accepted by all the parties. That is why an unprecedented form of signing that important agreement – the only existing arrangement valid to this day – had to be chosen.

When, after the Budapest summit where everything was approved by Heydar Aliyev, the Azeri side began to put up obstacles in the course of negotiations, the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Hungarian Foreign Minister László Kovács, at the session of the OSCE Senior Council in Prague, March 31, 1995, explicitly named the conflicting sides in the Karabakh conflict: **two sovereign states (Azerbaijan and Armenia) and Nagorno-Karabakh**. And to this day all attempts to distort the configuration of the Karabakh conflict merely hinder its peaceful settlement in which Baku should be interested just as much as the Armenian parties.

In 1993 it only became possible to resuscitate the chances for a ceasefire by December. However, the Azeri side twice evaded the formalisation of the new arrangements (first from December 16 and then from December 30). As it soon came out, the Azerbaijani troops were preparing to pass to the counter-offensive. It was apparently this that gave rise to unexpected difficulties related to the formalisation of the new ceasefire.

## Three Messages for Boris Yeltsin

By August 1993 the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had come up with an idea to suggest to all three parties to the conflict holding an urgent meeting for signing an agreement on a complete and universal ceasefire and cessation of hostilities on the condition of withdrawal of the Armenian forces from Agdam (and possibly from Kalbajar as well). We suggested one of Russia's southern towns as possible location for such a meeting with Dagomys becoming the final choice. We prepared a memo addressed to the president of Russia and drafts of his messages to Heydar Aliyev and Levon Ter-Petrossian, and also of a verbal address to Robert Kocharyan, but for reasons unknown to us the messages were never sent to the intended recipients. So we began to promote these ideas by other means – through Kozyrev's talks with Armenia's newly appointed Foreign Minister Vagan Papazyan and with Robert Kocharyan who both visited Moscow, and through his telephone conversation with Heydar Aliyev on August 11.

With Baku we also had to negotiate the release of six POWs – former Russian servicemen captured and convicted by the Azeris. Heydar Aliyev had promised to Kozyrev to raise that matter at the parliamentary session and push for the resolution scenario that I had suggested to him in our conversation on August 2 (a handover to Russia of six of its nationals in exchange for six Azeri servicemen and nine Azeri civilians – the Karabakh Armenians had agreed to hand over those six and nine).

Aliyev pointed out that for two months already he had been proposing to take the relations with Russia to a higher level but failed to meet an adequate response. He again complained that he had tried several times over but was never able to get in touch by phone with Boris N. Yeltsin. In the same conversation he himself for the first time mentioned that it would be worth thinking of a format for Azerbaijan's participation in the meeting of the CIS heads of states in Moscow in early September.

In particular, in order to orient the evolution of the relations between our countries, he asked us to send a Russian delegation to Baku headed by First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Anatoly L. Adamishin. It was decided that such delegation of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will consist of Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Leonidovich Kolokolov and the head of Russia's mediatory mission

We met with Heydar Aliyev again in Baku exactly a month after our first difficult talk with him took place. This time the agenda of the meeting was far broader but it also touched upon Karabakh. It went relatively smoothly. Heydar Aliyev approved our plan of action concerning Karabakh, including the signing of the agreement in Dagomys.

Meetings were also held with a number of figures in the new Azerbaijani administration – Secretary of State Lala Shovket-Hajieva, who had worked in Moscow for many years, Acting Foreign Minister A. A. Salamov and other persons. The delegation's stay in Baku had received a good deal of coverage in the local press.

I remember conversing with Heydar Aliyev's foreign policy advisor Vafa Guluzade (with whom Mr. Aliyev had himself recommended me to maintain working contact). During our face-to-face talk he surprised me by an unexpected request to jot down a rough text of Heydar Aliyev's message to Boris N. Yeltsin on Karabakh affairs. A very extraordinary proposition, but supposing that Vafa Mirzoevich needed some skeleton framework for further follow up, I obliged him. The range of issues was evident – I had to deal with them on a daily basis. About half an hour later I handed to him my draft on one page and a half informing it with my view on that subject, notably on Russia's role in the settlement and its guarantees concerning the future agreement.

On the next day we were given Heydar Aliyev's message dated August 21 for delivery to the addressee. I was quite surprised and almost flattered by the fact that it retained all the main points and even the exact wording from my sketch. It remained a mystery why Vafa had asked me to do this. He might well have composed such a text by himself or asked someone from his own team to do it. Had he been advised by Heydar Aliyev himself to use my services, or was Vafa just short of time, unable to meet a deadline? It did not look like a provocation, as the risk was clearly greater for him. I am not sure either

that he had informed Heydar Aliyevich of my being the author or, at least, a co-author. I confess that neither did I report to my superiors about this 'overtime' work. I did not quite understand why Heydar Aliyev had so easily put his signature under everything that I had jotted down there. Was he in reality seeking to blandish Boris Yeltsin, to amend the rather critical attitude of the latter to himself in the recent years (this was incidentally mentioned in Yeltsin's memoirs)? Verbally he agreed with our plan of actions, but when it came to written documents, all kinds of digressions or stipulations could arise. Particularly rejoicing were Heydar Aliev's words about peaceful settlement being the only feasible solution to the conflict and about de facto indirect acknowledgement of Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict.

A message from the head of one state to the head of another in any case requires to be treated in a corresponding manner, irrespective of who drafted it. We had to take it as a basis of Azerbaijan's position under Heydar Aliyev and correlate it with the positions of the other conflicting parties. The basis was quite appropriate for us, we found a way to communicate it to Ter-Petrossian and Kocharyan, encouraging them to send similar letters to the president of Russia so as to achieve a consensus among the parties to the conflict.

By the time of his arrival to Moscow, on September 23, Kocharyan had sent a letter containing statements that were very close in wording to those that were desirable. Ter-Petrossian's letter arrived only on September 30. But the main disappointment it brought lied in his very vague, evasive phrasing, especially as compared to the messages of Heydar Aliyev and Kocharyan. Furthermore, the content of Ter-Petrossian's letter did not quite square with his rather categorical sayings in our conversations. In my memo addressed to the Armenian Foreign Minister Vagan Papazyan I expressed my perplexity regarding the text received, but no other messages on that issue were received from those parts. It turned out that the ability to play a double game was not alien to Yerevan either.

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Russia's independent mediation efforts had as of the autumn of 1993 proceeded in a series of directions. Needless to say, in the foreground was the

work in the preparation of a 'larger' agreement on a complete and universal ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. What we had in mind was a trilateral agreement involving Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, which would allow a possibility of deployment of separation forces in the tensest zones, primarily, near the Iranian border – along the line of Fizuli – Hadrut – Jabrayil – Qubadli.

Heydar Aliyev asked for a postponement of the agreement signing until September 25, but the Azeris continued to delay with the matter even after that. Foreign Minister Hasan Hasanov undertook a patently doomed attempt to suggest a counter-draft of a 'protocol', incorporating therein many of Baku's steep, unrealistic demands. We had to show him the unacceptability of his draft item by item and suggest carrying on work on the mediator's document. In a conversation over the high-frequency telephone line on October 16 he promised to urgently submit his comments on our draft.

Stepanakert in principle approved with our draft but still voiced a reservation with respect to specific locations for the deployment of separation forces and to the procedure of funding their costs (those questions had to be duly recorded in a protocol to the agreement).

The matter of separation forces also required a serious internal follow-up revision on our part, first and foremost by Russia's Defence and Foreign Ministries, with a view to preparing for raising the question of obtaining a UN mandate. Our contacts with the Ministry of Defence were not getting on. In response to our numerous appeals from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as to the detailing of separation forces or even just military observers we would merely receive formal runaround replies to the following effect: this matter can only be examined after a sustainable ceasefire is reached. As if our partners did not realise that a ceasefire, in order to become sustainable, needed thorough preliminary elaboration.

Another orientation of our efforts in the autumn of 1993 was the conclusion of an arrangement between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the prevention of border incidents. It was to become a kind of a 'second hemisphere' to the agreement on a ceasefire between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh extended until November 5, 1993. Both these documents were to provide a logical background for the desired larger trilateral agreement.



True, problems with the extension of the ceasefire beyond November 5 cropped up as well. Faced with the toughening standpoints of Azerbaijan, Kocharyan no longer wished to agree to the extension unless he would receive from Heydar Aliyev a confirmation of the mutual understanding reached between them at the private meeting in Moscow on September 25, 1993.

To avoid new incidents, we proposed to the two sides – Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, – a provisional military-technical measure (without any political consequences): to freeze the line of contact for the period while the ceasefire is in effect. However, the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry feared that this would ‘legitimise’ the presence of Armenian Karabakh forces on Azerbaijani territory.

Both the Azeris and the Armenians (except for the Karabakh Armenians) delayed the implementation of our second ‘road map’ which provided for a series of first bilateral and then trilateral meetings on specific issues. The most important of them seemed to be the meeting in Rostov-on-Don dedicated to the problem of restoration of transport and energy links in the conflict zone. Representatives from Azerbaijan, including Nakhichevan, Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as Russia, would be able to take part in it.

We planned to inform the CSCE Minsk Group members of these steps taken by Russia in a most general outline. Within the Minsk Group itself, including at the consultations of the ‘Nine’ in Rome, we intended to continue with the fine-tuning of the schedule of urgent measures, first and foremost with regard to ensuring the durability of the ceasefire and the non-resumption of hostilities. Along with this, it was necessary to place an emphasis on the point that the Minsk Group should not oppose Russia’s efforts to its own but support them on the basis of combination and mutual complementarity. In this context we intended to demonstrate the urgency of a firm agreement on a complete ceasefire that would be legally binding upon the parties, one that Russia was so actively pressing for. And, as for the convocation of the Minsk Conference, we believed that it could only become effective after the cessation of hostilities that its opening ought not to be artificially forced.

## The Shocks of the Autumn

Heydar Aliyev's election as the new president of Azerbaijan on October 3 and his accession to that office on October 10 was not marked by a turn towards reconciliation. On the contrary, in fact – the pre-election interest in a truce at the front was now gone. Upon my arrival in Baku, instead of attending the inauguration of the 'new' president, I had to spend more than one day hanging on the telephone at the government mansion where Adamishin and I were accommodated, settling the incident near the village of Kuijak that took place on October 10-12. But I was glad to have that situation successfully settled at long last.

However, that clash proved to be merely a pale rehearsal of the bloody show and the mass exodus of the population taking place in the south-west of Azerbaijan from October 21 to 27. After the Azeris again locally violated the ceasefire in the south, the Armenian Karabakh forces launched a broad response operation capturing the entire south-western region of Azerbaijan. As always, the parties offered mutually exclusive versions of what had happened. I shall begin with the more detailed one. At the CSCE Minsk Group meeting in Vienna on November 2-6, Arkadi Ghukasyan, head of the Karabakh delegation, offered the following version of these events:

On October 21 at 2.05 pm, Stepanakert received a report that in violation of the armistice which last since August 31, the Azeris had suddenly occupied four heights in the Jabrayil area. Ten minutes later, Vice-Speaker of the Azerbaijani Milli Meclis Afiyaddin Dzhililov was informed about this by the high-frequency phone. The latter promised to clarify the situation and call back in half an hour but did not keep his word, and at 4.15 pm his phone no longer answered. We contacted the officer on duty at the Azerbaijan Defence Ministry by phone, he turned out to be totally unaware of the situation but promised to report the matter to his superiors. Kazimirov's phone did not

answer either (it turned out that he was in Rome at the time). Then Ghukasyan informed Russia's ambassador in Armenia Vladimir Stupishin of the situation. He also asked Libaridian and Shakhnazaryan to get in touch with Baku. An attempt to speak to the UN representative in Baku, the Egyptian delegate El-Said, also failed – his phone likewise did not answer.

From 11 o'clock on October 22 the Azeri offensive resumed in the same area, according to Ghukasyan. At 11.10 he phoned Dzhililov (who was just on the point of leaving for the Kusary district), demanding that the events of the day before should not repeat themselves, and reminded him that it was Azerbaijan that had asked for the ceasefire to be prolonged until November 5. It proved to be impossible to get in touch with Abbasov and El Said. Ghukasyan again reported the situation to Stupishin. By that time taking part in the offensive were about 40 armoured vehicles, the toll was 14 people dead, 9 missing and about 40 wounded. On October 23, in Ghukasyan's version, fighting was in progress from 6 am on. At 9.15 am he again phoned up Baku and at 11.00 the Armenians stemmed the advancing forces of the adversary and launched a counter-offensive. An hour later, Dzhililov phoned himself asking for adequate measures to be taken. He claimed that the ceasefire was broken by armed groups out of Baku's control, possibly from Ganja. He gave assurances that the matter would be investigated under Heydar Aliyev's supervision, and the culprits punished. However, nothing was ever reported on this ever since.

Ghukasyan specifically stressed the fact that the Armenians only launched their counter-offensive on the third day after the ceasefire was broken by the Azeris. According to him, on October 21 they presumed that it was an occasional outbreak of hostilities and did not even return the fire. From October 23 to 26 an Armenian offensive 'for the destruction of enemy forces' was in progress, and on October 27 Karen Baburyan made a statement on a unilateral ceasefire and cessation of the offensive by the Karabakhians.

Ghukasyan's principal opponent – Vafa Guluzade – asserted that each side had its own version of events: the concentration of Armenian forces near Zangelan had been in evidence three days before the breaking of the ceasefire. He recalled, and with good reason too, that the Armenians had earlier promised not to capture Agdam, Fizuli or Jabrayil either, but later seized them all

the same. The offensive was already in progress against Beylagan, with the forces being concentrated near Qazax. He denied that Azerbaijan was to blame for the resumption of hostilities. According to him, no provocation could justify the Armenian troops' operation. Guluzade placed emphasis on the extremely dire humanitarian consequences of that operation (people were fleeing into Iran, drowning in the river Arax; winter came and many were left without shelter).

For some time it seemed that one should demand a reversal to the status quo ante, that is, to the positions the two sides held on October 20, before the violation of the ceasefire, but this soon proved to be idealistic thinking on our part – this was something that could not be attained.

No sooner had we arrived in Vienna on November 1 that I was again urged to return to Moscow. I had to write in reply on November 3 that I was ready to fly back at once upon receiving express instructions, but that it was not worth doing immediately as only on that day (due to the delay with the arrival of the delegations from Azerbaijan and from Nagorno-Karabakh's Azeri community) the Minsk Group started its work in a body. My departure from Vienna, just as my failure to turn up in Paris in September, would surely be viewed as ostentatious unwillingness to cooperate with the Minsk Group.

(Upon my return to Moscow I found a blunt admonition in a memo left by my supervisor and even friend – First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Anatoly Adamishin. For all our good personal relations, he wrote to me: 'Vladimir Nikolayevich, what we have come to is sheer nonsense, if not a disgrace. You are needed for business, not for ceremonial visits. Please keep this earnestly in mind.')

But we were both far from indifferent to what country would pretend to the role of Chair of the Minsk Conference. In Vienna the version that the Italians were trying to lobby Great Britain for membership in the Minsk Group and for the post of its chair received its confirmation. It turned out that the Armenians were against Britain's admission.

Writing from Vienna to Moscow, I ventured an idea that, without excessive obtrusiveness, we ought to show that Russia was not going to shirk responsibility, that its presidency would ensure an optimal combination of efforts with those of the Minsk Group. At the same time I made it clear that

the USA, Turkey and certain other members of the Minsk Group would be doing their best to prevent such a scenario. This would, however, enable us to secure Russia's independent mediatory role, warding it off from the attempts to corkscrew it into the Minsk Group's 'common horse team,' which only slowed down the settlement process. Moscow did not respond to that suggestion and we decided not to press the issue.

Again from Vienna I submitted yet another proposal – this time on the resumption of the ceasefire. The idea was that at midnight on November 6 the deadline for the former ceasefire (effective until November 5) was to expire – that ceasefire was disrupted by the resumption and expansion of the fighting over the period from October 21 to 27 – but since, despite the 7-day disruption, the parties declared their resolution to observe it, it should be suggested to them that it is automatically extended by seven days – until November 12 inclusive, so that during those days talks could be held with an extension for a longer period being formally arranged.

I reminded that these considerations had been transmitted in a draft by me to Baku and Stepanakert back on October 31 in the draft Provisional Arrangements between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. I suggested giving this an additional impetus by asking the parties' opinion on that matter. In order to achieve a balance of the parties' interests I envisaged to include later on in the arrangements both the procedure of their actions in the event of other incidents (this was implemented only a year and a half later – in February 1995) and the withdrawal of forces to the positions as per October 20. I realised that Baku would sooner agree to it rather than Stepanakert, but it turned out that remote control over the process far from always worked – Moscow kept silence in reply. I still do not know if anything was ever done to pursue that matter at the time...

The 'Nine' were planning to exchange opinions in Vienna on the newly-arisen situation in the conflict region, on changing the chair of the Minsk Conference in view of the transition of the CSCE chairmanship to Italy due in early December, on fixing the permanent venue for Minsk Group meetings, and, lastly, on the financing and reorganisation of its work.

At sessions of the Minsk Group in a body it was, however, necessary to introduce amendments to the Schedule of Urgent Measures, to discuss two

fresh annexes thereto (on the separation of forces and on measures for enhancing the durability of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities), as well as a draft agenda and the draft rules of procedure of the CSCE Minsk Conference.

For us the meeting was noteworthy also due to the fact that not only did the comparison of Russia's peacemaking efforts with those of the CSCE Minsk Group constitute its general background, but it sometimes broke through to the fore during the discussions. My very critical article on the problems with the Minsk Group (I had been preparing it for Kozyrev but he preferred it to come out under my authorship) had already been published in the Moscow newspaper *Segodnya* and then distributed at the CSCE headquarters. Upon our arrival in Vienna, we paid a visit to the CSCE Secretary-General Wilhelm Höynck before the opening of the Minsk Group meeting on November 2. He wondered how one could avoid accusations that the ceasefire agreements were achieved not in the framework of the Minsk process but 'in a different format' (with Russia's mediation). Besides the ceasefire, it was, as he pointed out, a matter of a whole series of arrangements including bilateral negotiations between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. Höynck was saying that Nagorno-Karabakh was a special zone and a special problem too where Russia's special role on the territory of the former USSR could be discerned in a most salient manner – virtually all delegations in Vienna admitted that without Russia it was impossible to resolve conflicts in that region.

Yes, Russia had its national interests, including in the Transcaucasus, he continued. But who did not? This is normal. However, with respect to Karabakh what was necessary was a solution acceptable to all. Russia's possibilities should be realised within an acceptable international framework. He believed that a formula should be found within the Minsk Group: what Russia itself was doing and what it was doing in the context corresponding to the concepts and operation of the Minsk Group. And one had to avoid disputes between Russia and the CSCE Minsk Group by all means possible. In his opinion, what was being done and developed within the CSCE in relation to Karabakh, with Russia's participation among others, went far beyond the Nagorno-Karabakh problem itself.

Höynck perceived our delicate probing on whether the presidency in the CSCE Minsk Group should be handed over to Russia with little enthusiasm.

Speaking off the record, in terms of a strictly private opinion, he said that it was too early for now, the time for that would come roughly a year later (what an accurate guess on his part!). He believed that it would be inappropriate for such a major power to get a refusal undermining its own authority. It was better, in his opinion, to receive an approval of Russia's high standing from the Minsk Group.

Later I learnt post factum from the records of Andrei V. Kozyrev's conversation with the Swedish ambassador in Moscow Örjan Berner taking place on November 8 that the minister had tried to sound out while in Stockholm the possibility of pooling the efforts of Russia and the CSCE Minsk Group by appointing me as Chairman of the Minsk Group. He also proposed, if need be, to pick up co-presidents and thereby set up the Minsk 'Three' with an official status in the framework of the CSCE. As conceived by him, I was to report on the results of my visits to the conflict region both to Russia's Foreign Ministry and to the Minsk Group, which would resolve many current problems, making it possible in practice to 'link up' the peacemaking efforts of Russia and the CSCE.

Örjan Berner deemed the idea to be interesting and capable of eliminating the redundancy in the Minsk Group's and Russia's actions, and graced me with compliments, noting that Sweden considered me a 'very capable and actively working diplomat.' He promised to report in Stockholm about Kozyrev's considerations. Our minister pointed out the importance of Sweden's support for this proposal, reminding that Margareta aff Ugglas had agreed that the settlement in Karabakh was hardly possible without our involvement, but also stressing that we would not like to act on our own, independently from the CSCE either.

But this was not bound to materialise at the end of 1993. It only did so a year later in Budapest, after Russia secured a cessation of fire and of the massive bloodshed, and its ill-wishers in the West had no other choice but to accept it.

When at that session in Vienna the chairmanship of Sweden in the Minsk Group began to take shape (the stipulated term was one year), Armenia and the Karabakhians approved of it, while the Azeris wavered.

During the informal consultations of 'the Nine' we informed its members about the steps undertaken by us for the resumption of the ceasefire and the

withdrawal of the Armenian forces to the positions held on October 20. We also expressed our readiness to pursue our efforts in such a way as not to leave the Minsk Group on the sidelines (say, by acting on its behalf or upon its instruction and keeping it abreast of the progress in the talks).

US representative John Maresca (who clearly lost equilibrium on a number of issues at that Minsk Group meeting, making it the last one for him) hastened to declare that he could not 'give Russia a mandate' for holding negotiations on a ceasefire on behalf of the Minsk Group, as he allegedly did not know their content. In order to somehow justify that position, he stressed that only the chairman of the Minsk Group could wield such a mandate.

The American's strident position did not receive express support from the other members of the 'Nine', but the Turkish and the French delegates were not far from it (Candan Azer called for an 'effort concentration', E. Dubois spoke against 'distracting the attention of the conflicting sides.'). Only the German representative Frank Lambach called upon the 'Nine' to be more flexible with all this and upon Russia to carry on acting in the same spirit 'even without a mandate.' The Swedish delegate Mathias Mossberg defended the right of the CSCE Chair-in-Office and the Chairman of the Minsk Conference to seek the speediest resumption of the ceasefire, drawing a distinction between an operational ceasefire, which was of greater interest to the parties to the conflict in terms of tactics, and the one featured in the Schedule of Urgent Measures. The strongest support came from the Belarusian diplomat A. Buben.

That discussion gave us a possibility to bring up even more insistently the issue of the need to endorse Russia's efforts on the part of the Minsk Group. We called the attention to the fact that some of its members, instead of supporting the ceasefire arrangements achieved with Russia's assistance, were trying to place our steps aimed at curbing the bloodshed, as it were, outside the law. Nor did I conceal the fact that for a number of weeks a policy of barefaced derailing of the efforts to conclude an agreement on a full and universal cessation of hostilities was pursued for the mere reason that it was being drafted with Russia's mediation.

We emphasised that we were consistently calling the attention of the Minsk Group on a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, but that, unfortu-



nately, it persistently tended to underestimate this. The Minsk Group recalled this only when the Russian mediator had managed for several times in a row to achieve such formal arrangements between the parties and they – for the first time in the course of this conflict – did observe them for a rather long time.

We noted that it was in the interests of the Minsk Group itself to make maximum use of Russia's unique opportunities in the Karabakh settlement instead of hindering it. We firmly stated that Russia would not slacken on its efforts aimed at terminating military hostilities. Attempts to counterpose the efforts of Russia and the Minsk Group did not emanate from us. We highlighted the same idea in a statement made at the session of the Vienna CSO group. Under various pretexts our partners practically declined to pursue this discussion in substance.

We came to an agreement to the effect that Minsk Group activity was to be financed from the CSCE budget and not from that of its chairing country.

Heated discussions centred around the choice of a permanent location for holding Minsk Group meetings. At first, Czech ambassador Zdenek Matejka suggested Prague, using the infrastructure remaining there after the times when the CSCE Secretariat operated there, but soon dropped that proposal. The suggestion to hold meetings in the capital of the country chairing the Minsk Group met with support and understanding. The person to blame for the disproportionate exacerbation of the discussion on that issue was the American diplomat John Maresca who strongly objected to holding the meetings in Vienna. Behind the scenes it was rumoured that the reason for this were the strained relations between Maresca and US Representative at the CSCE J. Kornblum, who used to be his subordinate when the CSCE was being created.

Quite understandably, other Minsk Group participants did not deem it possible to proceed from this. Meanwhile, Mr. Maresca was simply obsessed with this issue, reaching a categorical tone. Not only did he suggest all possible venues, anything but Vienna (e. g. Washington or Geneva – the latter under the pretext of interaction with the UN, although we all knew how skeptical he was even with regard to the UN Security Council resolutions on Karabakh) – not only did he consent even to -Moscow, but he insistently

demanded that it be put on record that meetings should not be held in Vienna. This plunged him into disputes with many other participants, especially with the French member H. Dubois and the Swedish member Mathias Mossberg.

During the discussion of the Minsk Group schedule the Azerbaijani delegation indulged in verbal coinage trying to replace the usual term 'parties to the conflict' with a term like 'parties to the ceasefire'. It was thus that the vigils of the Minsk Group usually passed. It was an ordinary meeting for it. I shall not waste time on describing the others, as it would be too tedious. Their main feature was that this was a sherr talking-shop without proper concentration on major issues. And Maresca was quite right in his irritation with the fact that a number of member states delegate absolute novices who were barely familiar with the problems of Nagorno-Karabakh and rarely able to make any useful contribution.

## Three Confessions by Phone

On the instruction of the President of Russia, Andrei V. Kozyrev negotiated the approval of our November visit to the conflict region in personal telephone conversations with Heydar Aliyev, Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharyan. Another telephone set to be used by a translator or a shorthand typist was plugged in to the high-frequency set in his cabinet. This time the minister suggested that, if needed, I could join in these conversations using that phone set (our interlocutors were even confused sometimes as to who exactly they were talking to: Kozyrev or Kazimirov).

The November 9, 1993 session, consisting of three consecutive conversations, was not without interest. We insisted on a prompt termination of the hostilities and a withdrawal of the forces to the positions they held prior to the violation of the ceasefire arrangements of October 21, proposing that the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh sign an agreement to that effect in Moscow or somewhere in the south of Russia with its subsequent entrenchment on a multilateral basis with the involvement of representatives from the CSCE or, possibly, the UN.

Kozyrev told Heydar Aliyev in no uncertain terms that Azerbaijan was suffering military setbacks because it was delaying the settlement, listening to those who dissuaded it from signing the agreement facilitated by Russia. He noted that the Azeri side was not entirely free of fault as far as the disruption of the ceasefire was concerned, the conflict had reached the dangerous brink of internationalisation which would rouse radicals and extremists. 'I am also going to speak to Levon Ter-Petrossian and, possibly, to Robert Kocharyan. I am going to tell them that it is high time an end was put to this conflict, that Russia's patience too has its limits. We want to know if there is a will to achieve the cessation of belligerent actions on the basis of our compromise proposals,' Kozyrev concluded.

Heydar Aliyev was clearly annoyed by the fact that having set Azerbaijan's face towards Russia, he received no support from it in return. Having described the tragic situation in the south, along the border with Iran, he admitted: 'It may have been partly our fault as well that on October 21 the ceasefire arrangements were violated in the Jabrayil area, there was fighting over two villages. But is this indeed sufficient ground for mounting a massive offensive, for turning tens of thousands of people into refugees? When those events began, I addressed Kazimirov, Ter-Petrosian and the leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh. The latter assured me that they would not enter Zangelan.'

Aliyev stressed that he had initiated contact with the Karabakh leaders, and that now Kocharyan was trying to dictate his own terms. Armenia pretended to have no involvement in the events but, in fact, everything was masterminded by Yerevan – without Armenia Nagorno-Karabakh would have been unable to do anything. By noting also that Armenia, in turn, would not have been able to do anything without backing from abroad, he must have been alluding to Russia. In conclusion, Aliyev stated that he was ready to go for compromises, but only fair compromises.

Kozyrev remarked that it was the first time that Russia was posing the issues of settlement so sharply before the Armenians, too, but the latter's reply was that it was Baku that was reluctant to sign an agreement on the suspension of hostilities, or even negotiate about it. He told Aliyev straight that Hasanov was posing issues in a maximalist spirit. 'Members of the Azerbaijani leadership are currently each one says his own. It is impossible to do business like this. Hasanov is out of touch with the reality in demanding a coplee and speedy withdrawal from all occupied territories, while certain stages will be required, a phased-out withdrawal. And you have to make a decision.

The Azerbaijani president suddenly blurted out: 'I openly and officially declare to you that in the resolution of this conflict I place my bets on Russia – I have no use for the CSCE, nor the UN. Russia is capable of resolving this conflict all fairness, without prejudice to Azerbaijan. I shall take responsibility upon myself, I am prepared for it.'

Kozyrev informed Aliyev that over the next few days he would send me bringing a draft agreement to Baku, and then to Yerevan and Stepanakert. He

assured him that we were not seeking to counterpose ourselves to the international community and were willing to receive an approval of the agreement from the CSCE Minsk Group and the UN Security Council. The Karabakhians would have received guarantees of security, which is not really equivalent to recognition of independence, but, at least, blood would no longer flow, the withdrawal of armed forces from the occupied territories and other practical steps would follow, while the status of Nagorno-Karabakh would become a subject of detailed and, possibly, protracted negotiations.

Aliyev agreed that maximalist positions were not the best basis for seeking common understanding. ‘Kocharyan insists on our recognising them as a legitimate party. I agree that they are a party to the conflict, but not more than that!’

Kozyrev reminded his interlocutor that it was Hasanov who refused to recognise them as a party to the conflict, even though that would not have accorded them international legal recognition, but would have merely meant acknowledgement of the actual situation as it was. ‘Kocharyan points out: whatever Aliyev verbally admits, Hasanov invariably strikes out on paper. This point has to be cleared up.’

Heydar Aliyev proposed that, in addition to the three parties to the conflict, the agreement should be signed by Russia as well. Kozyrev agreed: ‘And Russia also, as a mediator.’

Aliyev repeated: ‘The main ally, the main power in the resolution of this conflict is Russia. I want Russia to have the same relations with Azerbaijan that it has with Armenia. I do not pretend to a single inch more than that. I have always said that Azerbaijan enjoys close ties with Russia. And I am now reproached here: Russia has thrown Aliyev out, it has no use for him.’

The minister asked Aliyev to take a look at our draft agreement himself, as the Azerbaijan representatives of other levels spoke with different voices.

Aliyev agreed to examine that plan with Kazimirov, to look for additional reserves, but asked not to procrastinate with the withdrawal of the occupying forces for months – the count had to be a matter of days or weeks. He manifested his awareness that it was unrealistic to expect a quick return of Lachin and Shusha but he simply had to mention them – that problem had to be indicated at least.

For my part, I had to remind Mr. Aliyev that a demand for their speediest return had in practice yielded a quite different result – a delay in the withdrawal from the other zones one by one.

The Azeri president raised the issue of ensuring that for the duration of my trip nothing should occur at the front. He assured me that he was placing his stakes on Russia, was ready to come to Moscow, and asked me to let word to Boris Yeltsin of his desire to meet him, if necessary, and to Viktor Chernomyrdin that the Azeris were anxious to develop local oil deposits.

Kozyrev promised to communicate to Ter-Petrossian and Kocharyan that any escalation of hostilities was to be prevented by all means, and to Boris Yeltsin – Aliyev's wish to meet with him in Moscow.

\* \* \*

We immediately got in touch with Levon Ter-Petrossian over the phone. This conversation was shorter but no less frank. Kozyrev stressed that without an all-round support from Armenia the expansionist operations by the Karabakhian armed groups would have been impossible. The Armenian leaders were responsible for the increasingly threatening march of events. The danger of intervention on the part of Iran and Turkey, the uprise of the Islamic fundamentalism – all of these represented potential danger not only to the interests of Armenia but to those of Russia as well. An important political and psychological barrier – the untouchability of the borders of what used to be the USSR in the eyes of Iran and Turkey – was at risk of crumbling.

Having briefly mentioned his talks with Mr. Aliyev, Kozyrev noted that the latter had agreed to search for a compromise basis for a draft agreement which Kazimirov would first take to Baku and then to Yerevan (but that he did not deem it possible to exclude Lachin and Shusha from it). This could be the subject of future talks.

President Ter-Petrossian also suggested that I should travel to Stepanakert to work with the Karabakhians – as it would be easier to persuade them there. Kozyrev agreed but stressed that they were letting Armenia down and active work with them was necessary. I also asked Mr. Ter-Petrossian about it even before my arrival. The Armenian president said he wanted to

send Foreign Minister Vagan Papazyan to Moscow to discuss the current situation, but agreed to my suggestion to postpone his visit until after my trip. Concerning the situation, he soothingly reassured us that there was no fighting underway at the moment – it was all quiet.

\* \* \*

To Robert Kocharyan Kozyrev said at once that Moscow was seriously concerned about the developments in the situation in the region. ‘We resolutely condemn the unleashing of military hostilities and the seizure of the south-western districts of Azerbaijan, we insist on a prompt termination of the fighting and a withdrawal of the Karabakh forces through the signing in Moscow of an agreement on a complete and universal cessation of hostilities at the level of the leaders of the three parties along with a state-by-stage withdrawal from the occupied areas and guarantees of mutual security.’

Unaware of my being on line, Kocharyan began by saying that he did not know what exactly I had conveyed to Moscow, I may have got him wrong. Further on, he linked the latest events to the arrival in Azerbaijan of a whole regiment of Afghan mujahedeen ‘which has now skedaddled to Iran.’ He believed that Baku was using ceasefire arrangements of the recent months to gain time for bringing up and employing mujahedeen fighters.

Kozyrev replied to him that the protraction of the conflict would inevitably lead to the involvement of third parties, extremists from Iran and Turkey. ‘The entire Islamic world will be represented here and no power will suffice to counter it. Either you receive guarantees and peace by sacrificing possible military gains and in exchange for a withdraw from the occupied territories, or you will path a way to a third world war – a dangerous collision of the Christian and the Islamic worlds. You have to avail of the advantage of having such a pragmatic politician as Heydar Aliyev in power and seek an agreement with him.’

Kocharyan tried to justify himself by saying that, whereas the Karabakhians were said to be intractable, it was the Azeris that reneged on the arrangements. ‘We,’ he said, ‘were in accord with the latest draft agreement proposed by Kazimirov, and are ready to sign it.’ He again asked whether Heydar Aliyev

was not trusted too much in Moscow. And he reminded us that he had been waiting, together with Kazimirov and Shakhnazaryan, until 2.30 in the morning of September 25, for Hasanov's arrival at the Russian Foreign Ministry to work over the draft agreement, but the latter never showed up – they did not really want any agreement! He had even failed to notify his negotiation partners that he would not come.

Kozyrev parried by pointing out that he trusted Aliyev to the same extent as he did the other conflict participants. He said that President Aliyev had promised to personally examine the draft agreement (not leaving it at Hasanov's sole discretion).

Mr. Kocharyan complained that there was nobody in Baku that he could work with – Hasanov, Hajiev, Sadykov all represented a hard line. It was not clear if the arrangements reached with President Aliyev in Moscow were still in force. For my part, I said outright to Kocharyan that the Karabakhians had to make the first step towards reconciliation – Baku at the moment had very restricted room for political manoeuvre.

Kozyrev argued strongly that the historic chance to engage in political settlement should not be missed.

Kocharyan again stressed that Heydar Aliyev had shunned the signing of the agreement in Moscow so as to gain a month and a half or two months and could do the same thing again, but he, Kocharyan, was ready to make another try. The plan proposed by Kazimirov fully suited them but Baku was overstating the demands and enlisting forces from the outside. Kozyrev caught up that idea: 'They are banking not on their own forces but on enlisting others, while those others have their own great interest in this... No one has any doubts that the overrun territories belong to Azerbaijan and an ever increasing amount of countries will lend it moral support. As for you, you will have to play out an interesting gambit – to give up a pawn in order to gain an advantageous position.'

Kozyrev warned that during my trip to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert there should be no military surprises of any sort. Kocharyan answered: 'We guarantee that for the entire duration of his stay.'

\* \* \*



Each of the three conversations contained certain fun facts. Baku would later spend years disowning Heydar Aliyev's words about Karabakh being a party to the conflict ('but not more than that').

Levon Ter-Petrossian knocked us over with another 'revelation'. In the face of the undeniable evidence produced by Kozyrev that Armenia was a direct party to the conflict he found nothing better than to attempt to conceal what was an open secret: 'This is strictly between ourselves!'

As for Robert Kocharyan, in response to Kozyrev's appeal to pull out the troops to the positions they held on October 20 or even symbolically to vacate a certain area, he declared that he would consider the possibility of withdrawing the troops a few kilometers back. 'I shall work on the map,' he assured, 'the territory affords this.'

Agreement was therefore achieved with all the top leaders of the parties regarding the goal of the trip by the special representative of the Russian President – to elaborate our draft agreement on the termination of the armed conflict. Mutual understanding was also reached that for that period the parties would observe a ceasefire effectively established by that moment.

On November 13 we set off for Baku eventually staying there much longer than we had planned. There took place not one but several meetings with Heydar Aliyev and Hasan Hasanov. The Azeri leaders assured us that they were willing to work on the conclusion of the agreement on the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities with Russia's mediation, want Russia to be the guarantor of its observance and provide its separation forces and observers, although they allow the possibility a combination with CSCE observers in the future. They agreed to finance the presence of these forces and observers jointly with Russia, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Heydar Aliyev assured us that if their deployment would have to be arranged first for 6 months, it would then be repeatedly prolonged during a long period.

During our last conversation on November 19 Heydar Aliyev agreed verbally that we would have to confront the CSCE with the accomplished fact of an agreement before the session of the CSCE foreign ministers in Rome in early December. He even promised to give relevant instructions. He was verbally echoed by Hasanov but each time he made this conditional upon a particular settlement of the problems of Lachin and Shusha.

Still it was obvious that Aliyev and Hasanov did not quite realise how urgently the agreement had to be concluded, even for the purpose of a speediest beginning of the Armenian forces' withdrawal from the occupied districts. No readiness to work strenuously in order to sign the agreement as early as in November was to be discerned – everything was dragged out. Even the petty intrigues around procedural issues threatened to ruin the whole business (the unwillingness to recognise the Karabakhians as a party to the conflict and to the agreement – Hasanov admitted only their imprimatur but not a signature). It was not at all clear whether Baku intended to maintain the ceasefire effectively established in November, and if so, how exactly. For my own part, on balance of our talks in Baku I reported to Moscow about the tedious work on the draft agreement, making a point that the ceasefire would not hold if we just counted on sheer luck and not bolster it with a special arrangement.

Hasanov insisted on his harder line despite Heydar Aliyev's relative verbal flexibility and delayed our departure for Armenia in every way possible. As it turned out later, a draft of their own, alternative to ours, was being urgently prepared in Baku at the time. During our last talk Hasanov proposed, even asked, to pass it on to the Armenians as allegedly that from the mediator, which tells a lot about the morals and the style of the author of that undertaking. I flatly refused to pretend it was mine, agreeing to pass it on to the Armenians only as a counter-proposal of the Azeri side, which nearly guaranteed its rejection by the Armenians, although that was not at all the aim of our tour.

From Baku I asked the minister to urgently clarify with the leadership of the Russian Ministry of Defence the question of separation forces for roughly four sectors and observers for the remaining sectors of the conflict zone. In view of the mood of the Ministry of Defence on that question, there was no clarity as to whether we would manage it on our own. But this message of mine from Baku of November 19 was only reported to Kozyrev on Monday, November 21, when the situation became sharply aggravated.

## **A Border Incident of November 20, 1993**

A shooting incident that occurred as our mediatory mission attempted to cross the border between Azerbaijan into Armenia had resulted in a great clamour, false rumours and speculations. I shall relate it in maximum detail: it is time to clear that episode of the thick accrescence of lies – in the form of both accidental and deliberate distortions. This is all the more so as it had caused a brief but unprecedented complication in the relations between Russia and Armenia.

In those years our mediatory work often compelled us to travel from Baku to Yerevan and vice versa. There was no direct traffic connection for a long time and we had to travel via Moscow, which took two to three days. This time, after spending six days in Baku (November 13-19), we wanted to make up for the time lost by directly crossing the border with Armenia. Especially considering that there was a relative lull at the fronts and, besides, it had been expressly pre-arranged with the parties that they stick to the ceasefire regime for the entire period of our tour.

On the morning of November 18 I recalled that back in Moscow the official representative of Russia's Foreign Ministry Grigory B. Karasin was due to announce at a regular briefing in the afternoon the message left by us beforehand, concerning the next in a series of trips of Russia's mediatory mission. All but intuitively, – which indeed happens sometimes! – I urgently sent from Baku a small addition to the text so as to make it in time for the briefing. Verbatim it ran as follows: 'A mutual understanding has been reached that for the duration of the trip of the special representative of the Russian President the opposing sides mutually sustain the effectively established ceasefire.'

Having received from Heydar Aliyev the 'go-ahead' with regard to crossing of the border and a promise to help us reach Qazax, I contacted the administration of the president of Armenia by high-frequency phone on the

very same day and informed presidential advisor David Gurgenovitch Shakhnazaryan and Chief of the Presidential Secretariat Shagen Karamanukyan that on this time we would not like to fly via Moscow but were ready to cross the Armenian- Azerbaijani border. We agreed than upon arrival in Qazax on November 19 roughly at 6.00 pm we would get on for contact. The route of passage across the border had not been specifically discussed (not that we knew it anyway), but the Armenians implied an ordinary itinerary along the Qazax-Ijevan road. They assured us that they would do all that was possible to meet us on their side of the border.

On November 19, V. I. Muzychenko and I flew from Baku to Naftalan and from there we travelled by car, escorted by the traffic police, to the town of Qazax, but only arrived there by 6.30 pm local time: later than expected – and it was already getting dark.

The garrison commandant, Colonel Isa Nazarovich Sadykhov, who welcomed us, refused to effect a border crossover in the dusk and suggested that we stay overnight and proceed with our plans in the morning. We then asked him to contact urgently the Armenian side and to inform them of this (we had no mobile phones of our own, nor other channels of communication at the time, and in this respect, unfortunately, we fully depended on the conflicting parties). Sadykhov also mentioned that certain roads had been mined. He informed his Armenian counterparts that the crossing of the border would take place in the vicinity of Voskepar, near the village of Ashaghy Askipara, on November 20, after 10 am.

We soon received an indirect confirmation that he did exactly that. At 7.30 pm a member of our mediatory mission Yuri S. Ignatov phoned from Moscow to Qazax and informed us that David G. Shakhnazaryan had sent to him from Yerevan his objections to the change of the place of border crossing by the Azeris. For my part, I asked Ignatov to tell Shakhnazaryan that the Azeris were refusing to ensure the security of the mission along the first route and guaranteed it along the other – right up to the place which was under the control of the Armenian side, that the itinerary on its territory was determined by the party that was in charge in ensuring security.

All through the evening Armenians and Azeris maintained contact by portable radio.

It turned out that there were no hotels in the town . On Sadykhov's invitation we spent the night in his flat, where we met his wife Ira and their two sons – Yan and Rustam.

In the morning of November 20, I kept asking Sadykhov whether there was any contact with the Armenians on the other side of the border, and also about the location where we were supposed to cross it. At first he kept saying the connection was getting better but not without difficulties, and then informed us that everything had been arranged: both the place and the time of the border crossing.

At about 10 o'clock we started on our journey from Qazax in our cars. A whole caravan volunteered to accompany us: all of the local authorities, including the head of administration of the Qazax district Nasimi Huseinovich ShakhmAliyev. Six or seven cars were moving along a narrow asphalt road. On the left side, beyond the river which was, in fact, even hard to spot at first from the road, an elevation could be seen, which turned out to be its steep other bank controlled by the Armenian forces. On our side the bank was a more gently sloping one, and we were driving past almost completely abandoned settlements in the frontier area.

Roughly half an hour later Colonel Sadykhov stopped the cavalcade in the village of Mazam suggesting that all wait behind a high hill near a half-ruined house, while the forward jeep would reach the Armenian positions, discuss the details of our passage with them and return to pick us up. This was just what we did.

The commander of the Azeri battalion Isa Veliev, accompanied by two soldiers and a driver, seated themselves into a UAZ-469 off-roader. They drove off, while we were milling about in expectation in front of a house destroyed by the shelling. It was not really cold but rather cool. In some places snow was already covering the ground. I asked Sadykhov how long it would take Veliev to reach the Armenian positions and return. 12-15 minutes was the colonel's response. But nearly half an hour had already passed. Sadykhov was also somewhat puzzled by the fact that the jeep was not back yet. The time was already nearing 11 o'clock.

Another ten minutes or so passed, and suddenly there was one single shot. Then another. And again, more and more. Then a string of bursts spat-

tered, followed by a second and a third. Something was afoot behind the hill where the little UAZ had driven away. Before my very eyes the commander sent several soldiers over to check what was going on on other side of the hilltop but ordered them not to open fire in response. Meanwhile, we heard shots of a larger caliber and grenade launchers. 'This is a Shilka self-propelled anti-aircraft gun already,' Sadykhov said. The soldiers returning from the hill reported that from the high bank gunfire was going on, the jeep disabled on the road. The hill where Azeri soldiers had just been spotted was also immediately exposed to fire.

We spent a total of about 40 minutes standing behind the ruined house, plus another 10 minutes or so – to the accompaniment of progressive fire. We could not be 'hit' from small arms but the ruins of the house were a clear proof of that it was quite attainable for artillery or mortars.

It became clear that in that situation we would not be able to cross the border. The whole procession of cars had to turn back. We returned to Qazax along a different, quite worn-down road which was far from the high bank in order to be less targetable for possible gunfire. Along some stretches we drove simply across virgin fields.

Already in Qazax it became known that the UAZ was destroyed and burned down as a result of a direct hit. Platoon commander Vagiz Mamedov and driver Bakhram Nabiev were wounded, though, luckily, not grave ones: the former was wounded in the belly, the latter – in the arm. Attempts to give them medical aid to them were thwarted by fire from the Armenian side. In view of the fact that they were at the sloping bank – in full view of those who occupied the steep slope, all four had to hide in a road ditch and lie there until it began to grow dark. It was only under the cover of twilight that they managed to crawl out and get back to their own.

We returned to Qazax in the afternoon. I wrote down the names of those who accompanied us and had come under fire. After that, having said bid farewell to everyone, we set off for Ganja in a car so as to take a night flight to Moscow.

In Ganja we were welcomed by the head of administration Elsevar Alekperovich (Alekper-ogly) Ibragimov. From his cabinet I briefly related to First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Anatoly Adamishin on a high-frequency

line that the incident had barred our route to Armenia, and we were forced to return. Here are the bare facts of that day in brief, although important details and logical rationales are yet to follow.

When already at home we learnt the rest of the story about the events that had taken place at the border, all the uproarious details and inventions associated with that incident. Unprecedented tension arose between Moscow and Yerevan, all to the delight of Baku. This was, of course, to be fully expected, but acrimony that was perhaps excessive was added by factors the influence of which could, given the will to do so, be restrained. Those who were directly involved in that incident were also the last to publicise it, limiting themselves to identifying its causes and circumstances.

## The Stories Spinned Over That Incident and Who Spinned Them

On November 21, upon our arrival back to Moscow, we tried to restore the course of events. Due to the lack of communication during that trip from Baku to Qazax and farther on to the border, many facts and circumstances were not known to us. In the evening of November 19, following Karen Shakhnazaryan's address, Yuri S. Ignatov, the officer in charge of our mission, made strenuous efforts to avoid possible mishaps by literally pestering Baku and Yerevan with phone calls, but alas...

**Moscow.** It turned out that on November 20 Anatoly L. Adamishin reported my call to Andrei V. Kozyrev, and a brief but rather sharp statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was circulated concerning that 'barbarous act' with a demand for official explanations from the Armenian side and a direct hint at tough conclusions.

Andrei V. Kozyrev submitted a memo entitled 'On the Major Incident with the Representative of the Russian President on Nagorno-Karabakh' to Boris N. Yeltsin. It was noted that 'the references of the Armenian side to the fact that the Azeri side had changed the route of travel are unfounded – this had been known in Yerevan, yet no appropriate measures had been taken.' 'This unprecedented action running contrary to both the norms of international law and the general nature of the Russian-Armenian relations requires most resolute measures to be taken on our part,' declared the memo. 'If we cannot protect the safety and dignity of Russia's official representative, what then can be expected with regard to ordinary compatriots of ours living in the former Soviet republics?' Measures that had already been taken were mentioned, among them, the delay of our ambassador to Armenia in Moscow 'for consultations.'

Kozyrev suggested that we demand urgent official apologies from the president of Armenia along with public guarantees that, upon their identifi-



cation, the culprits would be brought to trial and necessary steps to ensure the safety of Russian representatives performing a peacemaking mission would be taken. 'Unless this is done within 24 hours, harsh political and economic sanctions against Armenia should be enforced – such may include the termination of oil product supplies.'

Yeltsin forwarded an urgent resolution to Viktor S. Chernomyrdin, Andrei V. Kozyrev and Vladimir M. Maschits in which he expressed his agreement with the proposals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, approved the draft statement by the Council of Ministers – the Russian government on the incident, and ordered to monitor the reaction of the Armenian side, as well as to consider possible retaliatory measures.

Having secured the approval of the president, Andrei V. Kozyrev summoned me on November 22 to the press centre of the Russian Foreign Ministry and recited the text of the statement by the Russian government at a press conference. It denounced the incident in question, demanded immediate and official apologies from Armenia and guarantees of safety for Russian representatives on official missions. The Russian government reserved the right to resort to resolute measures in order to avoid possible repeat of similar incidents.

Kozyrev emphasised that our mission as such was operating on the basis of arrangements made between him personally, Levon Ter-Petrossian and Heydar Aliev, in keeping with the instructions of the president of Russia. He pointed out that he accepted the special representative's report about the incident in good faith. He added that he had been waiting for official explanations from the Armenian side for two days already, but what had so far been received was merely a 'confusing document' from its Foreign Minister Vahan A. Papazyan, 'judging by which further contact with that person was hardly possible', and that decisive measures would not be long in coming.

Kozyrev seized the occasion to proclaim the resolute intention to defend the Russian-speaking population, to stand firmly for its interests and the interests of Russia, even if those who may encroach upon such happened to be our friends. 'This is a litmus test for the sincerity of friendly relations.'

I had to tell those present at the press conference about our plans to cross the Armenian border and what happened as a result. I kept to the plain facts

of the case avoiding generalisations. With one and only exception: I pointed out that the coordination of routes of travel for peacemaking missions in this conflict had traditionally become a kind of absurd ‘tug of war’ between the parties to it (with the most common pretext being that a particular road had been mined). That had been the case before with the missions of Mario Raffaelli and Mathias Mossberg, sometimes things reached the point of gunfire. I explained that the incident had no direct connection to Nagorno-Karabakh as it had taken place in a location that was far from it. I also said that the executive office of the Armenian president was perfectly aware of where the Azeris were taking us and that intensive multi-sector shelling attacks from weapons of different calibres was in progress. I stressed that the incident once again demonstrated the absurdity and insanity of the conflict which the Russian mediatory mission was seeking to put an end to,

While answering questions, Kozyrev remarked in passing that had something of the kind happened, say, to an American diplomat – a personal representative of the president, – we would have been bound to see retaliation in the form of an air strike by his country’s military forces there already. In response to Papazyan’s hints that, unless the incident received the required interpretation, Kazimirov would encounter major difficulties with proceeding with the mediatory mission, Kozyrev advised him to concern himself not so much with the task of personnel selection for peacemaking missions of the Russian diplomatic service, but with ensuring a prompt reaction to our proposals.

He made it clear that Russia was determined to proceed with its assistance win the settlement of the conflict, but along with that stated something that went beyond the incident: the parties, the Armenian side included, had in essence exhausted the limit of actions beyond which outright damage to Russia’s national state interests also began. The minister noted the expansion of the conflict in the recent period, the appearance of a pretext for other forces to be drawn in. He made it clear that the mediation mission might come down from blandishments into something different, that our interests were affected in that region much more directly than those of many other states.

Kozyrev’s press conference aroused great interest and received wide coverage in the press of various countries, who unanimously noted the harsh tone of his statements addressed to Yerevan, containing expressions that were

‘not characteristic for the world of diplomacy.’

On the same day, Deputy Foreign Minister Vitaly I. Churkin summoned the Armenian ambassador Felix Mamikonian to his office and handed over to him the text of the statement by the Russian government. The ambassador tried to argue that the incident and Moscow’s sharp reaction to it were allegedly a consequence of Russia’s change of policy in the region, a bias in favour of Azerbaijan that appeared after Heydar Aliiev’s coming to power. Churkin dismissed those insinuations, ridiculed the attempt to present the matter in such a way as if the Russian representative had somehow intentionally exposed himself to the fire in order to reverse Russia’s policies. He insisted on a positive reply to the demands of the Russian government within 24 hours.

**Yerevan.** On November 21, Armenia’s Foreign Ministry set out its own version of the events, customarily inserting them into the framework of their antagonism with Azerbaijan, while Foreign Minister Vahan Papazyan sent a personal letter to Andrei V. Kozyrev, in which he described the incident as deplorable, expressing his sincere regret in that respect, but also bewilderment at the harsh tone of Kozyrev’s statement which was made ‘before ascertaining all the details of the incident.’ Papazyan laid the blame entirely on the Azeri side who had changed the time and the place of border crossing, explaining it all with Baku’s intention to avoid accepting the updated schedule of the Minsk Group and especially the latest Russian initiative.

The conclusion of Vahan Papazyan’s letter was rather peculiar and deserves quoting in full: ‘In my view, the interests of our common cause would be served by a public statement by Ambassador Vladimir Kazimirov, which would clarify the question whether he was aware of the intention of the Azeri side to change the agreed itinerary or had himself become an unwitting victim of provocation staged by the Baku authorities. I see it as my duty to declare in all frankness that in the absence of such a statement, in the absence of a clear statement of his position from Ambassador Vladimir Kazimirov, the Republic of Armenia may find it very hard to continue cooperation with him in his present capacity as a mediator in the Karabakh settlement.’

Well, how do you like it? Now, to top it all, I was now offered to apologise before Papazyan for having come under fire delivered from the Armenian-controlled riverbank!

Ambassador-at-large David Shakhnazaryan got in touch with our embassy in Yerevan and claimed that the route of travel was agreed upon on November 18 as passing along the Qazax-Ijevan road (this, he said, was the only decent road in that district, the rest being mere mountain paths). On November 19 the receiving group from the Armenian side were expecting the guests on that road starting from 4.00 pm. By 6.00 pm the Azeris had informed them via portable radio that they would travel on a different route – further north, via the village of Ashaghy Askipara. The Armenians replied with a request not to do so without receiving a green light from their side as they ‘could not guarantee security’.

Shakhnazaryan tried to find me but failed. He wanted to negotiate with Baku over the HF phone the establishment of contact with Kazimirov in Qazax, but met with a refusal. He rang up Yuri S. Ignatov in Moscow and confirmed the inexpediency of travelling along the new route. On November 20 the receiving party continued to wait for the guests on the Qazax-Ijevan road from 8.30 am and onwards, and by noon *Radio Liberty* had learned about the incident. Shakhnazaryan believed this to have been a pre-planned action by Baku with a view to create all premises for such an incident and then lay the blame on Armenians.

On November 23, the government of Armenia announced that it deeply regretted the artillery attack on the vehicle. It stressed that that emergency came as a result of the change of the route of travel by the Azeri side. The statement also claimed that the incident was being investigated by the military prosecutor’s office of Armenia. The government of Armenia proposed to send to the region a commission to investigate the incident and expressed its readiness to offer public apologies, should the responsibility of the Armenian side be established. Simultaneously it expressed its conviction that the ‘embarrassing incident will not affect the active continuation of Russia’s peacemaking efforts’.

Prior to the publication of that statement David Shakhnazaryan rang me up and read out the entire text off-the-record, so to speak, having stressed that not a single comma could be altered in its body. I replied that such a statement would not close the issue, as it did not admit to that fire was opened by the Armenian side. I reminded him that the press secretary of the presi-

dent of Armenia had already reported to the public that the 'Armenian border guards, who had not been notified of the visit, opened fire.' I told Shakhnazaryan that this only served to reveal and emphasise the insincerity of the statement by the Armenian government, whereas – judging from the words of the president's press secretary – it would be far more logical to offer apologies for the mistaken opening of fire and thereby close the whole issue. But even this, privately given, piece of advice did little to help the situation.

**Baku.** As early as on November 20, the press centre of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry issued a statement in which it stressed that the incident took place 'in-between the Azeri settlement of Mazam and the Azeri village of Ashaghy Askipara which is currently under the Armenian occupation.' Nor was it able to forbear the temptation to whip up passions: 'Gunfire exposed the lives of Vladimir Kazimirov's team to a very real danger.' And, of course, the spearhead of the message was aimed at highlighting the fact that the mediation mission was disrupted through Armenia's fault. It deliberately exaggerated the significance of our meetings in Baku ('a candid and constructive exchange of opinions', 'the talks were of exceptional significance for putting resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 of the UN Security Council' into practice – after all, it all happened just a week after the adoption of the latest resolution of the Security Council.

On November 22, preempting Papazyan, Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Hasan Azizovich Hasanov sent a message to Kozyrev. He took it upon himself to set out the details of what had happened, but indulged himself in inaccuracies. According to Hasanov's version, it was the vehicles (in plural) that had come under fire. The place and the time of crossing the border had allegedly been agreed in advance between the authorities of Azerbaijan and Armenia. During the day of November 19 telephone communication with the Armenian side had taken place five times over, 'in the course of which Ambassador Vladimir N. Kazimirov himself had once again specified the time, the conditions and the place where the border crossing' was planned to take place (this was certainly not the case). Hasanov expressed his indignation with 'this provocative action on the part of Armenia aimed at undermining Russia's mediatory efforts, as well as regret over the incident 'which precluded the consummation of the productive work carried out by Mr. Vladimir Kazi-

mirov in Baku.' The ostentatious compliments were supplemented by a wish to see the resumption of 'Russia's mediation mission, so important for the peoples of the region.'

From Baku public reactions were arriving all denouncing the attack. Our ambassador reported that my comments on our intention to carry on with our mediatory efforts were viewed as confirmation of Russia's serious and responsible approach to its mission. At Rasul Guliev's request, I forwarded to him and to Afiyaddin Dzhalilov the text of the statement by the government of Armenia.

Therefore, all who wished to do so had diligently demonstrated their position regarding this incident.

Our CSCE partners: CSCE Secretary-General Wilhelm Höynck, the American representative James Collins, the Turkish representative Candan Azer, the Italian representative Federico Di Roberti and others – had also sent telegrams and letters as a token of solidarity. All of them had confined themselves to expressing their solidarity, without touching upon other matters – all except Collins. With all my personal respect for him, the American deemed that occasion likewise suitable for again insisting on the multilateral character of peacemaking efforts, as if somehow implicitly blaming us for our unilateral actions. The CSCE Minsk Group, he wrote, was the best mechanism for achieving a speedy ceasefire and deployment of international observers (although in its resolutions 874 and 884 the UN Security Council was already compelled to speak with approval of Russia's steps to ensure the ceasefire).

This characteristic feature of his message was by no means accidental. On November 23, – the same day that he sent his letter, – I was visited, upon the instructions of the State Department, by the Minister Counsellor of the US embassy in Moscow L. Sell, – the pretext for that visit being the need to ascertain the circumstances of the incident. In actual fact, however, he spoke more about coordination of operations referring to the agreements reached at the recent meeting between Talbott and Mamedov in Bonn. Making no secret of the differences in the approaches demonstrated by Russia and by the United States to the settlement of the Karabakh settlement, Sell requested information on our latest steps (the recent Russian draft agreement on the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities; the nature of our talks with the conflicting

parties; Russia's plans to deploy its separation forces, their strength and status, and so forth). He expressed hope that Russia's settlement plan would be implemented with due regard for many elements of the CSCE Minsk Group schedule and a wish that the signing of the agreement and the stationing of Russian separation forces should not be attended with any surprises (as Sell put it, they would not like to be accorded the role of mere dummies at the signing of the agreement). In short, at that point the United States preferred to avoid direct contesting of our actions, to shower us instead with questions about this, that, and the other, so as, under the pretext of close cooperation, to hamper our progress in every way possible.

Later, upon the instructions from the minister, Anatoly L. Adamishin and I presented before him a concise outline of actions:

once the inquiries concerning the incident with Armenia are completed, to insist on the conclusion of a trilateral agreement on a complete and universal ceasefire and cessation of hostilities with Russia's mediation;

to invite Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharyan to come to Russia and ensure the signing of the agreement, as well as of general arrangements concerning the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Andrei Kozyrev approved the resolution to pass from persuasion to tough pressure and ordered to draw up specific documents taking maximum account of work already done and of the CSCE's role.

A day later, a memo on retaliatory measures against Armenia in view of its refusal to offer apologies for the incident was drafted and cleared with all the relevant departments before being submitted to Viktor Chernomyrdin. It proposed strict observation of the earlier ban on arms supplies, military equipment, war outfit and ammunition, as well as taking steps to curtail such supplies from third countries, especially from CIS members states; suspending credit arrangements; and curbing the supplies of oil and oil products, except for purposes related to sustainment of the infrastructure and the population (despite the obvious difficulties of monitoring the proper use thereof).

Initially the government machinery launched the good customary bureaucratic delays and foot-dragging, but one of Viktor Chernomyrdin's first deputies – Oleg N. Soskovets – stirred up the heads of a number of depart-

ments. He summoned me for clarifications and took relevant steps in that connection. The matter, however, continued to stall. I remember Soskovets later ringing up Anatoly Adamishin in my presence and asking how things were going, to which the latter replied literally the following: 'It's high time they cried at the top of their voice, yet not even a squeak is heard from their quarters so far!' Indeed, the Armenian lobby had worked hard in Moscow to 'cushion' the measures taken against Armenia and to secure their later annulment.

On November 25, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian made a statement addressing the heads of foreign diplomatic missions in Yerevan. He informed them of the unconditional acceptance by the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership of the schedule of urgent measures proposed by the CSCE, but also made a number of bows before Russia. Having noted that the schedule proposed by the Minsk Group lacked a reliable and effective mechanism for non-resumption of hostilities, he recommended to the international community to find an optimal form of implementation for Russia's proposals.

Armenia was, according to the President, the last to benefit from the 'embarrassing incident'. But he kept insisting that the route had been changed by the Azeri authorities at the very last moment, which was allegedly why the incident had taken place. True, he added that the military prosecutor's office was investigating the matter and, 'should the culprits be identified, they will certainly be punished.' Not without a touch of slyness he described it all as a mere misunderstanding in the relations between Russia and Armenia which could not have any serious consequences, expressing a conviction that the incident would soon be settled.

The answer to his statement was given on the next day at a briefing at the Russian Foreign Ministry. The text read out by Grigory B. Karasin had been edited by the heads of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It noted that the Armenian side was reluctant to comply with a most basic demand – to offer excuses for the incontestable fact that it had exposed an escort vehicle of the special representative of Russia's president to gunfire for effect. It was stressed that one of the essential conditions for Kazimirov's peacemaking mission was observance of the universal ceasefire agreed upon personally with the president of Armenia. All of that was bringing unnecessary complications into the



relations between both countries. 'For all their importance for Russia we cannot compromise the security and dignity of the official representatives of the nation and its president.' It was pointed out that Yerevan was speaking of the importance of Russia's mediatory role but not doing what was necessary for its resumption. Arguments about Russia's allegedly altered approach towards the settlement and its pro-Azeri bias were dismissed at the briefing. It was once more emphasised that Russia had rigorously stuck and firmly intended to stick further to objectivity and impartiality insofar as the settlement of the conflict was concerned.

On November 28, Levon Ter-Petrossian's advisor David Shakhnazaryan began to explore through me, and on behalf of the president, the possibility of his coming to Moscow under the pretext of the need to discuss Russia's mediatory proposals which had been aborted in Yerevan. Armenia's Foreign Ministry was working over another option of settling the incident – to convene political consultations in accordance with the bilateral protocol. In order not to lose momentum in our mediation work, I spoke in favour of Shakhnazaryan's visit to Moscow and my superiors duly assented.

The purpose of his visit was to explain and sort out the incident. Shakhnazaryan gave me a few photographs of the road leading from Mazam to Ashaghy Askipara, which, according to him, had been blocked by a trench and mined. The same purpose of overcoming the incident was served by a visit by Armenia's State Minister Vigen Chitechian, who was in charge of economic ties with Russia, to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs – there was nothing else he could possibly need to discuss with Anatoly Adamishin. He had frequently been to Moscow but never before had he visited our ministry.

The incident was settled only a month later at the CIS summit in Ashgabat on December 24, 1993. I could not make it there because we were on our way back from the symposium of parliamentarians dedicated to the peaceful resolution of the dispute between Finland and Sweden that had been held in the Aland Islands. At a briefing at Russia's Foreign Ministry on December 28 the incident of November 20 was declared to have been settled during the talks with the president of Armenia in Ashgabat. The Armenians insisted that Levon Ter-Petrossian had offered no apologies there, while our representatives deemed them sufficient...

## The Remote Flank of the Karabakh Front

The incident at the border had received a great deal of analysis and discussion at the time. Amid a flurry of events, which tend to creep over like an avalanche during conflicts and coming and going ever so swiftly, we, the direct participants therein, saw little sense in getting back to them or focusing on the incident. It was, therefore, left to the mercy of assorted researchers, glib elucidators and smart memoir writers. But quite a few circumstances were never clarified at the time and many i's were never dotted and t's never crossed, so to speak. In some way, they can even easier be dotted now, many years on – when the issue has become somewhat less sensitive for the parties.

The incident revealed one distinct feature of the Karabakh conflict by complementing the developments around Karabakh with a visually compelling image from a sector of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border that lay far from the enclave itself. It had long since been known that the situation there was too a cause of concern, but this had long been overshadowed by the turbulent battles at the main front.

It was a little difficult to judge accurately who was more to blame for the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, but each of the sides had made its notable contribution to it: the artillery attacks and capture of settlements were an instrument widely employed by both sides. There is little doubt that both sides had their designs and calculations regarding that flanking sector of the conflict. The Azeris could see in it a chance to demonstrate Yerevan's direct involvement therein. Armenia had long but vainly tried to conceal or minimise its involvement in the Karabakh conflict, being reluctant to admit that it was a party thereto, and taking great pains to camouflage the fact that its troops had taken part in the fighting at the Karabakh front. Meanwhile, the northern sector of the Armenian-Azeri border lies so far from Karabakh that there were no Karabakh forces there – only the troops of these two states.

In view of Azerbaijan's superior numbers, it was of vital importance for the Armenians to contain the adversary's forces and resources far from the main hotbed of warfare in Karabakh. It is perhaps for these reasons that Russia's mediatory proposals aimed at normalising the situation on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not find much support in 1992–1993. Yerevan, as a rule, declined these proposals under the pretext that the principal protagonists in the conflict were Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

In August 1993, Russia's proposal to formalise an agreement on a ceasefire in the border area was rejected: Yerevan argued it away by claiming that Armenia was not at war with Azerbaijan. On October 8, 1993 another proposal was brought forward by us – on the prevention of incidents along the Armenian-Azeri border (it was still valid by the time of the incident and could be quickly formalised). But Yerevan again disagreed, making it conditional upon the attainment of an agreement between Baku and Stepanakert. From the point of logic this was not very convincing. He who is eager to terminate an armed conflict will hardly advocate its escalation but rather try to grab any chance of scaling it down.

In October 1993, on account of Azerbaijan's protests over the occupation of a whole number of Azeri villages in the districts of Qazax and Zangelan by the Armenian troops, the chair of the CSCE Minsk Group requested from Yerevan factual information on that score. But the Armenian Foreign Ministry refused to provide even information on the situation in these border districts. In a rather abrupt letter of response it alleged that that had nothing to do with the core issues of the conflict and that Armenia too had quite a few claims against Azerbaijan.

Yerevan repeatedly claimed that the Azerbaijani side was intentionally trying to destabilise the situation along the border by exposing Armenian villages to gunfire in order to drag Armenia into the conflict. But during our trip to the border we had also seen a great deal of devastation in the abandoned Azeri settlements in the Qazax area.

Could this have been the reason for the Azeris preferring this route instead? Was it likewise not the reason why it was viewed as unacceptable by Yerevan – because it passed via the villages that had been seized or destroyed by the Armenian armed groups operating on the territory of Azerbaijan? This

background may be of certain significance for understanding the roots of the incident. For the parties fixated on the conflict it was more important to turn the incident against each other and to their own advantage even in this case, far more important than the fact that this hindered the safe crossing of the border by our mission.

## **Yerevan's Version and a Bit of Logic at Last**

To be sure, in this episode both conflicting parties were playing the fox, but more so the Armenians, who had made fools of themselves with all their cunning and subterfuges. Their arguments by and large did not stand up to scrutiny. The main principle in this matter is unambiguous – each side makes it its task to ensure the safety of the ‘guests’ on its own territory.

Let us begin with the allegations that the route of travel for our mission had been agreed in advance. Both Baku and I had accepted Yerevan's proposal to cross the border near the town of Qazax, but the Armenians unequivocally understood this as the most frequently used Qazax-Ijevan road.

With whom then had they reached an agreement concerning that road? With me? What would have been the point of this – I did not know the routes and roads in that area. And even if I had known them, I could not possibly decide single-handedly which way to go, since it was the Azeris who were in charge of ensuring our safety until we crossed the border. However, the arrangement with them did not work out – disagreements arose, with the Armenians objecting to the ‘new’ itinerary. The Azeris too were playing the fox, falsely assuring me that everything had been agreed with the Armenians.

While highlighting the problem of changed route in every way possible, the Armenians took great pains to hush up the fact that the office of the Armenian president, – but, in truth, the president personally just as well, – had known perfectly well about the ‘new’ Mazam – Ashaghy Askipara route, and, what's more, they had known about it in advance, the night before. Otherwise, how could David Shakhnazaryan so vigorously object to changing the route as early as in the evening of November 19? During that evening he had repeatedly entered Levon Ter-Petrossian's office and could not possibly fail to update him on the situation (whenever our colleague Yu. S. Ignatov rang up Shakhnazaryan, he was told that the latter was at a meeting with the president).

The fundamental, pivotal question was whether the Armenian military commanders in that zone had been notified that 'guests,' no matter how 'unbidden,' **could** appear there at about 10 am. But Yerevan would not let out a word about it. It is hard to believe that it had not occurred to Armenia's statesmen, – even as they turned down the 'new' itinerary, – that their military forces operating in that location needed to be notified as well. If not, then the responsibility of the Armenian government is even more evident. If they had sent proper notifications, however, it is important to know what the instructions were precisely. It all depended on the substance of the command given and the way it was understood on the ground (was it simply to be on guard and not let the mission in, or was it to not let it in by all means available, including possible infliction of fire damage?). If Yerevan had reported everything along the proper chain of command, yet something went wrong, there would be no question as to who was responsible – and no need for any commissions either.

Let us even pretend to accept the version that the change of the route was a provocation on the part of Baku. But why did the Armenians need to interfere with it and, – what's more, – make things worse by opening gunfire? If, according to their version, the route led into a dead end – to a road on the Azerbaijani territory blocked by a trench and mined, – this would have all been blamed on the Azeris. The crossing of the border would not have taken place, at any rate, but that would not have been through the Armenians' fault. They would have got stuck at that trench with this resulting in a hitch, a return to Qazax, embarrassment for the Azeri side, but no incident.

How typical were the maneuvers and tricks employed by the Armenians in explaining the incident. They obstinately sidestepped the issue of who had opened fire and from whose side it was delivered, although that was beyond any doubt. Allegations were even made in passing that some sort of unidentified instigators or the Azeris themselves were behind the attack. In order to camouflage the fact that the fire was opened from the Armenian-controlled riverbank, Yerevan switched the attention to the fact that the incident took place on the territory of Azerbaijan. Initially they even appealed to the fact that no one was hurt, apparently as a kind of extenuating factor (it took the Armenian side some time to grasp that they were thus inadvertently giving

themselves away – for one who pretends to have nothing to do with the attack, blaming it on somebody else, does not require such ‘extenuating circumstances’).

What in the world could possibly justify that shooting in the context of an effective ceasefire, even if the arrival of Russia’s mediatory mission had not been known to them? Is it not absurd to open fire just because one of the parties does not approve of the route? Why should one expose someone else’s vehicle, which is driving peacefully on the territory of Azerbaijan, to fire and try to destroy it?

The wording chosen by the Armenian officials was also revealing. Papazyan called the incident deplorable, Ter-Petrosian had twice described it as embarrassing. Regret was also expressed in this connection, but not even once, however, was it actually **condemned**. But if it was committed or provoked by the other side or any third party, what then stopped them from condemning it?

It is equally curious how the officials in Yerevan persisted in their attempts to play down my status. Moscow emphasised the status of the Russian president’s special representative both before and during the trip, as well as after the incident. But Yerevan, – in order to minimise the repercussions of the episode, – always spoke about the incident as involving a mere ambassador-at-large. Perhaps they hoped that that trick would pass off largely unnoticed – after all, I was indeed an ambassador.

Contrary to the obligation to observe the ceasefire for the duration of that trip, the Armenians had opened fire. The jeep was moving along the road on Azerbaijani territory not showing any signs of aggression. The fire that we came under was nothing like mere warning shots in the air – it was fire for effect with an increasing intensity. This cannot be attributed to actions under compulsion (like retaliatory fire, for example). From the Azeri side (and to that we were witnesses) a command was given not to open fire.

The idea of creating a commission that would be in charge of investigating the incident was a mere subterfuge, for the facts of the case were absolutely clear and required no detailed investigation by any ‘competent commission.’ What was needed was mere objectivity, courage and responsibility. The president and the government of Armenia had more than once

spoken of their own investigation (although the military prosecutor arrived in that area only six days after the incident, on November 26). But no mention whatsoever was made of the results of his trip, as if those who had opened fire were never found. Nonetheless, we are talking not about two or three random shots, but about fierce fire from weapons of different calibers. It would have been easy to identify those who opened it even judging from ammunition expenditure. And this could not be blamed on the formations that operated beyond Yerevan's control – that border was under the vigilant watch not only of the border guards, but also of the regular troops.

As for Levon Ter-Petrossian, he had more than once tried to double-cross all and sundry. Was it logical to say: 'should there be any persons responsible discovered, they will be punished.' As if in that situation (given the ceasefire and the arrival of the mediators) there could somehow prove to be no one responsible for the concentrated unilateral fire for effect, which was, on top of all, completely unprovoked. Or were the culprits hiding somewhere outside of Armenia? (Here one may recall the criminal case on the death of five Russian servicemen in Gyumri in July 1992, in which legal proceedings were suspended in January 1993 because the two citizens of Armenia who were suspects in the case absconded during the investigation).

Among Levon Ter-Petrossian's verbal ruses was a 'basic postulate' that the incident was least of all beneficial to Armenia. But does this really prove that it was someone else that was shooting: I shall permit myself a bold but lucid analogy. Was not the terrorist attack in the Moscow metro on January 8, 1977, after all, least of all beneficial to the reputation of Armenians in the USSR? And yet we all know what nationality were the perpetrators?

The Armenian president's praises concerning the relations between Armenia and Russia (which, he claimed, were so robust and based essentially on mutual trust that the incident was bound to have no serious consequences) likewise smacked of craftiness. A question arises: why then these trust-based relations did not allow him to close the matter at once in a proper fashion? And not necessarily in public, as Kozyrev was urging. Why was Levon Akopovich so reluctant to find a form and way of offering apologies? Apologising for your subordinates' actions is not so difficult. It is far harder, I believe, to acknowledge one's own faults.



So then, what was at the essence of the Armenian version of the incident?

1. If not an outright denial, then at any rate avoidance every manner possible of acknowledging that the fire had been opened and steadily delivered from the Armenian side.
2. Suppression of the fact that there was a lull at the fronts and that the parties had undertaken to observe the ceasefire for the duration of our trip.
3. Artificial downplaying of the level of Russia's mediatory mission in official statements by Yerevan.
4. Stubborn concealment of the fact that Armenia's top leadership had known about the other itinerary since the evening of November 19.
5. Reticence as to whether the military forces at the location where the incident occurred had been informed of our arrival there and, if so, then what was the nature of the instructions.
6. Clumsy attempts to shift the focus of attention in order to distract the attention from the true essence of the incident (the territory was that of Azerbaijan; the perpetrators must have been conscious instigators or the Azeris themselves: no one had been hurt after all).
7. The meaningful policy of avoiding condemnation of the incident.
8. Not a word was let out about the results of their own investigation.
9. Levon Ter-Petrossian's disingenuous statement made on November 25.

All of these arguments reveal Yerevan's 'gimmickry' which had proved to be counter-effective. This all suggests that the attack was by no means accidental and was carried out not without Yerevan's knowledge. It is clear that we were not the target of the gunfire, while the fact that it happened during our trip was not the main point. Given the parties' obsession with the conflict, it was obviously more important to settle scores with the Azeris, to 'teach them a lesson' for their attempt to take advantage of the situation in their interests... However, one of us could have just as well happened to be inside the UAZ vehicle...

Thus Levon Akopovich was hardly sincere in his assurances that there was nothing to apologise for.

\* \* \*

Certainly, Moscow pursued its line not in the best way possible. Andrei Kozyrev had shown excessive exaltation. Demanding public apologies at the top level and, at that, within 24 hours, and all this accompanied by threats, was an emotionally prompt overshoot, for this might have really affected the personal prestige of the Armenian president. It would have been better to insist on apologies by means of 'quiet diplomacy' and at a different level.

For my part, I must by way of self-criticism admit that I had underestimated the role of the lack of direct communication with the other side before crossing the border and the already known blindness of the parties due to their uncompromising stance in that conflict (especially as there had already been the examples of Raffaelli and Mossberg in evidence).

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It would have hardly been worth paying so much attention to that incident, had it not been for all that had been spun over it. Curiously, Russia's former ambassador to Armenia Vladimir P. Stupishin made a public stand as a zealous advocate of the Armenian side. At first, he published a brochure about the Karabakh conflict and then incorporated it almost entirely into his memoirs entitled *My Mission to Armenia*. In both publications the description of the incident at the border had taken up more than ten pages! – a whole essay, so to speak.

As for his assessments in substance, one can find almost no distinction in them from the Armenian ones. He cannot even afford to examine Yerevan's position critically (also because he writes mostly on the basis of what the Armenians had told him). He darted flashes of criticism at the Azeris but, above all, at his own Foreign Ministry. He is simply 'geared up' to justify as best he can the actions of the Armenian side, while maligning the Russian participants in the events. His only distinction from the Armenians themselves is that those could not afford such blatant assaults on former colleagues ('toadies', 'bigwigs', and so forth). Russia's former ambassador to Armenia (it looks rather the other way round) portrays this position as brave standing up for the truth and as bold criticism of the unreasonable Moscow.

Much like the other chapters of his book related to the Karabakh conflict, this essay lacks the main thing – authenticity. One cannot help admiring his demonstrative confidence regarding matters with which he had only had an indirect contact, and of which he knew the essence and the details mostly by hearsay, but his description of, and opinion on, which he presents without a shadow of confusion as the ultimate truth. The essay contains quite a few inaccuracies and dialogues that are clearly the author's own invention. There is little point in boring the reader with quoting all of his 'gems' and goofs. I shall touch upon only a few of them, apparent to the naked eye.

1. The tale he reproduces in his book to the effect that 'a draft memorandum addressed to the president with a proposal to break off diplomatic relations with Armenia was already making the rounds in the Foreign Ministry' cannot be described as anything other than the height of irresponsibility. For before talking such nonsense (even if reported by somebody else), one has at least to ask oneself whether such rumours are generally accurate. You must consider things seven times over before you start chronicling.
2. Stupishin artificially separates the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh from the developments taking place along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border (tensions, bombardments, mutual seizures). As if the former was in no way linked to the latter! Could Moscow against all existing evidence act in the same manner, that is to say, monitor not the whole panorama of the conflict but merely separate segments treating them as absolutely independent and isolated occurrences? Meanwhile, the Armenians themselves do not deny but merely downplay this connection. And here, too, our former ambassador goes further than his Armenian friends. What was the purpose of introducing this distortion?
3. My statement of November 22 is also described by Stupishin in a rather curious way: 'At the same press conference the 'special representative of the president' [just note how difficult it is for him to write this without quotes denoting unconcealed sarcasm] for some reason dared not tell a lie in Kozyrev's presence and essentially admitted that neither he, nor the motorcade had been exposed to gunfire.' Now, how do you like this? Stupishin seems to know in advance that I meant to tell a lie but suddenly messed things up

because I obviously did not have the heart to do it. This results in his having to tell lies himself at the end of the sentence. A slight verbal manipulation and... 'no one shot.' Well, this implies that once they did not kill me, consequently, they did not open fire at all.

4. 'Kazimirov and Sadykhov had indeed hid in a shelter,' he writes. What shelter can he be talking about? A cellar? A dug-out? 'Indeed' is inserted herefor greater credibility only. To help the reader infer that the author had seen this with his own eyes.
5. The UAZ vehicle, according to Stupishin, was also to blame – for having been painted battle-grey. And once this was so, for him it seems only natural that 'someone' opened fire at it. What did it matter that the ceasefire was in effect, that the arrival of a mediator there had been communicated in advance? The UAZ was after all painted battle-grey? Fire!
6. None other than a sheer piece of nonsense is Stupishin's description of my telephone talk with Qazax which he happened to overhear in Moscow (presuming that the talk was with Baku). He scoffs at the fact that I inquired about the state of health of the Azeri 'guys' who had come under gunfire. He is unable to understand the feeling of compassion and empathy with the people who were wounded on account of accompanying our mission. But he has allegedly even 'heard' what was replied to me on the other end of the line: 'All are safe, alive and kicking!', though what I in reality heard from Qazax was something quite on the contrary (Stupishin was still clinging to the first version of the Armenian side that no one had been injured).

Vladimir Petrovich declares that eavesdropping on other people's conversations is against his principles, but regrets having not heard that one through to the end. That is to ay, eavesdropping is an awkward thing to do. Is it somehow ethical then to replicate overheard bits and snatches of conversations that one had no business listening to in a book, moreover, seasoning it all generously with one's own fantasies?! Here are exemplary morals for you!

7. Referring to David Shakhnazaryan (God knows why, as the latter denies it), Stupishin claims that in January 1994 I attempted to travel to Nakhichevan. He omits to take into account that I had no business to attend to there (after the trip in July 1992 I never had any intention of going there again). The author seems to be equally skilled in yarn-spinning!

Concluding the list of absurdities, I shall only remark that the acting ambassador at the time did not bother himself with sorting out what had happened, taking on trust everything the Armenian officials were telling him. What particularly strikes the eye is the barefaced bias, the uncompromising partisanship – verging on servility – demonstrated by him in rushing to defend the rather shaky, to put it mildly, foreign version of the incident. Whoever reads his memoirs will be given to understand that all the perfect, exemplary public figures are to be found in Armenia, while all sorts of scoundrels invariably flock in Moscow, and precisely at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I shall not denounce such mere trifles on his part like his inaccurate dating of events (he attributed the Azeri counter-offensive to the early days of December and the settlement of the incident to the meetings of ministers in Rome on November 30, and not to the CIS summit in Ashgabat held on December 24, and so on).

It is no coincidence that I cite the works of my strenuous ‘opponent’ precisely in connection with the Armenian version of events. But enough on that chapter.

One more side note, I guess. I generally do not believe it normal that two veterans of the Russian Ministry of Foreign affairs have not found a better place for debates than the pages of newspapers and books. After the first such invective by Stupishin published by *Nezavisimaya gazeta* about ten years ago I briefly gave him a piece of my mind on that score on the pages of the same paper. Since that time he has published two books and a whole lot of articles about Karabakh in which he not simply argues with me, but uses every occasion to literally drag me through the mire. I shall leave dozens of attacks unanswered. After all, if I choose to respond to all of them here, that would be too much honour for him.

## The Shady Deal of December 1993

Following the general collapse of the early 1990s, Russia was overwhelmed with heaps of problems of its own, but could not, nevertheless, remain indifferent in view of the bloody events on the outskirts of the crumbled Soviet Union (from Karabakh and Transnistria to Tajikistan) – which, moreover, posed a potential threat for us as well. Nonetheless, primitive speculations, – to the effect that the key to the settlement was in the hands of Moscow, but that it merely benefited from the simmering conflicts which served its purpose of control over the former Union and presently independent republics, – continue to circulate. Everyone remembers Karabakh, which has become a common name for inter-ethnic clashes and an arena of a full-scale fierce war. It was speedily forgotten, however, how the flames of that conflict scathing the whole of Transcaucasia were beaten back with Russia's active facilitation, and the enormous amount of effort that it had taken. The conflict has to date not been completely extinguished, it keeps smoldering. And yet there has been no major bloodshed for 15 years now.

The hostilities in Karabakh reached their peak in 1993. By that time these were no longer just pockets of localised clashes, but a virtually continuous front line and massive military operations with the use of modern weapons and with seizure of vast territories. The initiative passed into the hands of the Armenians: its regular troops were already fighting there along with Karabakhians and volunteers from various countries. Their adversaries had, for their part, enlisted various mercenaries, among them many professional officers, via military enlistment offices in a number of Russia's regions, along with about 2,000 Afghan mujahideens.

Since the mid-1993 Russia was bringing ever increasing pressure on the conflicting parties in order to make them effect first measures necessary for the limitation of military operations, and subsequently a universal ceasefire.

But the eventual achievement of a ceasefire, which took effect on May 12, 1994, was preceded by the bitterness over a whole series of breakdowns of ceasefire arrangements. The first armistices proved to be short-lived. (It is true, however, that if their periods are added up, it turns out that over the second half of 1993 the bloodshed had been suspended for a full two months: two months in lull out of six is quite something in terms of the number of human lives saved!)

At that time no one except Russia – neither any other states nor the CSCE Minsk Group – was able to contain, even if at least temporarily, the hostilities in Karabakh (even when they encountered reasonable possibilities to do so). And small wonder this is: Moscow was most consistently pressing above all for an end to the bloodshed in a far more committed manner than the other mediators. And not only for reasons of humanity (although these alone would have been more than sufficient for this) – in the heat of battles it is even more difficult to negotiate. Our Western partners hardly wished that the military operations continue but did not invest half as much effort into achieving a ceasefire as Russia did. They obviously had other priorities...

Some ruined hopes of 1993 had not only brought along disappointments, but also resulted in grave direct or indirect consequences. In early September the Armenians scuttled a withdrawal of their troops from the Azeri district centre of Kubatly that was under their occupation, although this had been publicly promised by Yerevan and Stepanakert at the top level. Thereby a chance was missed to demonstrate an example of flexibility, which is an indispensable tool in overcoming intransigence on any issue. For it is those who are in a more advantageous position that are supposed to break the ice as a goodwill gesture – no one is capable of such gestures when in a losing position, as this would be viewed as a sign of weakness and defeatism.

October brought disruptions of the ceasefire on the Azerbaijani side: on October 10 a dangerous incident occurred near the village of Kujjak, and on October 21 the Azeris eventually broke the armistice, only to lose the entire south-west of the country later on.

It is important, however, to note that when at least one of the parties was really in need of a ceasefire, such could hold for a relatively long period of

time. Thus, once it was prolonged four times over and lasted from August 31 until October 21: for Heydar Aliev needed not battles but a more favourable general situation in order to win the presidential elections on October 3, which crowned the transition of power into his hands.

Especially memorable by its absurdity and bloody consequences is the breakdown in mid-December 1993 of the ceasefire arrangements reached 'at the top level' with the assistance of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (that is to say, at the level of the top leaders – if only those arrangements had been observed at the same level!). This time the reason was not an embarrassing incident on the front line (as was sometimes the case before due to reckless actions of the field commanders or uncontrolled formations), but the bungling or perhaps a cynical trick conceived in the corridors of power in the capital. This is how it happened.

On December 16, 1993, while in Moscow, I learned of yet another escalation of hostilities in the south, near the town of Beylagan. As usual, mutual recriminations came spilling out. I got in touch via HF line first with President Heydar Aliev and, then, with the leader of the Karabakh Armenians Robert Kocharyan. Their consent to my proposal of a fresh universal ceasefire came surprisingly fast. We agreed that the fire was to cease at midnight on December 17 for a period of ten days, so that its extension could be arranged in the meantime.

Heydar Aliev informed me that on behalf of Azerbaijan's political leadership the agreement would be signed by the Vice-Chairman of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan Afiyaddin Dzhililov, and on behalf of the military command – by the Chief of the General Staff General Nuretdin Sadykov. Robert Kocharyan entrusted this to Arkady Ghukasyan and Seyran Ohanyan. I immediately faxed to Baku and Stepanakert a draft document for execution. The text only slightly differed from the previous similar agreements.

We were pressed for time, with just a couple of hours on our hands, as after the written formalization we still had to send crosswise to both sides the fax messages signed by the opposite side, so as to confirm the mutual character of the commitments assumed. After that, the military command had to lose no time in giving relevant orders and notifying the commanders on the front line as soon as possible.



Very soon I received a fax message from Stepanakert: everything had been signed without amendments or additions. Precious hours were passing by with no document arriving from Baku. Knowing that Heydar Aliev was tightly engaged in preparations for his visit to France, I began to rush the Azeri side. They assured me that the delay was due strictly to a technical hitch: General Nuretdin Sadykov was on his way back to Baku and would sign the document as soon as he arrived. No comments on, or amendments to, the text were suggested. In order to speed up its signing, I sent a fax message containing the Karabakhians' autographs to the apparatus of the president of Azerbaijan 'ahead of time' (normally I would do this after the arrival of documents from both sides). The Azeris could now see for themselves beyond all doubt that Stepanakert had undertaken to cease fire provided they do the same. They could have no false delusions on that score – the text expressly stated that the arrangement would take effect only after the mediator confirms the receipt of both identical documents.

Given the complexity of the situation near Beylagan and the fact that everything had been agreed upon personally with the president of Azerbaijan (there was no one above him, so we had no other choice but to trust him!), I sounded out Robert Kocharyan's opinion as to whether it would be possible to cease the fire that midnight on the basis of an 'honourable understanding', to avoid having to put it off on account of a 'technical hitch' with the signing of the document in Baku (I now regret my naïveté!). To my great surprise, Robert Kocharyan, – despite being known for his harsh disposition, – had no objections. Both sides claimed to have given relevant orders to their armed forces (I had no means of controlling this from Moscow where I was!).

However, in the morning mutual grievances over violations poured again. During the following day I kept trying to wheedle a signature under the document out of Baku, passing on counter-protests to the parties along with urgent demands to take measures. By the end of the day of December 17 I sent a fax message listing all the disruptions of the arrangements (according to Robert Kocharyan) personally to Heydar Alievich asking him to check on them and give a 'strict order to observe the ceasefire.' I also sent that same fax message to Azerbaijan's Defence Minister Mammedrafi Mamedov. Failures in such situations are extremely undesirable, but still they did occur (say, not every-

where 'on the ground ' was the order received and executed at once). Sometimes the situation would gradually improve, almost changing into a lull.

But the delay with the signing was unprecedented! It continued well into December 18. The president of Azerbaijan was already out of reach on the high-frequency phone line. I persistently kept ringing up his apparatus, the chairman of the parliament and the General Staff. Telephone conversations cannot be quoted on paper, but I have kept a fax addressed to Heydar Aliiev's personal secretary: 'Tariel, I ask you to report to the President that **Azerbaijan's** text of the ceasefire arrangements signed by Afiyaddin Dzhililov and Nuretdin Sadykov has not been received by the mediator **to this day**. Working in this manner is not possible. The matter was important enough, and order and consistency in it were required. Or else, the ceasefire was to be cancelled altogether. December 18. 9.00 pm.' Silence again – no answer.

Finally, only on December 19 at 9.40 pm (more than three days after the agreement was reached with Heydar Aliiev), a fax arrived on a letterhead of the Azerbaijani defence minister signed by Dzhililov and Sadykov. The document looked somehow extremely frivolous. It was not at all what we had been expecting since December 16 – not only in form and address, but in content as well. The first catch was evident – it bore no date. The second was that the letter was addressed not to the 'leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh' and the mediator, as had been the case before, but to the mediator alone. Dzhililov's signature, bearing little resemblance to his former ones, did not inspire confidence either.

But the main thing was that the text contained almost nothing remaining of our draft sent long time earlier to Baku and already signed by Stepanakert. Equally distorted was the very substance of the matter – as if it were not a question of a ceasefire, but of its extension already. In a word, the letter was completely unsuitable for formalising the agreement achieved with Heydar Aliiev. It furthermore proposed that the Armenians withdraw their troops 10 kilometers back: it did not even specify where exactly – along the entire front line probably! To top the list of absurdities, at the end of the text hope was expressed that the 'the agreements signed will be rigorously observed'! What was the reckoning behind all this? A sheer travesty of common sense, to the detriment of one's own people, – that's what it was!

To make my account more illustrative and document-based, I attach both texts as appendices: 1) the one that was sent to Baku and Stepanakert for signing (apart from the addresses and signatures, they are absolutely identical) and 2) the one that was received from Baku three days later (see Nos 20 and 21 among the appended documents of the Russian mediation).

Is there any need to remind how such sensitive agreements are executed? Normally plenipotentiary representatives of the parties sign a single document simultaneously and at one place. But, in order to avoid recognising the Karabakh Armenians as a party to the conflict, Baku preferred arrangements with them to be signed in absentia (as a rule, through us and by fax). We, as mediators, did not object to this – this way it went even faster. But it is sheer truism that under any procedure the text of the document must be absolutely identical (if amendments are introduced, they have to be agreed upon with the other side directly or through a mediator). Needless to say, introducing unilateral amendments to the content or form of the text without prior arrangement, much less so post factum, can never be deemed either legally valid or correct. Could the high-ranking officials in Baku really have no inkling about it?

(Incidentally, on December 18 and 19 Azerbaijan's Defence Minister Mammedrafi Mamedov sent to me successively three lists of violations on the part of the Armenians based on a ceasefire in effect. As if Baku had already formalised that ceasefire in a proper fashion!)

Upon receiving that balderdash from Baku, I urgently informed Nuretdin Sadykov that the text was unacceptable for the mediator, as any documents executed in connection with the ceasefire must be identical in content and form. Introducing any other elements into the text was absurd, all the more so as Baku had long known that the text proposed by the mediator had been signed by Stepanakert without a single amendment. Fresh wording could become a subject of negotiation, but this concerned amendments to specific formulas, say, in case of prolongation of the ceasefire. But here we had a completely different, improvised text not bearing even a remote resemblance to the basic version! None of the parties are entitled to claim the prevalence of its own wording of the text without negotiating it with the adversary (directly or through the mediator). We could not therefore consider the ceasefire to have taken effect.

Meanwhile, Heydar Aliev was already in Paris. At our Foreign Ministry I outlined a draft cipher message to our ambassador in France Yuri A. Ryzhov. He was urgently to find the president of Azerbaijan there and, choosing an appropriate and delicate tone, express our perplexity at the fact that his instructions had not been complied with in Baku. Despite the tight schedule of Heydar Aliev's visit, Yuri Alexeyevich did manage to find him and complied with the assignment of Russia's Foreign Ministry. He informed him that the letter that we had received from Baku was absolutely unacceptable for formalising the ceasefire, but confirmed our readiness to hold new talks on achieving a truce. In accordance with the instructions from Moscow, Yuri Ryzhov stressed that we considered the parties' accuracy and loyalty to the commitments undertaken to be an indispensable condition for us to continue with our mediation – otherwise, mutual distrust between them would only grow.

The president assured him the ambassador that he had given all necessary orders in Baku and promised to sort out upon his return (!) what had happened (we will never know how he later sorted it all out).

So what was it all about, that whole 'pantomime'? A sequence of ludicrous mishaps? The appallingly poor coordination within the Baku government administration? The lack of competence on the part of the signatories? An attempt at outright cheating?

And the main question is: why had Heydar Aliev, who had personally ordered to cease the fire, failed to monitor the signing of the document before his departure for France? There had been enough time for it. For even in the haste of preparations this could not possibly be deemed as a question unworthy of the attention of the head of state. But once he did not follow it up, what instructions did he leave before flying off to Paris? Finally, could two high-ranking officials be sufficiently prepared to risk their positions to the point of disobeying the country's top leader? That is to assume that he had ordered one thing to be done, and quickly, while it was all in fact done only three days later and, at that, the wrong way out. Was such a thing possible under an authoritarian system, further still in the time of war and with respect to a key, really crucial issue? I do not want to press on anyone a ready-made answer to these questions – my readers are free to choose an answer that seems the most plausible to them.

The reason was all too obvious. The middle of December was marked by the beginning of an attempted Azeri counter-offensive on the southern front. Some people date it exactly on December 17, others – on the third week of the same month, but it was clearly the major attempt to repel the Armenian forces in the Karabakh war.

On the same unfortunate day of December 16 we made an attempt to improve the situation along the Armenian-Azeri border as well. On the basis of earlier discussions in Baku and Yerevan I sent to Heydar Aliev and Levon Ter-Petrossian a draft 'Arrangement on the Prevention of Border Incidents,' proposing to sign that document in St. Petersburg on December 19, 1993.

On that day the leading figures in the parliaments of Armenia and Azerbaijan – respective Vice-Speakers Afiyaddin Dzhililov and Artashes Tumanian – were expected to arrive there en route to Finland (we assembled there in order to travel all together by bus to Helsinki, and from there by plane to the Aland Islands, where the first meeting of parliamentarians of the three parties to the conflict was being prepared).

We had a prior arrangement with the St. Petersburg Mayor's Office on assistance with the procedure of signing that document. On December 18 two minor amendments to the draft document proposed by me arrived from Yerevan which fact confirmed their general readiness to sign it. These amendments would not prevent the parties from agreeing upon the final wording. It remained for each of the sides to empower its respective parliamentary figures to hold talks and sign the document.

No reaction, however, came from Baku – neither amendments nor refusals, while at the time of our contact in Petersburg Afiyaddin Dzhililov even claimed was unaware of that proposal and that draft document. And that plan too was thwarted by the same party! Instead of the planned negotiations in Petersburg I had a nice conversation with [the St. Petersburg Mayor] Anatoly A. Sobchak in the presence of his advisor on foreign relations [Vladimir Putin], who was known to few people at the time.

Upon my return to Moscow from the Aland Islands, I explained, frankly and in most unflattering terms, to Heydar Aliev in a detailed letter dated December 28 the reasons why the ceasefire had fallen through (or, to be exact, had been wrecked), but... again no reply came. Whenever it needed

this, the Azeri side was able to lose the faculty of reacting to the mediator's appeals and proposals.

Nor was our fresh proposal – to declare a New Year truce for a period of two weeks starting on December 31 – accepted amidst the escalation of the fighting. It was forwarded on December 30 in written form personally to Heydar Aliev, Robert Kocharyan and Levon Ter-Petrossian. Baku again left it unanswered. Karabakh again gave its assent. Yerevan endorsed the proposal on the same day, consenting to seek the prevention of incidents on the Armenian-Azeri border for the duration of a fortnight.

At the CIS summit held in Ashgabat on December 23-24, 1993, that is to say, between the two disruptions of ceasefire efforts, Heydar Aliev in his statement to the press declared that he (I quote from ITAR) 'prefers a peaceful settlement of the conflict and stands for immediate termination of the hostilities between the opposing sides.' In his opinion, 'the conditions necessary for this have not yet been created, the arrangements reached earlier have been broken, with the direct contacts with representatives of the Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh having been of little help in facilitating the process.'

The counter-offensive, which was apparently meant to create the 'necessary conditions,' soon petered out, bringing the Azeris only moderate local success in the Goradiz area. But the fierce fighting of the winter of 1993/94 continued for a rather long period resulting in heavy tolls on both sides.

From that time on Baku severed direct contacts with Stepanakert, completely ignoring it as a party to the conflict, although during the year 1993 it had concluded arrangements on the limitation of hostilities, ceasefire or its extension ten (!) times over precisely with Nagorno-Karabakh (that is, without any involvement of Yerevan). Russia, as a mediator, reckoned that there were three parties in that conflict and, basing its judgement on its realistically unusual configuration, persistently tried to get Yerevan involved in the settlement as well, though not at all in order to push Stepanakert aside.

December 1993 puts in bold relief the ongoing complexities with which mediator's work with the parties is fraught. It shows just how important political will, coherence in action and fidelity of top leaders to their word are. And, incidentally, it explains why protracted military actions continued to

shake the region for another five months after that resulting in heavy human casualties and great material destruction. And in the growing flow of Azeri refugees, on whom so much verbal solicitude is now being lavished in Baku... Who is going to answer for those absolutely needless victims?

Is it much wonder that mutual mistrust between the parties was the blight upon the entire Karabakh settlement!? The shady deal of December 1993 had merely aggravated it. I shall not conceal the fact that, as a mediator, I myself felt extremely disappointed, even crestfallen. However, I could not afford to lose heart, because blood continued to spill in Karabakh and around it.

## The Bishkek Protocol

In 1991-94, Russia was engaged in extensive, multi-dimensional work for the cessation of bloodshed in Karabakh, one that was not limited to the military, political and diplomatic realms. It was urgently necessary to promote the formation of 'parties of peace' to counterbalance the hot-headed and very active 'parties of war' in the opposing camps. We therefore initiated various meetings (between parliamentarians, military and religious leaders, journalists) ourselves, encouraged various public organisations on the conflicting sides to get engaged in this and supported proposals that emerged in that connection.

A lot of effort was invested in achieving a termination of the conflict through parliamentary channels, naturally with Russia playing a most active role. Within the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly (IPA) set up in 1992 a group charged with promoting the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was even formed (in September 1993, I think). It was headed by the then chair of Kyrgyzstan's parliament Meditkhan Sherimkulovich Sherimkulov and variously referred to as a conciliatory mission, a peacemaking group or the CIS IPA mediatory group on Karabakh. At that stage of the conflict it was rather active and closely cooperated with Russia's mediatory mission. I repeatedly had to take part in its trips and other activities.

At the meeting of parliamentarians from Azerbaijan and Armenia and representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh convened on the Aland Islands on December 21-22, 1993, on the initiative of the CIS IPA, Russia's Foreign Ministry and the Aland Institute for Peace, its participants were afforded an opportunity to learn more about the experience of resolving ethnic tensions between the Swedes and the Finns concerning these islands. On the same occasion in Mariehamn, the capital city of the Aland Islands, Meditkhan Sh. Sherimkulov suggested the capital of Kyrgyzstan as the location for pursuing further inter-parliamentary dialogue between the parties to the conflict.



At the proposal of the CIS IPA, the parliament of Kyrgyzstan, the Federal Assembly and Russia's Foreign Ministry, the new meeting of parliamentarians took place in Bishkek on May 4-5, 1994, this time at a higher level – that of the heads of parliaments. The Armenian delegation was headed by Chair of the Supreme Council Babken Ararktsian. A group of Nagorno-Karabakh representatives was headed by the then acting 'speaker' from Stepanakert Karen Baburyan. Chair of Azerbaijan's Milli Meclis Rasul Guliev was planning on attending the Bishkek meeting but could not make it in the end, since President Heydar Aliev, – when leaving on May 3 for Brussels to attend a meeting of Partnership for Peace organised by NATO, – left him in charge of the government and the country. The Azerbaijani delegation was headed by his deputy Afiyaddin Dzhalilovich Dzhalilov (later, on September 30 of the same year, he was killed by an unidentified terrorist near the entrance to his house in Baku).

Chair of the CIS IPA Council and the RF Federation Council Vladimir F. Shumeiko and Secretary of the CIS IPA Council M. I. Krotov took part in the meeting in Bishkek on behalf of the IPA, but in actual fact represented also Russia (along with yours truly, who took part in it as the Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation and simultaneously on behalf of Russia's Foreign Ministry). Few people know that a delegation of the lagting (local parliament) of the Aland Islands headed by Roger Jansson was present at the Bishkek meeting as observers at the invitation of Meditkhan Sherimkulov – who thus repaid the hospitality extended to himself earlier.

Unlike the first meeting held on the Aland Islands, where no documents were adopted, the higher level of the forum in Bishkek was more convenient for trying to pass an agreed resulting document aimed at endorsing the Statement by the CIS Heads of States adopted on April 15, with its imperative provision on the cessation of the bloodshed in Karabakh.

To be sure, we were free of any illusions that this was going to be easy. The main goal at that moment was to galvanise the public opinion towards an armistice and a ceasefire. Well in advance, while still in Moscow, I drew up a draft document – the Bishkek Protocol. It was that draft had sparked extremely bitter debates taking place on May 4 and 5 in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, mainly between the Azeris and the Karabakhians, taking up many hours

on both days. Far from always was it possible to focus the disputes on the text of the document, quite frequently they took on a much wider scope. (By way of self-criticism I confess that the title I had given to that document was not an aptest one. I introduced the word ‘protocol,’ as it were, to denote the intention to cease fire, but this imparted to it a tinge of a legalistic rather than political document, which it was. For few people generally read the text of that document. This had given rise to misunderstandings and even resulted in an opinion that it constituted a ceasefire act.

It soon became clear that the entire programme prepared by the hosts was crumbling: an alluring trip to the Lake Issyk-Kul, which was scheduled for the end of the first day, had to be cancelled, along with the other events. Everything came to a standstill. Both days were spent in heated disputes – both between the delegations in their full strength and in a narrow circle of their leaders only, when the rest of the participants in the meeting languished for hours on the sidelines in anticipation of the outcome of the heated debates between the ‘speakers,’ notwithstanding the joint attempts of the four mediators at once to mitigate them.

In itself the proposal to endorse the provision on a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, which was contained in the Statement of the CIS Heads of States, did not provoke discussions. The essence of the new document lay in building on that provision by appealing on behalf of the leaders of parliaments upon all the sides to the conflict to cease fire. But this had to be expressed not as a general and rather vain wish but as a concrete initiative. The date of May 9, which is firmly associated in the memory of the peoples of the Soviet Union with the Victory day, was approaching, and one had to grab the chance and take advantage of that coincidence. No one raised objections to my including it into the text of the document – I wished to show that reason was at last gaining the upper hand, **winning** in this conflict as it did in other similar conflicts. As a result, the appeal to cease fire containing the proposal of a specific term – at midnight on May 9, 1994 – became the core achievement of the Bishkek Protocol.

Yet the contradictions between the parties concerning other issues remained unbridgeable. Unfortunately, in Bishkek, too, the procedural issues came to occupy an excessively prominent place: was Nagorno-Karabakh a

party to that conflict and should Nizami Batmanov, representative of the Azeri community of Nagorno-Karabakh, be equated to the Armenians from Stepanakert in terms of status of participation in that forum. Dzhililov challenged the legitimacy of the participation of Karabakh Armenians in that meeting (reducing in fact their status of a 'party to the conflict' to that of an 'interested party'). Being unable to achieve this due to the fact that the participation of the Karabakhians had been duly taken into account by Heydar Aliev in advance, he sought to equalise a member of his delegation Nizami Batmanov with them. But this would have run counter to sheer logic, as the latter did not represent either a parliamentary or even a municipal body (for a very short period, from March till early May 1992, he was head of the executive authorities of Shusha, but by no means of the representative authorities).

There was, of course, no question of anyone recognising the 'Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh' or its parliament, but still, the Karabakh Armenians had a certain elected body formed on the basis of the expression of its will by the local population. Even in the Helsinki decision by the CSCE Council of Ministers of March 24, 1992 the elected representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh were mentioned first. By dismissing them so impetuously, the Azeris failed to appreciate (simply taking for granted instead) that Yerevan was gradually coming to admit its status as a party to the conflict. Naturally, Ararktsyan and, especially, Baburyan, did their best to advocate the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict and a participant in the Bishkek meeting. Nor were they long in reproaching the Azeris for downgrading their own status of participation in that forum.

During the discussions Vladimir Shumeiko was outspoken in arguing that Nagorno-Karabakh, – just like Armenia, – was a legitimate party to that conflict, and he stressed that the failure to understand that made it practically impossible to achieve its settlement. On this we also based our line of argument at the Moscow negotiations where a draft agreement on the termination of the armed conflict was being worked out with the participation of delegations from the three conflicting parties.

In Bishkek opinions clashed concerning the substance of the settlement as well. It stood to reason that most of the issues could not be examined realistically, much less still resolved by the leaders of the respective parliaments

due to the specific nature of that forum. However, the inertia of argument observed during the negotiations periodically held in Moscow manifested itself also in the foothills of Tien Shan. Thus Dzhaliilov pressed for a speediest ceasefire more actively than the Armenians did, yet he insisted on linking it directly to a prompt withdrawal of the Armenian forces from all of the occupied Azeri territories and a return of refugees thereto. Yet what struck the eye was his failure to place any emphasis at all on how to guarantee the non-resumption of hostilities – he clearly shunned the idea of deploying neutral separation forces, being prepared to content himself with observers instead.

Nor did Dzhaliilov show himself inclined to realise the expediency of proposing to the parliaments of the CIS member states to discuss the initiative of Vladimir Shumeiko and Meditkhan Sherimkulov concerning the creation of Commonwealth peacekeeping forces (on that question it was already felt that the Azerbaijani leadership had taken commitments before the Western powers who strongly objected to the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone, whereas the CIS forces seemed to them to play the role of a mere stalking-horse for Russia).

At the end of the day, the Azerbaijani delegation was trying to advance its own draft of the resulting document which reflected only the need for a ceasefire along with an immediate withdrawal of the Armenian forces from the occupied areas of Azerbaijan but, naturally enough, rejected the involvement of Nagorno-Karabakh and utterly narrowed the role of the CIS in the settlement. Of course, drafts drawn up at such forums by any of the conflicting parties independently have virtually no chance of being accepted, as they are clearly intended to reflect its own interests only and are easily dismissed by the opponents as one-sided. Yet the Azeris failed, both before and after that, to fully understand this and tended to push through their own drafts instead of fine-tuning those submitted by the mediator. Thus, in their draft they made an attempt to remove the reference found at the beginning of the text to the fact that the conflict ‘had a substantial impact on the interests of other countries in the region,’ which was easily turned down by the other participants in the meeting.

The Armenians, for their part, placed a particular emphasis on the need to develop a mechanism that would ensure the observance of the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities, as well as safely guarantee that such would not

resume. Only after that did they consent to a withdrawal of their forces from the territories of Azerbaijan that had been occupied by them. In other words, they sought first a definitive consolidation of the ceasefire and the settlement of all logistic aspects before proceeding to that of the military and political ones (i. e. to the withdrawal of their troops). As Vladimir Shumeiko pointed out later, it was unprecedented that leaders of such a level should spend almost two days in a row working on the actual text of a document. Although, quite naturally, almost all the drudgery, i.e. the search for alternative wording and the preparation of the revised versions of the draft – a whole series of them, – fell in actual fact upon my shoulders as the mediator.

Towards the end of the day of May 5, after truly exhausting debates, the Bishkek Protocol was eventually signed by the leaders of both Armenian delegations and all the persons acting as mediators, and only the head of the delegation of Azerbaijan refused to sign it. Dzhaliyov's refusal certainly became a fly in the ointment as far as the results of the meeting were concerned. Azeris formally explained their position with the fact that Nizami Batmanov had not been authorised to put his signature, making also rather vague allusions to the effect that the essence of the document did not correspond to their interests. But these were mere pretexts.

The true reason for Dzhaliyov's conduct was revealed rather soon. It was known that the president of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliev had spoken at the session of the NATO Council in Brussels on May 4 and signed the framework document of the programme of Partnership for Peace there. Speaking before that audience he certainly did not say a word about the peacemaking efforts of Russia and the CIS, did not at all speak about Moscow 'holding the key to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict' (as he had more than once stated in public before and after that). Suffice it to say that, besides NATO, – which was awarded plenty of praise, – only the UN, the CSCE and its Minsk Group were mentioned in that speech – neither Russia nor the CIS were named by him not even once. That visit and speech at the NATO headquarters were already part of that geopolitical game into which the leader of Azerbaijan was being drawn at the instigation of Western powers.

In that context, Heydar Aliev hardly needed the signing of the Bishkek Protocol in those days, which was in fact most vigorously lobbied precisely

by Russia's representatives as an important step in the conceptual and political preparation for the cessation of bloodshed (which in no way demeans the importance of the contribution by the other participants in the Bishkek meeting).

In his speech on May 21 1994, Heydar Aliev confessed how he had blocked the signing of the protocol in advance: before his departure for Brussels he did not confer upon Dzhililov the powers to sign any document in Bishkek without his consent. Accordingly, the latter acted in Kyrgyzstan in the spirit of these instructions, so as not to interfere with his president's affairs in Brussels. This is certainly curious, but, looking at it all from another angle, it is worth asking: was there such a thing as separation of powers in Baku, what were really the political mores there?

At that time in Bishkek we were, naturally, not aware of these instructions by Heydar Aliev, and vainly did I seek there a telephone contact with the Chair of Milli Meclis Rasul Guliev in the hope of securing his consent to sign the Bishkek appeal. Nevertheless, the decision taken then by those who did sign the document – to leave Milli Meclis an opportunity to accede to it later if it wished – was an absolutely correct one.

To abandon the matter halfway through after so much effort had been invested into it would have been way too wasteful indeed. That effort had to be pursued. I had to fly to Moscow for one day to take part in Andrei Kozyrev's first meeting with the new president of the Minsk Conference, the Swedish diplomat Jan Eliasson, on May 6 and, on the next day, by arrangement with my minister and Vladimir Shumeiko, to fly to Baku to discuss the Bishkek Protocol with the president of Azerbaijan and the chairman of Milli Meclis. We needed to ascertain the ultimate position of Azerbaijan regarding that document and to try to arrange its signing.

## The Signing of the Protocol in Baku

On May 8 Heydar A. Aliyev brought all the top leaders of Azerbaijan together in his cabinet. Among those attending the meeting were the parliamentary leaders Rasul B. Guliev and Afiyaddin D. Dzhaliyov, State Advisor on Foreign Policy Vafa M. Guluzade, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hasan A. Hasanov, Minister of Defence Mammedrafi I. Mamedov, deputy minister of foreign affairs Tofiq N. Zulfugarov, the Azerbaijani Ambassador in Russia Ramiz Rizayev and others.

In his opening words the President addressed yet another portion of rebuke to the Russian mediator, saying literally the following: 'You have again prepared a document which clearly goes against the interests of Azerbaijan...'. We had to tell them then that some of the provisions contained in the Bishkek protocol were found to be rather unsatisfactory by the Armenian side as well, yet not a single phrase in it could be deemed as contradicting the interests of those Armenians or Azeris whose highest aspiration was to see the end to the current bloodshed.

Quite naturally, those attending the meeting were fully supportive of their president's stance. The ratio of votes of those present could not possibly be in favour of the mediator. Rather unexpectedly, the first from among the Azerbaijani representatives who spoke with a greater degree of certainty in favour of a ceasefire was the Ambassador in Moscow Ramiz Rizayev. He was then seconded by Rasul Guliev. A turn-up for a more realistic approach clearly began to surface.

Compromise suggestions to sign the document, provided a number of amendments are introduced into its text, were voiced. Some suggested that the word 'international' be inserted before 'observers', others wished to 're-qualify' the 'occupied territories' as no other than 'invaded'. The first amendment would have meant that observers would be not only from Russia (it is,

by the way, incorrect to speak of ‘international’ observers in that context, since it was the Protocol of the February 18, 1994 meeting of defence ministers in Moscow. By that date only Russia had confirmed its readiness to deploy its peacekeeping forces and send its observers, that is, only Russia and Turkey, but the latter option was declared absolutely unacceptable by the Armenian side). The second amendment was largely a tribute to emotions: after all, armed hostilities are usually characterised by occupation or invasion of territories, unless the adversary itself decides to vacate it. This conflict had given place to both scenarios. Little difference did it make how all this would have been worded.

On my part, I did my best to explain that introducing amendments into the suggested text hardly made any sense at all, as all the other participants in the Bishkek meeting had signed the document as it was and would not waste time on its re-examination. This was, after all, not a contract, not a legal document at all, but a purely political one.

The ‘pet peeve’ of the Azeri diplomacy had also duly shown itself: they again began to insist on Nizami Bakhmanov’s signature on it on behalf of the Nagorno-Karabakh Azeri community. I pointed out that Nizami Bakhmanov could not possibly be equated with the heads of representative structures. However, the interests of the Azeri participants in that meeting were far more vehement and powerful than any arguments of reason. It then entered my head, however, that the reservations may have indeed been something of a blessing in disguise – insofar as they somehow saved the face of the Azeri leaders who had decided to accede to the agreement.

Closer towards the end of the meeting President Aliyev ordered to Dzhaliilov: ‘Now, go on and sign it, Afiyaddin!’ But the latter refused to do that claiming he was bound by the stance he had taken in Bishkek.

This was a delicate, and even amusing, situation. And not only because of Afiyaddin Dzhaliilov’s disobedience. After the change in the general moods of those present, his evasive conduct would have allowed to bring the case up to a higher, and a more natural, level – that of the Milli Meclis chairman, Rasul Guliev, becoming the signatory on the Azeri side. But all the other signatures on behalf of the sides to the conflict belonged to the top members of parliaments. That is why, surprising as it may seem, I had to express my full



support of the stance taken by Dzhililov and second it before President Aliyev, trying to steer the matters towards having the document signed by the parliamentary speaker.

In tones not totally devoid of reproach addressed to his deputy, Rasul Guliev remarked that some people seemed to be more concerned with their reputation, whereas he personally did not bother about it in the least, as far as all this was for the good of his nation. He was therefore ready to sign it, provided it contained the mentioned reservations and Nizami Bakhmanov's signature on it. Aliyev gave his consent and Guliev put his signature in the place of Dzhililov's straight away. At the bottom of the page the two reservations were inserted in clear handwriting in Russian. Other important, yet more sensitive, provisions of the document (the reference to the Protocol of the February 18 meeting of the Defence ministers, the role of the CIS, the concept of creation of joint CIS peacekeeping forces) had not been examined.

The whole thing with Nizami Bakhmanov's signature ended in sheer embarrassment. The Azeri side had his name written in, along with the others, by hand, but had failed to find him on time. Having informed Moscow of the signing of the Bishkek Protocol by Rasul Guliev, I left the next day taking with me that copy of the text with the two reservations in it and Bakhmanov's surname inserted.

## **Baku – Moscow, May 9-11**

On the morning of May 9 we held an unusually crowded and lengthy press conference (with representatives of 20 media sources attending), where we revealed the Russian plan of conflict resolution. A detailed (lasting over 3 hours) conversation with the press was deemed necessary mainly due to the intense verbal attacks and harsh criticism with which the minister of foreign affairs Hasan Hasanov targeted ‘the Russian plan’ during the Milli Meclis session on April 18.

And so I had to confirm before the journalists that the Bishkek Protocol had been signed by Rasul Guliev, albeit with two reservations, this news came as a sensation for them. With regard to the reservations introduced into the protocol, I had to explain that they were to be regarded as a dissenting opinion of the Azeri side, because for those parties who had signed the protocol back in Bishkek, the document remained as it was at the time of signing.

(I could not possibly announce the signing by the defence minister Mammadrafi Mamedov of another document – on termination of the hostilities, – scheduled for the same day, May 9. Until the very last moment there was no certainty that it would be signed after all, as had been arranged the day before. Plus the signatures of Yerevan and Stepanakert were yet to be obtained. So I merely said that we now needed a legally binding agreement that would be signed by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, as well as Nagorno-Karabakh, adding that we were closer to a breakthrough in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict than ever before.)

Despite all the faltering and twists on the Azeri side, the signing of the Bishkek Protocol by them, that is, the approval by Baku of the appeal for a ceasefire, was a more or less timely and courageous step in the right direction on their part, becoming one of the chief premises for the actual ceasefire.

The 'war party' had launched a massive campaign, or rather massive hysteria even, against the Bishkek protocol, and a 'blind' one it was (because the full text of the protocol was only published by the local press later and it was, naturally, their own version of it). The struggle against that document, which had been indirectly kindled by Hasan Hasanov's recent harsh criticism of 'the Russian plan' in his address to the parliament, had become yet another pretext for putting pressure on Heydar Aliyev's team, as well as an incentive for uniting previously scattered forces. On May 10, 12 political parties came forward with a joint statement in which they condemned the signing of the protocol. One of their arguments was that Rasul Guliev's signature put next to Karen Baburyan's signature would lead to the international recognition of the republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Guliev was thus accused of national treason. The opposition mouthpieces did not even bother to look into the essence of the matter, which was a mere call for a ceasefire, something that the Azeri side was, in fact, much more in need of at the time than their Armenian adversaries!

There were, of course, voices of reason in Azerbaijan too. Six parties, all members of the centrist bloc, issued a joint statement expressing their support of the Bishkek Protocol. A lot depended on the position of President Heydar Aliyev himself, but he was in no hurry to make it clear whether the signing of the protocol had been blessed by him personally or not. On May 13, Azerbaijan's Party of National Independence demanded that the President voiced his position on the document. Aliyev vouchsafed a vague statement to the effect that the signing of the protocol was a step in the right direction contributing to bringing about a ceasefire. On May 14, in an interview to the Azerbaijan television, Rasul Guliev was compelled to stress that he had signed the protocol in Aliyev's cabinet, in the presence of the latter and at his sanction. Justice needs to be done to Rasul Guliev: he had also made a public statement recognising Nagorno-Karabakh as a legitimate side to the conflict.

On May 10, the session of Milli Meclis, that was expected to be impassioned, was postponed first until May 13, and then until May 18 (the second postponement was due to Eliasson and myself arriving to Baku and our lengthy – 4 hours – talks with Heydar Aliyev on May 13, in the presence of speaker Rasul Guliev).

On May 18 Azerbaijan was hit by a parliamentary crisis. After the opposition had failed in its two attempts to include the Bishkek Protocol on the Milli Meclis agenda (the voting ended in a draw – 19:19, with two abstentions), it began to claim that the chairman of Milli Meclis had exceeded his powers, insisting on the cancellation of Guliev's signature and his resignation. The most outspoken voices in that line were those of the former minister of foreign affairs Tofiq Gasimov and Etibar Mamedov. 17 members of the parliament walked out of the session as a result, destroying the quorum (Milli Meclis has 50 members, with a minimum of 34 required for the quorum) and refusing to continue their work for over a week after. Guliev had hardly expected such a violent filibuster on the part of the opposition, nor such an indecisive position to be taken by the national leaders.

It is rumoured that Afiyaddin Dzhililov hinted to the Baku press that the Bishkek Protocol allegedly ignored the interests of Azerbaijan. Whether this was true or not, I do not know. As for Hasan Hasanov, he had taken a curious stance on the matter – in his interview to the ATA media agency he denied any connection with, or awareness of, the whole Bishkek protocol affair, claiming he had not even read it, refusing to comment and recommending the correspondent to address their questions to those who had actually signed it. Even though he was one of those present in Heydar Aliyev's cabinet at the time of its signing and, therefore, a direct witness to the act.

I was among those whom Azerbaijani journalists addressed in this connection. I had received quite a few calls from them when already in Moscow. For example, they asked me whether I was hoping for a ratification of the Bishkek Protocol by Milli Meclis. My response was sheer bewilderment. Emphasising the significance of this document with regard to creating the right political climate for the eventual termination of the conflict, I begged to explain what ratification could they be talking about, if the document merely contained an appeal for a ceasefire and suggestions to that effect, but nothing more – what was there for the parliament to ratify?

Despite the large-scale hysteria campaign by the opposition, the people of Azerbaijan had shown a rather positive attitude towards the Bishkek Protocol. According to the opinion poll conducted by the survey department of the *Zerkalo* daily, 30.7% of the respondents welcomed it, and 17.8% felt some-

what positive, whereas only 17% were decidedly against it and 11.5% felt somewhat negative. It is worth noting that another survey had given different results that were much less favourable for the opposition. The deployment of Russian military bases on the territory of the republic was deemed necessary by 27% of the respondents, 30.7% felt it was a tough but inevitable measure, while 29.9% spoke against it. Curiously, among the most supportive categories of the society, both regarding the protocol and the deployment of military bases, were servicemen (and students in the case of the bases), – the group that would have been directly affected by the hostilities should they have resumed. And yet this was exactly one of the strongest arguments of the opposition who tried to intimidate people claiming that bringing in Russian separation forces would result in their staying in the republic for much longer than required, which would have meant nothing less than an occupation of the country through the creation of Russian military bases there.

The controversy surrounding the Bishkek Protocol continued to run high in Azerbaijan for several weeks, even after a ceasefire agreement was achieved. It is true too that due to this delay with the signing of the protocol by the Azeri side and the thorny talks in Baku on May 8 and 9, we did not manage to comply with our own plan to time the armistice to the Victory Day. Two more days were spent on negotiating the text of the new agreement with the sides – the ceasefire, therefore, only came into force at midnight of May 12, 1994.

Once realising that the end to the bloodshed was declared with Russia's mediation, the Western countries, primarily the US, hastily stepped up their pressure both on Baku and on Yerevan to prevent them from accepting 'the Russian plan' (to their great dismay, they had no direct levers of pressure in respect of Stepanakert). But this deserves more detailed coverage, perhaps even a separate essay. I will, therefore, merely note here how hard it was to believe that the line pursued by the United States had nothing to do with the opposition to the Bishkek Protocol by the opposition forces in Baku. Especially, since the Bishkek meeting and protocol had nothing to do with the CSCE or its Minsk Group, but would have been adopted within the CIS framework.

The Bishkek Protocol had become a culmination of all the political efforts that we had applied with the sole purpose of achieving a ceasefire,

beyond the actual scope of the peace talks and the diplomatic efforts on the military front. After all, the parliamentary leaders were in actual fact backed by the top leaders of the sides to the conflict. The document was of utmost significance with the regard to the struggle for public support. This was a kind of paving the way for the first sketch of a future armistice.

Mass media, or even researchers and political analysts, who are not familiar with the actual texts of these documents, often mistakenly claim that it was in fact the actual ceasefire agreement that was signed in Bishkek at the time. They seem to see no difference between an **appeal** for a ceasefire and documentary execution of **obligations** assumed in this respect on the basis of the political resolutions made by the leaders of the sides to the conflict. Failing to examine the actual ‘mechanism’ of that armistice, they omit to take into account that this was a meeting of the heads of respective parliamentary structures of each side to the conflict, and not of representatives of the countries’ executive authorities. The heads of those structures would have demanded officially confirmed authorisation from the top executive authorities to sign an agreement of this kind, and this was not the case. Nor was such authorisation ever requested. The organisers of the Bishkek meeting had a totally different goal in mind, even though they naturally strove to achieve realistic progress in their cause to put an end to the bloodshed.

It would only seem logical for the researchers to pay due attention to the appraisal of the Bishkek Protocol by its signatories Babken Ararktsyan and Rasul Guliev. The former, for example, emphasised at a special press conference held in Yerevan on May 7, 1994 that this was a significant political document, but equally that it had been drawn up as a parliamentary document and was advisory in nature. Speaking at the opening of the May 18, 1994 session of Milli Meclis, Rasul Guliev retorted in response to the accusations from a group of deputies that this was merely a memorandum of agreement, so to speak, by no means legally binding and of a purely advisory nature, the signing of which required no approval by the parliament, nor any special powers or ratification for that matter.

The inappropriate exaggeration of the significance of the Bishkek protocol had taken place on both sides to the Karabakh peace process: in Azerbaijan this came as a result of the noisy political struggle that had evolved

around the protocol, and in Armenia – on account of the euphoria arising due to the place that had been accorded to Nagorno-Karabakh in the course of the meeting in Bishkek and in this document. In his interview to the *Respublika Armenia* newspaper, one of those taking part in the Bishkek meeting, Arkady Gukasyan, described this meeting as a historical milestone, because Nagorno-Karabakh was for the first time mentioned as a legitimate side to the conflict, and ‘the acting chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh’, Karen Baburyan, had put his signature next to the signatures of the other participants. Many Armenians had gone as far as to discern an actual recognition of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh there. Babken Ararktsyan had taken a far more moderate stance himself when, speaking at the same press conference, he stated that the principal achievement of the Bishkek summit was the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh by all of its participants, except the Azerbaijan delegation, as a de-facto side to the conflict. It is, of course, rather disputable that this was indeed the principal achievement, as is the fact that Russia had only first acknowledged Stepanakert in this capacity during the Bishkek summit, yet Babken Ararktsyan nevertheless proved to be the most realistically-minded figure among all of the political analysts of his country.

It is truly lamentable that many of the reputable researchers – and not only those in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert, but equally those in Moscow, – had allowed themselves to get carried away in attaching excessive significance to the Bishkek Protocol, failing in this connection to pay due attention to a much more significant document adopted at a far higher level 20 days before the Bishkek meeting. Some described the Bishkek summit as a breakthrough in the Karabakh peace process, whereas the true breakthrough had taken place earlier and resulted in an open-ended ceasefire.

As it was said above, on April 15, 1994, the Council of the CIS heads adopted, at Russia’s initiative, a crucial declaration which contained an explicit statement on a ceasefire agreement being urgently needed as far as the resolution of the Karabakh conflict was concerned. This was the first time a document like that had been adopted by the Council of the CIS heads with regard to the Karabakh peace process and with the direct participation of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia too! Among its provisions was the fol-

lowing statement: *‘The key priority, the very imperative of the conflict resolution is a speedy cessation of fire, of all armed hostilities, and a subsequent firm recognition and reaffirmation of this. In the absence of this, liquidation of the consequences of this tragic confrontation does not appear to be possible’*. It is worth noting that up to that moment there had existed no definite documents to that effect, let alone, any top-level multilateral documents involving the heads of both states involved in the conflict.

The researchers seem to have failed even to see that the Bishkek summit was in no other respect but solely in form a sequel to the meeting of members of the two parliaments on the Aland Islands, but was essentially convened to ensure the support by the heads of the parliaments of the resolution by the heads of the CIS countries in the document signed in Moscow to achieve a prompt end to the bloodshed and the open hostilities. But this is, after all, directly stated in the Bishkek Protocol: the participants in the Bishkek summit, having declared their support of the April 15 Declaration of the heads of states, *‘have expressed their readiness to extend their full support of the efforts of the heads and representatives of the executive authorities directed at putting an end to the armed confrontation and at the liquidation of its consequences by way of speedy signing of a corresponding agreement’*. Well, can there be a more succinct way of putting it?

This is how it happens sometimes, when something secondary, something derived, but ironically more attention-getting comes to blot out something far more fundamental, substantive and essential...



## **May 12 – A Breakthrough on the Path to Peace in Karabakh**

May 12, 1994 had become something of a historical date, a day when the long-cherished hopes of the war-ravaged nations of Azerbaijan and Armenia, of the entire Trans-Caucasian region, were expected to meet their fulfillment, on account of the ceasefire agreement taking effect on that day thus denoting an end to the 15 years of the Karabakh conflict. This agreement was indeed vital and unprecedented, as far as its form was concerned. At long last, we, the mediators, felt like fortune was on our side! Yet, we all know that Dame Fortune only favours those who spare no effort in seeking it with both persistence and tenacity. And an end to the bloodshed was what had been the ultimate goal of the persevering mediatory efforts of Russia during more than 2 years (since September 1991).

It should be said right from the start that neither the conflicting sides themselves, nor any other mediators had ever been observed to apply the same amount of effort or were ever that persevering and tenacious in achieving this goal. This is easily proven by a good dozen of facts. And this is the most conclusive answer to those who have for years been trying to accuse Moscow of the intention to prolong the conflict or to drag out the negotiations. The sides to the conflict sometimes demonstrated a reluctant inclination to cease the hostilities but usually only when things on the front line began to look rotten for their respective side and only for a short period, mainly seeking respite for themselves and later resuming armed assaults in the hopes of new victories. Unfortunately, the ruling elites of the conflicting sides had long refused to abandon their cherished illusions to achieve their goals through armed violence, demonstrating utmost inflexibility and absolute rejection of compromises. Some of the mediators, too, believed that the armed struggle to the bitter end was the only acceptable option, whereas others, while pretending to

dedicate themselves to seeking solutions to the conflict, devoted their energies to quite different goals that were their obvious priorities.

By the early May 1994 the situation on the front line had become extremely controversial. After the counter-offensive of the Azeri forces fizzled out in the winter, having brought nothing but very modest progress, yet contributing largely to the drastic rise in losses on both sides, a certain balance of forces was achieved. Slugging battles were in full swing in the region of Ter-Ter. The attempts of the Armenian side to seize the town potentially represented the greatest of perils. Should they have gained a chance to block the roads leading to Azerbaijan's second largest city, Gandja, or succeeded in advancing along the Barda-Yevlakh-Mingachevir route to the Kura river, then the north-western edge of the republic's territory would find itself in danger of being cut off the 'mainland', so to speak. The nightmare which befell the south-west of Azerbaijan in the autumn of 1993, when the Armenian forces reached the river Arax on the border with Iran, could easily repeat itself.

The Azeri leaders were, therefore, keen on the prospects of achieving a ceasefire. Earlier they were frequently the ones responsible for impeding the peace process, either due to a lack of will to call for a ceasefire, or by putting forward a bundle of preliminary conditions, which were often invariably impossible to fulfill, or by breaking ceasefire arrangements, but this time they insistently, and clearly reproachfully, put forward one question: is Russia indeed incapable of putting an end to the hostilities and armed clashes? This was voiced to my face at the highest level possible. It is characteristic that this time the Azeri leaders did not set forth any preliminary conditions for a ceasefire, nor were they demanding a release of the territories occupied by the Armenian forces.

By the time the May 8 meeting, held in the Azerbaijani President's cabinet, closed in Baku, soon after the Milli Meclis speaker Rasul B. Guliev signed the Bishkek protocol, Mr. Heydar Aliyev gave orders in my presence to the Defence Minister Mammadrafi I. Mamedov to prepare a ceasefire agreement.

## **Necessity Truly is the Mother of Invention**

The work on the actual text began straight away. In my capacity of a mediator, I had to make contact by telephone with Yerevan and Stepanakert from Baku seeking the approval of the document. This was partly facilitated by the fact that Stepanakert had just declared a unilateral ceasefire at midnight of May 9. There were talks about a unilateral ceasefire in Baku as well, but this was all somehow very much up in the air, with little certainty to count on. In the meantime, news arrived of new clashes breaking out on the front.

On May 9, another meeting was held, again in the cabinet of President Heydar Aliyev, this time dedicated to polishing the final details of the ceasefire document that I had prepared. The meeting was attended by Rasul B. Guliev, Vafa M. Guluzade, Mammadrafi I. Mamedov, and the Azerbaijan Ambassador in Moscow Ramiz G. Rizayev. This was, however, not yet the time to celebrate. The Azeri side again began to insist (just like they did before at the May 4-5 meeting in Bishkek, and the day before, May 8, in Baku) that this document too had to bear the signature of the representative Azeri community of Nagorno-Karabakh.

This had become something of a bee in the bonnet for the Azerbaijani diplomats. Naturally, the Azeri community continued to be an ‘interested party’, but it surely could not be possibly regarded as a party to the conflict. Suffice it to say that it had no forces of its own at the front, which could be compelled by this document to cease fire (a Finnish colleague of mine, the co-chairman of the Minsk OSCE Group Rene Niberg, remarked once later to Heydar Aliyev that, in reply to speculations concerning the Vatican’s might, Stalin’s only question was: ‘How many divisions does the Pope have under his command?’) Sheer logic prevented me from including N. Bakhmanov’s signature into this text. Yet, new obstacles were bound to arise.

The first version of the ceasefire agreement was drawn up by me using the same basis as before – in the case of Baku and Stepanakert. Nonetheless, the Azerbaijani side, which had previously entered into pacts on containment of hostilities with Stepanakert (with no involvement of Yerevan) exactly 10 times over, now insisted on signing this agreement with a representative of Armenia only and on the condition that the Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh had nothing to do with it. Just as before, Yerevan was doing its best to avoid such prospect.

For my part, I explained that this was a waste of time, pure and simple – for it was highly unlikely that Yerevan would ever consent to sign a document like that. But President Aliyev once again asked me to try and persuade the Armenian leaders that doing this would be vital. Indeed, difficult as it was, this time I succeeded in reaching an agreement with the Armenian side using the secure high frequency telephone line to the effect that it will also sign this document (this was the first success in this line since the September 19, 1992 agreement on a two-month suspension of hostilities signed by Minister Grachev in Sochi).

However, unlike the case was in Sochi, this time Yerevan refused to sign anything that did not include Stepanakert, while the Azeri side declined to put their signature next to that of the Karabakh side, less still in its presence. There are, of course, ‘techniques’ allowing for a possibility to sign a document separately, so to speak, that is to say, in a manner not requiring physical presence of the representatives of the sides at one table, but Baku was against it. The priority goals were being clearly blotted out and substituted with secondary ones. Moreover, reaching an agreement on the location where the document was to be signed and ensuring the arrival of the plenipotentiary representatives would have taken several days, and all was so much up in the air that this period could have sufficed for all arrangements to go to pieces.

The deadlock was thoroughly absurd: all the parties to the conflict agreed that a ceasefire was desirable; the stumbling block was whose signatures were to be put under that document. The readiness of all the parties to cease fire was a chance to be grasped, even at the cost of having to bypass their stubborn reluctance to meet for signing the document in a more conventional manner.

There was hardly any time to negotiate formalities! Choosing between letting the bloodshed continue and plunging into legal details was completely out of question. What we required was non-standard solutions, or even perhaps tricks that would help us keep to the precious crux of this business and avoid putting another hundreds, or maybe even thousands of innocent lives, in danger on account of purely formal disagreement alone. An earlier 'technique', which we used back during the year 1993 in signing short-term ceasefire agreements or extending such agreements, came in handy somehow – the experience in facsimile diplomacy accumulated so far, when the urgency of a matter coupled with the impossibility to bring the representatives of the conflicting sides together required telephone negotiations and subsequent formalisation of achieved arrangements by way of making them exchange facsimile messages, but only via Moscow, with approved and signed texts. But those were short-lived guarantees and by that time something completely different was required.

Thus, on May 9 we began to formalise the ceasefire arrangements, despite the reluctance of one of the parties to hold a special meeting and sign the document along with the representative of the opposite side that was its actual adversary on the battlefield, yet, since the end of 1993, was no longer recognised as such. The rest of the negotiated parameters were nevertheless approved. It was decided that the agreement would be signed by the top commanders of the three sides – the Defence Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia and 'the commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh army'.

The text that was urgently drawn up in Baku by the Russian mediator represented, like the earlier documents, an absolutely identical appeal by each of the sides to the three Russian officials. For the sake of patching up the complicated relations between Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, I put not the name of my immediate superior but that of the Minister of Defence Pavel Grachev first, the name of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev – second, and that of the presidential plenipotentiary envoy in Karabakh negotiations – third only.

Such order of recipients was nothing new. It was quite natural too, as the appeal was to be signed by the supreme military leaders who, in the text of it, request from Minister Grachev to hold a meeting with their participation in

Moscow as soon as possible, with a view to discussing the mechanism required for ensuring the cessation of fire. We also had to consider that either Russian military observers or separation forces may turn out to be necessary, and only the Ministry of Defence had such forces at its disposal. Grachev's vision did not allow for anyone else beside himself to act as the key peace-maker: as soon as he signed the agreement in Sochi in September 1992, Russia immediately found available military observers (whereas while the ceasefire arrangements were being prepared under the aegis of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all our inquiries and requests addressed to the Ministry of Defence were answered with formal 'runaround' replies). That is why, Grachev's name had to come first, even though neither he personally, nor the Ministry of Defence, had anything to do with the actual work on that document.

The two-day talks in Baku (on May 8 and 9 – first on the Bishkek Protocol, and then on the ceasefire agreement) prevented us from timing the armistice with the Victory Day, which had been proposed in Bishkek. It was agreed that the ceasefire will come into force at midnight, May 11, but due to the complex agreement signing procedure we had to postpone it setting a new deadline as 00.01, May 12.

The result was that on May 9 Heydar Aliyev gave the Defence Minister Mammadrafi Mamedov his 'blessing' to sign the text of the agreement consisting of four clauses. So that was what the latter did – right opposite the presumed signature of the Nagorno-Karabakh Commander-in-Chief which appeared on another list containing an identical text. This could be deemed as virtually completed formalisation of the peace agreement between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh (I had already negotiated everything there was to be negotiated with Nagorno-Karabakh from Baku while I was there, so the only piece lacking was Samvel Babayan's signature). Some time later, when Yerevan suddenly agreed to sign the ceasefire agreement as well, the positions of the other signatories: the Armenian Defence Minister and the commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh army, – came to be specified on that list.

The same text was faxed by me from Baku to Yerevan and Stepanakert for signing. Since I was going to leave for Moscow straight away, I asked them to send both copies, once signed, directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in

Moscow. I simultaneously sent copies of the text to Moscow, to Pavel Grachev and his deputy Georgy Kondratyev, among others, notifying them of my having submitted it to the Armenian side for signing.

While I was trying to get through to the Moscow Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Armenian Minister of Defence, Serzh Sarkisyan, had introduced two minor amendments leaving out one of the references to the Moscow Protocol of Ministers of Defence dated February 18, 1994, and disposing of the suggestion to invite the Chairman of the CSCE Minsk Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh to the ceremony of signing the pending agreement on termination of armed hostilities. While in Moscow already, I had to negotiate those amendments with Baku over the phone, but they were accepted without much ado. This was indeed rather indicative for before negotiation of such amendments would have invariably taken much longer.

On May 10 I received the final version of the text signed by the Armenian Minister of Defence. On May 11 a fax arrived from Stepanakert bearing an equally 'lonely' signature of the Nagorno-Karabakh army commander Samvel Babayan. I immediately notified all the parties that the procedure had been completed and faxed to each of them the sheets bearing the signatures of the other two parties – relevant orders had to be given to the armed forces straight away!

Those three sheets (containing identical text and one signature on each of them), were consolidated in Moscow by the Russian mediator finally turning into the long-sought ceasefire agreement. Combined together, so to speak, they became that very document which is normally signed by authorised representatives of the parties gathering at one table or, at least, on one day and at one place, let alone – on one sheet (and sometimes even in several copies). The references to the February 18 Protocol by the Defence Ministers and the parliamentarians' appeal voiced in Bishkek found in the body of the text did not in the least mean that the document was somehow based on them or, less still, a sequel to them. This was an independent agreement, yet the mention of those previous arrangements somehow secured the positive dynamic of the peace process.

## **Benefits and Implications of the 1994 Ceasefire**

Unlike all previous arrangements concerning the ceasefire, the duration of this agreement was from the start stipulated by default as ‘unlimited’: the period of validity was deliberately left unspecified. This very important point met with understanding on the part of all the sides involved (even though this precise point would later give rise to more than one tricky situation).

Another difference from the previous agreements consisted in the fact that this time each page of the agreement bore not two signatures for each of the parties (on behalf of the political and the military leaders, as was the case before), but one signature by the supreme military commander of each of the parties. This may seem like a mere procedural trifle, but those details reflected, in fact, certain political and procedural changes. Firstly, no matter how reluctant Baku was to accept that scenario and how difficult they had chosen to be in that respect, it was stipulated in the text of the agreement that it was to be signed by Nagorno-Karabakh as well. Secondly, no matter how hard Yerevan temporized, pretending that the sole parties to the conflict were Baku and Stepanakert, Yerevan’s signature had to be there as well. In contrast to the propaganda tricks and twists of the parties, this reflected much more accurately the actual situation in the region. The Azeri side was happy to see the signature of the Armenian side under this agreement, even though subsequently Baku would increasingly avoid recognition of Stepanakert as a party to the conflict and to the negotiations alike.

Pious zealots of pedantic jurisprudence may be somewhat skeptical about the unusual form of the agreement. Yet an analogue is not hard to discover – in the form of the widely used method of confirming arrangements by exchanging letters between the parties. It was for this reason that the option, which provided for addressing Russia as a mediator taking upon itself identical obligations, had been chosen. Another facilitating aspect was that in



the case of this conflict that method of formalising the agreement reached had already been accepted by the parties and, therefore, aroused no protests.

Therefore, the ceasefire agreement of May 12, 1994 has neither an original copy, nor any copies that would be signed by the representatives of all the three parties. There were no seals, no stamps, no ceremonial lists. Nor was there a formal depository of this agreement, although the three copies of the statement were addressed and sent to Moscow. Those formal 'drawbacks' of the document, its failure to comply with the common standards did not, however, prevent it from facilitating an actual ceasefire, and this was, after all, the name of the game. The crux here was not about the shortcomings related to the execution of the document, but about the actual political will of the parties so accurately reflecting at that time the desire of both the Azerbaijani and the Armenian sides to achieve an end to the bloodshed. Moreover, the supreme criterion of truth in a conflict is practice, which in this case would be a lasting armistice.

Other weak points of the agreement were far more significant. Namely, it did not contain such standard instruments of ceasefire confirmation as withdrawal of the armed forces of the conflicting parties from the line of contact, removal of heavy armament from the battle area, the creation of a buffer zone, sending independent observers or separating forces there, implementation of relevant control measures, and international guarantees. The view adopted in this respect was that some of those issues would be resolved at the meeting between the defence ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, and 'the commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh army', which the three solicited the Russian Minister of Defence to convene urgently in Moscow (May 12 was suggested as the date but Grachev was unable to make it on that day).

## **Moscow meeting of the Defence Ministers**

The meeting was held in Moscow, on May 16-17, 1994, at the invitation of Pavel Grachev. Curious as it may sound, but the experts of the Russian Ministry of Defence, who were probably more than anyone else accustomed to the frequent breakdowns in ceasefire arrangements in Karabakh, had equipped their minister with draft documents prepared by them in which they... again proposed to cease fire starting from May 18. My comments to the effect that such an agreement had already been signed and that the hostilities had already been suspended for several days (minor incidents were few, and as for something major, that was not there at all) were met with a certain deal of mistrust and even with a visible lack of joy in this connection. It was indeed hard to believe that peace had finally been achieved, at long last!

During the meeting at the Russian Ministry of Defence headquarters some of the participants in the negotiations had lost their nerve. Grachev, who had himself organised similar meetings between Azeri and Armenian military leaders dedicated to the Karabakh problem more than once, was clearly irritated by the stubbornness and the uncompromising attitudes of the sides, having quite unwisely chosen an excessively harsh, dictatorial tone, verging on ultimatum. On the following day the press jumped at the chance to paint a colourful picture of that incident. Measures in confirmation and strengthening of the ceasefire provisions based on the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone had been developed and, for the most part, approved prior to that meeting.

But Grachev was not the only one to have lost his nerve. On the same day Heydar Aliyev gave his defence minister Mammadrafi Mamedov urgent instructions not to sign the document developed at that meeting but to return to Baku straight away, allegedly for further instructions. On May 17 we left

for Baku along with Mr. Mamedov. On May 18 Heydar Aliyev met with him ordering to refrain from signing the document suggested by Moscow. As the minister told me later, the president waved his hand before his face, palm down, indicating to him the need to slow down a bit.

At the meeting with me on the same day, the President was clearly into maneuvering in all possible manners, suggesting a meeting with Levon Ter-Petrosyan in Moscow during the first days of June, ostensibly for signing the 'big political agreement', as it had been described in the media. Heydar Aliyev claimed that the reason for Mamedov's recall back to Baku was Grachev's unacceptably harsh undiplomatic tone, but the reasons obviously lied much deeper. We will examine this in more detail below.

When Mamedov and I returned to Moscow on May 19, the Azerbaijani minister began to put forward new conditions at the meeting with the Russian Deputy Minister of Defence, Georgy Kondratyev (Grachev had refused to meet with him) precisely in order to avoid signing the document prepared on May 16. He attempted to connect the withdrawal of the troops with the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the territories occupied by them, even though this was not so much a matter of military logistics as a strategic and political one and had to be resolved in the framework of a 'big political agreement'.

Azerbaijan was subjected to fierce pressure from the West. While the ceasefire achieved with the help of Russian mediation had come as bad news for the Western political interests, the prospects of deployment of its peace-keeping forces in the conflict zone had become practically unbearable for them. This appears unambiguously from the sudden intensification of the efforts of the Minsk Group leaders after May 12: the series of trips and initiatives by Jan Eliasson, as well as the whole dynamic of the Western diplomats' efforts around Karabakh all through 1994. All those efforts were aimed at exploring at least the possibilities for sending OSCE observers and peace-keeping forces to the region – anything to prevent the deployment of Russia's military forces, as well as military forces from other CIS countries. It was due to have succumbed to this precisely pressure that Mr. Aliyev had ordered his representative to resort to yet another maneuver in his line, this time in favour of the West's political ambitions.

The refusal of Azerbaijan to adopt the instruments of strengthening the ceasefire arrangements deprived us of an opportunity to consolidate the agreement in terms of military logistics, the sole result of all this being the fact that the armistice had not received due support either from Russia, or from the West, remaining objectively fragile. There had been no withdrawal of the forces from the contact line, no withdrawal of heavy armaments at a considerable distance, no establishment of a no-fly zone, etc.

Sometimes the sides proudly declare that the ceasefire arrangements are being maintained by them through their own efforts, without the involvement of foreign observers or separation forces. This is indeed a praiseworthy achievement! But the line of contact of the adversaries' forces continues to be quite an explosive region. Every year people die there as a result of frequent incidents and clashes. Some estimates claim that over the past 15 years several thousand servicemen and civilians have been killed in that region. Moreover, this is a constant source of simmering tensions, a kind of oil to the flame of hostile propaganda.

The difference in the way the sides perceived the ceasefire was particularly felt. In Azerbaijan the initial prevailing emotion was a kind of relief, whereas some Armenians, particularly from among the most bellicose members of the Karabakh community, have later repeatedly complained that Russia's interference had prevented them from taking over Ter-Ter, which would have made Baku far more cooperative. They have also made frequent public statements to the effect that the ceasefire agreement had resulted not so much from the mediatory efforts as from the balance of military forces achieved by that time.

## **Confirmation of the Armistice: Fantasies vs. Realities**

Two months later, on July 20, 1994, the West made a rather clumsy attempt to 'steal' Russia's role in the May ceasefire arrangements. President Levon Ter-Petrosyan told me in Yerevan that Mathias Mossberg had phoned him from Stockholm and on behalf of the Minsk Group (Sweden being its sole Chair at the time) suggested... that the ceasefire arrangement be extended by 30 days.

I replied that two hours earlier Mossberg had spoken to me on the phone while I was here in Yerevan, making, however, no mention of any suggestions to that effect. Stranger still, as well as more important in the matter, is how a ceasefire that was from the start deliberately stipulated as open-ended could possibly be extended?! What would that mean in practice then? None other than giving either side a chance to reject during those 30 days further extension of the agreement and opening possibilities for resumption of military hostilities. This, naturally, had to be prevented by all means possible – we simply could not afford to exchange an open-ended ceasefire for a month-long truce only with the prospect of being faced with uncertainty once it is over. The awkward maneuver by Mossberg is notable in showing that stealing the ceasefire initiative and taking the whole affair into the hands of the Minsk Group was so important that the Swedes stopped at nothing, including running the risk of breaking it down. It is somewhat hard to believe that the experienced Swedish diplomats were unaware of that possibility and were indeed acting upon their own judgement.

I immediately offered President Ter-Petrosyan an alternative solution – to make the political and/or military leaders of all the sides regularly (whether at joint meetings or separately) reaffirm the ceasefire arrangements with adamant statements of their resolution to continue to respect such. Mr Ter-Petrosyan approved that idea of mine. We discussed it with Baku and Stepanakert duly obtaining the consent of both sides. The totally absurd proposal

by Mossberg was therefore rejected and forgotten once and for all. We immediately proceeded to drawing up a preliminary draft text consisting of two paragraphs only (I still have several alternative drafts of that text in my possession) and proceeded to negotiating the details with them.

One pleasant fact was that my counter proposal was promptly accepted by all sides, yet after Yerevan I still had to go to Stepanakert and Baku, and by July 23 return to Moscow. In Stepanakert and Baku I took part in negotiating the alternative versions of the text, leaving the sides to work with it on their own afterwards I returned to Moscow but continued to follow the process of reconciling the actual wording directly between the parties. The signing of this statement was negotiated through fax correspondence, that is to say, there had never been any actual meeting taking place.

On July 26-27, 1994, three leaders of their respective countries' armed forces – the Defence Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh armed forces signed the first in the series of such reaffirmations. And again the text was forwarded to Moscow by fax, to the same addresses as the previous pact. Nonetheless, in Baku, presidential advisor Vafa Guluzade suggested that I forward a copy of that text to Jan Eliasson, who was the chairman of the Minsk Conference. We had no objections to this, nor did the Armenian side. This was the first time that this new recipient featured in the correspondence with Moscow.

Our genuine intention was to get along with the Minsk Group, yet our Western partners had taken advantage of Elisasson's inclusion onto the list of recipients to achieve their own ulterior aim of 'getting their back on Moscow for its success in securing a ceasefire. Little problem it was to turn down Guluzade's proposal, for it all went into enhancing the ceasefire arrangements achieved by Russian mediation. Funny as it is, but it is precisely due to this circumstance that the West has been so actively emphasising the significance of this document as opposed to the May 9-11 agreement. Earlier still we saw how the OSCE Permanent Council demonstratively ignored the latter agreement as it had been achieved with Russia's assistance and under its auspices, choosing instead to declare its support for the alternative draft agreement on the enhancement of the ceasefire regime, which Jan Eliasson had been fussing over for several weeks, in actual practice merely creating further hindrances

in our work with the sides to the conflict on the 'big political agreement' (he had even succeeded in obtaining a signature of the Azerbaijani side but the latter withdrew it two days after).

The key feature of the July 26-27 agreement was that this time it was executed on one sheet (and not on separate ones) and contained all titles and signatures (this was something of a major achievement!). Furthermore, it was in this text that the wording widely used henceforth, declaring that the sides have undertaken to observe the ceasefire conditions until the agreement on termination of the armed conflict is signed, first appeared. The literal wording was as follows: 'The parties to the conflict undertake to reaffirm the obligations under the ceasefire agreement assumed by them within a stipulated term until a fundamental political agreement providing for a complete cessation of hostilities is signed.'

We naturally attached understandable significance to this statement, yet were far from regarding it as an accomplished agreement, as some of our Western partners did. The Armenian side was also inclined to treat it as an agreement, but in their case it was mainly because of Nagorno-Karabakh being a party thereto.

There is no gainsaying the importance of each signed document in conflicts like this one, and yet there should be no illusion as to that in terms of its contents and commitments assumed this statement contained nothing whatsoever that would be beyond the ceasefire arrangements achieved earlier. After all, the commitment to observe ceasefire until a major political agreement is signed cannot be more lasting than an open-ended agreement. The only difference was that the open-ended agreement had been executed as such by default, whereas the limitation 'until a major political agreement is signed' was explicitly stipulated.

That said, achieving a breakthrough, such as ceasefire or an armistice, is one thing, and maintaining and building on what has already been started or achieved is quite quite another. And speaking in terms of the essence of the commitments, this was merely a reiteration of the ones assumed earlier and by no means an undertaking of new commitments by the conflicting sides.

The arrangements reached in Yerevan concerning the point of making

such statements in terms of effective confirmation of the ceasefire arrangements were indeed complied with by all three sides to the conflict but only once – a month later, in late August 1994. In their later statements both Yerevan and Stepanakert refer to the July 27, 1994 document as ‘agreement’, whereas Baku explicitly calls it a document and nothing more than that. In August each of the sides made a unilateral statement, retaining the similarity between them, even though the texts were no longer identical. It was now obvious that direct contacts between the sides regarding coordination of the texts of these agreements had indeed taken place (for the mediator had no part in it).

The August 29, 1994 statements contain some valuable provisions that deserve to be repeatedly reiterated, yet they never were. The Defence Ministry of Azerbaijan expressed its satisfaction at the time with the way the ceasefire arrangements were complied with. The Azeri Defence Minister had ordered all army units to refrain from any actions capable of leading to violations of the ceasefire regime. Measures to prevent possible incidents were reported to have been provided, as well as measures to punish persons responsible for violations of the ceasefire regime. Similar provisions could be found in the statements made by the respective foreign ministries of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Such measures could well have saved more than one life, civilian or military alike, in these past years.

Unfortunately, the progress made in August 1994 proved to be the culmination of the effort. The arrangement to make regular statements in support of the ceasefire regime was no longer observed by the conflicting sides, and indeed it would be nothing short of amazing had it been observed in the past decades. So irreversible was the throwback from the positive momentum, from the progress achieved, and this was caused primarily by that side which is still relishing the feeble prospects of revenge.

Our search for ways of confirming the renunciation of bloodshed continued. With a view to securing the ceasefire regime (and again at our initiative, but this time on behalf of Russia and Sweden, the countries co-chairing the Minsk Group at the time) an agreement on strengthening the ceasefire regime was drawn up and took effect on February 6, 1995, stipulating the arrangements concerning settlement of armed clashes that more frequently



broke out along the Azeri-Armenian border than around Nagorno-Karabakh. What was important was to provide all the sides with a succinct mechanism that could be instrumental in preventing further development or escalation of such clashes. At the request of one of the sides we had even developed draft internal guidelines on the implementation of such mechanism. And if the sides had not fully availed of such a mechanism that was provided at their disposal, they have no one but themselves to blame for this.

Years later I discovered a certain quote by Vafe Guluzade in a Baku daily 'Zerkalo' (dated December 26, 1998) where he alleges the following: 'Once every three months Azerbaijan and Armenia would have to negotiate, with Russia's mediation, the extension of the ceasefire arrangements,' such are his indignant allegations. 'That is to say, we were offered an option of bowing before Russia once every three months, over and over again.'

His logic can be described as nothing other than strange, to say the least. Indeed, would Moscow, that had invested so much effort in putting an end to the Karabakh bloodshed, be that much interested in repeating the trick of coaxing such unforthcoming partners into extending the peace arrangements over and over again on a quarterly basis, to say nothing of the probability of such efforts failing miserably each time anew? Luckily, we have a hand-written draft of this very agreement: a sketchy plan made by me in President Aliyev's cabinet on May 8, 1994. Naturally, it contains neither direct, nor indirect hints concerning its duration – as it was said before, the agreement was from the very start conceived as an open-ended one!

But Vafa Guluzade did not stop there in his fantasies: 'The phrase contained in the ceasefire agreement "until a peace agreement is signed" was negotiated by telephone, bypassing Moscow and Paris, thanks to the openness and the constructive approach of Girard Libaridian, the ex-advisor of the former Armenian President Ter-Petrosyan, who was my partner in direct negotiations. This stipulation, along with a number of other factors, had undoubtedly facilitated the stable nature of the ceasefire arrangements, and the end to the bloodshed as a result of the transition to peace talks.'

I by no means wish to dispute his words with regard to Girard Libaridian and the importance of the mentioned phrase. However, Mr. Guluzade had demonstrated a remarkable lack of responsible judgement in this case, and a

bad memory into the bargain. The peace process had begun before that, civilian killings stopped because of the armistice, and not because of some incidental phrase. The direct talks between the advisors of the two presidents only began in Amsterdam on December 19, 1995, one and a half years later. So, in reality, Moscow's participation was far from being uncalled for, even though Vafa Guluzade – whether due to inexplicable forgetfulness, or with a definite intent, – so vehemently denies, and even rejects the possibility of such.

The 'minor' detail regarding what exactly had been proposed to be done once every three months seems to have slipped his mind altogether. In July 1994, when the text of the suggested regular reaffirmations of the ceasefire arrangements was still being developed, the idea of setting the frequency of such reaffirmations as once every three months was voiced, but later, in the course of consultations, the actual frequency was omitted. But this was by no means about the ceasefire deadline! In a word, not the thing that he talked about later, not the place that he talked about and not the time that he talked about... Vain were such attempts by Vafa Guluzade to hold this absurd accusation against us! I will not dwell on the political aspect of his words, for he hardly realises that his declarations lack the crucial element for any political statement – accuracy and veracity.

Such was briefly the situation with the ceasefire and the cessation of military hostilities in Karabakh in May 1994. Despite this, due to a general lack of acquaintance with relevant documents, the media, political analysts and even some researchers not infrequently present a most confused portrayal of it, consequently misleading their readers as well. The nature of ignorance insofar as documents related to these events are concerned is truly pandemic. Comments made now and then by various observers and analysts are a plentiful source of amazement.

Thus, the achievement of the actual ceasefire is most often attributed to the Bishkek Protocol, which is deeply erroneous for it merely contained an appeal by the heads of parliaments to cease fire on the night to May 9, and not the actual agreement to this effect entering into force from May 12, 1994. In celebration of anniversaries of the armistice some media sources claim, as if at a command, that this was the day when the Bishkek Protocol entered into force, obviously unaware of the fact that the document in question was a

political, and not a legal one, for it is the latter type that normally take effect. There is a great deal of my own fault in it, which I readily acknowledge: the document should have been denoted as an appeal, and not a protocol.

Another frequent mistake is to claim that the ceasefire in Karabakh took effect on May 18 (at the meeting of the Defence Ministers in Moscow, see above). The birth of this myth is also partly our own fault as we had not published the text of the ceasefire agreement (although it is said to have been recently put up on the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Kyrgyzstan).

## **Some Are Not Too Happy With Peace Either**

It is worthy of note, however, that the end to the bloodshed and hostilities was not so much an occasion for joy in the eyes of our Western partners within the CSCE Minsk Group, especially on account of having been achieved with Russia's mediation. This had caused major dismay in the West resulting in a remarkable rise in the activity of the Swedish diplomats, since Sweden was the chairing member of the CSCE Minsk Group at the time. Some of the 'counter measures' taken by them were described earlier in this book. After the Minsk Group had failed to steal the ceasefire initiative, another line was adopted consisting in casual acknowledgement of Russia's role, nevertheless, demeaning the scale of such involvement as far as was possible. There were different ways and forms of achieving this.

For example, even after all these years, the OSCE reference books continue to claim that the Karabakh ceasefire agreement was allegedly an unofficial pact. It has already been acknowledged above that this agreement indeed lacks legalistic accuracy and numerous other essential details. And yet it was signed by the supreme military commanders of all the three sides to the conflict (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh) who had been duly authorised to do so by their respective supreme political leaders. Moreover, it has been repeatedly approved and re-affirmed in public by the leaders of all the sides involved in the conflict. It did not require an approval from the relevant parliaments but was clearly and unambiguously approved and supported by their people. Years that have passed since then have only helped to prove its viability. What grounds could there be for seeing it as unofficial? Who and by virtue of what criteria can ever determine just how official a document like this? The CSCE is hardly in the position to pronounce its own judgement on it, since it had nothing to do with its conclusion. If the only real contribution of the OSCE to the resolution of the Karabakh conflict, as far as

the ceasefire was concerned, consists in this interpretation, it can hardly be deemed as helpful in any respect.

The Armenian president Levon Ter-Petrosyan had in his due time also played his role in stirring confusion concerning the nature of this agreement. Speaking at the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly on September 29, 1994, he stated that 'thanks to the direct and efficient contacts between the sides to this conflict, the ceasefire *de facto* declared on May 12 was awarded on July 27 and August 28, 1994, an official status, with the sides reaffirming their resolution to observe the ceasefire arrangements prior to the signing of the political document.' Those words had an obvious goal of demonstrating the efficiency of the direct contacts between the sides of the conflict, even though his claims about the statements made at the end of July and August having a more official status than the agreement itself are absolutely not supported in any way. Signatures of the same rank, the same 'blessing' by the top leaders. How on earth could ceasefire arrangements gain an (especially *de facto!*) official status following the July and August re-affirmations is more than anyone can say! I must say that both the Azeri and the Nagorno-Karabakh side had, for their part, successfully refrained from pulling stunts like that.

What was also important was the fact that the United States were at the time dedicated to working towards the so-called 'formalization' of the ceasefire (in other words, awarding it a more official status). Vice-president Albert Gore and Secretary of State Warren Christopher spoke about it on September 27, 1994 during the visit by our delegation to the US, stressing this as almost a top-priority goal in respect of Nagorno-Karabakh. To translate this from the pseudo-legalese into the language of politics, this, on the one hand, meant the same old persistence in demeaning Russia's achievements as a key peace mediator and, on the other, it meant search for another way of once again stealing the ceasefire initiative from Russia and bringing it under the OSCE aegis. Andrei Kozyrev, therefore, duly replied to them that it was political harmony between the sides of the conflict that was to be sought, for, in the absence of that, no ceasefire arrangements, no matter how formal their level, could ever last and guarantee stability.

Little surprise it is, therefore, that later some of the researchers began to describe this agreement as 'unofficial', with the OSCE Secretariat persistently

upholding this view in their official reference books. But what is far worse is the fact that this is not merely a matter of historical justice or abstract legal nature. It is not so much about attempting to demean Russia's role in all this. What is paramount here is the fact that this agreement to date continues to be the only real achievement in the entire history of Nagorno-Karabakh peace process – its significance cannot be diminished in the eyes of both nations involved, and of the entire region, in fact. Thus, the substantial little that has been achieved is being deliberately, willfully undermined. Moreover, this means direct connivance in respect of those trigger-happy ones, who are still seeking to revert to military solutions for this long-running conflict. The situation in the region gives every reason to believe that it is not only a question of its past history, but equally of its today's realities and, – this possibility is also not be jettisoned blindly, – of its tomorrow.

Due to the agreement being described as 'unofficial' in the OSCE reference publications, I sent on September 29, 2003 a letter to the then OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubiš (who is now the Foreign Affairs Minister of Slovakia) requesting the removal of this term from subsequent publications. I was, therefore, quite understandably particularly looking forward to the OSCE Yearbook 2007 coming out. And, indeed, I did not find the vexed term there. Nor did I find any reference to the fact that the current peacemaking efforts by the OSCE with regard to the Karabakh conflict are maintained in the conditions of an armistice, and an indefinite armistice at that. Once describing the ceasefire arrangements as unofficial did not really work, – and even those arrangements had been, on top of all, achieved by Russia, and not by the OSCE, – it apparently made more sense to omit all mention of it in general. The Karabakh part of the brochure covers a whole range of issues, with 13 different dates given, yet there is no mention of either the actual ceasefire (the only real achievement in the Karabakh peace process!), or of its date. There is the much-vaunted neutrality and impartiality of our usually so sensitive European colleagues for you!

## **The Role of Russia's Mediatory Efforts in Achieving the Ceasefire**

The opinions in this respect vary widely and are often none other than polar. Some actively stress Russia's role in putting an end to the Karabakh bloodshed, as if it all depended solely on the mediator, its persistence and the art of exerting skillful pressure on all the sides. Others do their best to demean this role, portraying it as if the sides had arrived at the decision to cease the hostilities all by themselves. This position may seemingly be supported by the fact that the ceasefire arrangements have been effective for so long without any involvement of neutral observers or separation forces.

For example, speaking at the public hearings held at the State Duma Committee for CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots, 'Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh' Arkady Gukasyan stated that it had been not Russia's mediatory efforts but instead the general fatigue of the sides and the achieved balance of forces that had been instrumental in achieving the ceasefire. The version of the fatigue of both nations of the war having served as an impetus the armistice is also actively supported by the prominent Azerbaijani political analyst Arif Yusufov. Little doubt there is as to that both these factors had played their respective role in achieving the ceasefire. But the truth is that the people of this region had grown tired of bloodshed not by May 12, 1994, but much earlier, this was definitely the general feeling by the end of 1993. Moreover, the balance of forces had held before – for several months after the occupation of the Kel-bacar district. That is just the point: the whole situation was far more complicated, influenced by many more factors than just the two noted by Arkady Gukasyan.

To understand this phenomenon many other factors need to be considered.

Firstly, Baku cherished until the very end the hope of achieving a military victory over the Armenian side. That is why it had repeatedly evaded the ceasefire option, along with other peacemaking initiatives proposed, or made a tactical choice of first accepting them and later backing up even on officially signed arrangements.

Secondly, Russia and the Council of the CIS heads were consistently steering the process towards their determined goal, their settled priority – an end to military hostilities in the framework of the peacemaking process. Only Russia and – upon its initiative – the Council of the CIS heads had so explicitly stipulated this goal as a priority.

Thirdly, on Russia's part this was more than just a matter of principled stance, but a persistent, consistent and practical course pursued by its leaders and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence. Suffice it to recall the entire series of short-term ceasefire agreements reached in the course of this conflict precisely with Russia's mediation in 1991, 1992 and especially in 1993. Those were short-lived, unfortunately, yet had become important political and psychological premises for the May 12, 1994 ceasefire that continues to be in effect to this day.

Fourth, Russia had been calling for this in its capacity of a member of the CSCE Minsk Group, but its appeal for a ceasefire or, at least, a suspension of hostilities, had long been stifled by the representatives of some other countries there, who at the time determined the general policy of the Minsk Group placing more significance on the continuity of the peace talks rather than on cessation of fire as such.

Fifth, it is worth reminding the other mediators involved in the peace process that they had not even once managed to achieve a real ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh: neither the CSCE Minsk Group, nor Tehran, nor Alma-Ata...

Some of my Minsk Group colleagues told me later that the US Ambassador John Maresca would even pick on me slightly behind my back, showing something verging on pity – saying that I had allegedly cracked my brain on that ceasefire, whereas the fighting was bound to continue and this path to peace would in reality take us nowhere.

Matter of fact, Sweden – who chaired the Minsk Group in the early 1994 – was also rather eager to achieve a ceasefire, even if that meant doing



so along with Russia, as a partner, but better still, without it, on behalf of the CSCE Minsk Group.

If Arkady Gukasyan wishes to maintain his point of view, he might be so kind as to explain why the leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh had voiced their reproach to Russia's representatives so many times over for Russia's having prevented them from taking over Ter-Ter in May 1994. And this would have meant gaining access to Barda and Yevlakh and the danger of the whole of Azerbaijan's north-western region being cut off in the vicinity of Mingachevir (as was the case with its south-west back in October 1993). It therefore looks like that, despite their fatigue and the balance of forces, the Karabakh leaders were then determined to make the most of the assault on Ter-Ter but were forced to curtail fire under the pressure of circumstances.

This is what the situation with Russia's role in the ceasefire was like. Little sense does it make to try and overestimate it, yet those wishing to demean it should also abandon their hopes of achieving this.

Finally, there is another curious fact related to the Karabakh ceasefire. The PACE resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh dated January 2005 contains a declaration of gratitude to the co-chairing members of the Minsk Group and the personal envoy of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for their relentless peacemaking efforts and, in particular, for their contribution to the ceasefire agreement of May 12, 1994. The authors of that PACE resolution were apparently blissfully unaware of the fact that neither the co-chairing members of the Minsk Group, nor the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office actually existed at the time. The Minsk Group was chaired by Sweden, who, just like the CSCE on the whole, had nothing to do with the cessation of hostilities in Karabakh, which had in reality been achieved by Russia.

But even after we brought this to David Atkinson's notice long before the resolution was adopted, the text was adopted the way it is. How difficult it is for the West to recognise Russia's achievements! Or, rather, almost impossible, so it seems...

## Our Western Partners are into Schemes

Considering that up to the present day, the developments in the situation of those days have always been – if solely for the sake of simplicity – related in a somewhat lopsided manner, presenting them more as a regional scale, or even domestic events, emphasising the prominence of their international aspects assumes even greater importance. Factors that were by all means external, as deemed in relation to this region, played a significant, or even sometimes vital, role during that period.

It is hard to summarise straight away wherein lies the main value of the Karabakh peace negotiations as an experience of that kind, what was the fundamental lesson that we had to learn from it (at least, with regard to the period between 1992-1996 – the time of my active involvement in this business) – that of cooperation between Russia and some of the Western states or, on the contrary, that of their differences and the rivalry of their approaches? Or, rather, of the spokes that were constantly put in Moscow's wheels by the Western forces. I by no means wish to demean that experience of truly constructive cooperation, I nevertheless believe it necessary to call attention to some of the tricks and strategies that our Western partners resorted to in their attempts to constrain and undermine Russia's position. Because those manifestations of malice were somehow paradigmatic, so to speak. Another reason why this simply cannot be is that this is something we can well expect to encounter in the course of our interaction and cooperation in the framework of peace negotiations

Here is the opinion of a correspondent who was working in Moscow for the *Christian Science Monitor* at the time and wrote about that whole Karabakh business back in 1993: *'Russia and the West have major differences on how peace in the region can be achieved. Russia's representatives have chosen to act at their own risk and peril trying to mediate in the direct negotiations between the sides at war in order to achieve a ceasefire. Yet, its Western partners*

*in the framework of the CSCE efforts lasting two years now are accusing Moscow of playing its own game and seeking its own ulterior interest – to restore Russia's former influence and role in the Caucasus region... The attitude to Russia's peace initiatives within the Minsk Group was rather controversial: the OSCE had declined to declare its support for either a ceasefire at Russia's initiative, or the suggestion to send Russian troops as peacekeeping forces to act as a buffer separating the warring sides.'*

In our utterly diplomatic, yet nothing short of polemic (in terms of its contents) correspondence with the Swedish diplomat Jan Eliasson in October-November 1994 I was compelled to point out to him the substantial difference both in the intensiveness and the effectiveness of the mediatory efforts on the part of the CSCE/OSCE Minsk Group and those contributed by the Russian Federation, especially at top level, stressing the lack of determination and prompt reaction on the part of the Minsk Group in respect of a whole range of issues. Russia was behind not only the ceasefire initiative, but also the chosen format of negotiations (involving all the three sides to the conflict), their basis (a legally binding agreement), as well as the realistic approach to a number of complex aspects of the conflict.

The Minsk Group had been for a long time doing its best to ignore Moscow's suggestions, only to find itself later faced with little other choice but to accept and adopt much of what had initially been first proposed by us with regard to the resolution of the Karabakh conflict. Looking back now, many years later, once the frank memoirs of our American colleague Ambassador John Maresca, – who had played a key role in the Minsk Group in 1992-2003 when it was chaired by Italy – have been published, it is no longer surprising why our suggestions were first met with so little enthusiasm on the part of the Minsk Group leaders.

John Maresca was without doubt a very experienced negotiator, as far as OSCE affairs were concerned. His Italian roots did not come amiss either when it came to finding common grounds with the chairmen. But the key factor was, of course, the fact that he was a representative of the United States seeking deeper involvement of Washington in the Karabakh crisis resolution. It is moreover clear from his publications that his motives were precisely to curb Russia's 'neo-imperialist ambitions.'

The range of means employed at the time by the chairing and some of the ordinary members of the Minsk Group in order to either restrict or diminish Russia's role in the Karabakh peace process varied greatly, yet all of them hammered away at one sole aim. This deserves a more thorough examination, as this was by no means an isolated case of evidence of just how thorny the path of Russia's complex relations with other countries was, with a fair deal of tensions and even antagonism.

\* \* \*

Below are a few examples of the methods employed by some of our Western partners (primarily, the United States, of course, and those whose customary role was rather that of their puppets):

- The Western partners persistently ignored Russia's ceasefire efforts and initiative dismissing them as unrealistic, unfeasible under the circumstances, yet, seeing that Russia was making more significant progress than was expected, they suddenly demonstrated not only an ardent desire to avail of the successful results of its work – which is rather natural, perhaps, – but they went further trying to steal those initiatives, understandably stealing the credit for them as well. There was a certain period even, when they had openly succumbed to the temptation to foist the achieved progress in ceasefire negotiations, demeaning or totally denying Russia's role in them. Suffice it to remember the declarations made at the July 1994 session of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly to the effect that the ceasefire deal had been fully the result of the work done by the Minsk Group! Further still, there was one episode where they showed themselves ready to jeopardise even the very prospect of such ceasefire (first, through the proposal put forward by the Swedish diplomat Mathias Mossberg to extend the agreement by 30 days, – an open-ended agreement, that is! – and then through the proposal to 'formalise' that agreement, which was specifically dallied with by the American side, including such figures as Albert Gore and Warren Christopher).

- Following the decision by the 1994 Budapest OSCE summit to introduce the complete coordination of all mediatory and negotiation steps, our Western partners demonstrated a remarkable itch to alter or even completely transform the preliminary ceasefire arrangements elaborated by the Russian side as a basis for further negotiations between the

sides to the conflict that were held in 1993-94, with Russia acting as the sole mediator at the time. That said, they did not suggest any draft document of their own, at least, one that would be legally binding for all sides. Many of the participants in the peace process worked hard to block whatever had been done in that line, among them was Sweden who long rejected our 'big political deal' (as it was labelled by the mass media) as a basis for negotiations, all in the hope of rushing their own 'little deal' on the strengthening of the ceasefire regime through. They had spent three months on doing this, but after it fell through were nevertheless compelled to start the work on the 'big deal'. In one of our debates with our Western partners I was compelled to discard all laws and commandments of diplomacy and say to their face in deliberately harsh tones: 'It was not us who came to your negotiations but it was you who came to ours.'

The German representative Frank Lambach was particular eager to twist and distort the basis for negotiations. He literally kept harping on about the general unacceptability of this draft agreement, both addressing the neutral parties and even those involved in the conflict – behind the scene, of course, – urging all to seek a different basis for negotiations. The only result was that, of all the members of the Minsk Group, he was himself eventually assigned the task of seeking such basis, which, rather predictably, had never yielded any tangible result.

- The determination displayed by our Western partners with regard to putting obstacles in Russia's way was such that sometimes they sought to ruin even those arrangements in our draft agreement on which all of the sides to the conflict had already agreed. One would imagine that mediators may desire nothing more than for all sides to reach agreement. Once, upon our arrival in Baku, we had to spend half of the day locked in heated debates on where the ceasefire agreement was to be signed. The draft agreement specified Moscow as the chosen location, and all the sides had already consented to it. However, Anders Bjurner was doing all he could to ensure that that field was left blank, i.e. meaning to leave this matter open for further discussion. The inevitable question arising here is: if all of the sides to the conflict, all the parties to the agreement had reached agreement regarding that option, why would this arouse such fervent objections on the part of one of the mediators? How was this compatible with the interests of the cause of seeking a resolution to the conflict? Now you can see for yourselves what kind of partners we had! Could we possibly choose to comply with their wishes?

- Another matter which was important to them was to have CIS observers removed from the room where negotiations were being held. This was in fact the result of a curious metamorphosis. When they first took up the chairmanship of the Minsk Group, the Swedish diplomats pleasantly surprised us with their efforts to emphasise the importance of Russia's involvement, along with its role in the settlement of the conflict. They also stressed the helpfulness of the CIS involvement. For example, in his statement made on May 21, 1994 Heydar Aliev confessed that in his conversations with Eliasson and Mossberg the latter would always assign a special role to Russia and declare the necessity of achieving the involvement of the CIS. So what could have happened then for it all to change? Why did the same Swedish diplomats later begin to oppose even token presence of CIS observers at the negotiations? After all, we never opposed the presence of the Swedish diplomats at the earlier negotiations on our draft agreement, when such were held in Moscow with Russia's sole mediation. Reasons for this change in their position are hard to understand. A natural question therefore arises: was this not by any chance a result of certain pressure on behalf of other members of the Minsk Group?

And is it, after all, not curious how or Western partners sought to remove from the preamble the already agreed between the sides phrase containing the statement about the agreement having been motivated by the aspiration to consolidate the CIS? It is at any rate the parties to an agreement (and by no means a mediator) who make an independent decision on what they are motivated by in signing it (Azerbaijan had already become a member of the CIS by that time, as had Armenia, while Nagorno-Karabakh was clearly within its range of influence.)

- It is also characteristic that in 1993 the Italian delegates turned down a request on the part of Kazakhstan to be admitted into the Minsk Group in the modest capacity of an observer. And this was despite the fact that the leaders of Kazakhstan had played a very active role in the Karabakh peace process in 1991 and 1992. This was the only time when a request for admission into the Minsk Group was actually refused, even though the Western states (Finland, Switzerland, Austria) had absolutely no problem with joining the Minsk Group. From among larger countries the United Kingdom was the only one to remain outside the Minsk Group, despite all its historically significant interests in the Trans-Caucasian region. It later attempted to clarify its chances of adhesion but, by that time, we had already raised the issue of the blatant unacceptability of the refusal received by Kazakhstan with all others having been so easily

accepted, and this may well have been the reason behind the Minsk Group Board's decision to slow down the Brits.

- The Western partners would habitually put up obstacles preventing trips by the Russian mediator down to the region of the conflict, which were perceived with jealousy as a source of our awareness of the realities, positions and developments in the situation between the conflicting sides, as well as a channel of our influence there, especially as far as top level contacts were concerned. They urged the Finnish co-chairmen to tag along with me whenever I travelled there and demand approval of the informative basis of those trips.

- Finally, there was such a last-ditch method as the forced but merely declarative readiness of our Western partners to accept the creation of multi-national OSCE peacekeeping forces to be deployed in the region – only to avoid possible deployment there of solely Russian observers or solely Russian forces to separate the warring sides along the contact line.

- There were even instances when the Minsk Group was directly incited to act against Russia, demonstrating barefaced reluctance to work on and approve its mandate, even though the OSCE system knows of no other precedent of any bodies, groups or commissions operating without any specific decision on their establishment, an officially approved mandate or explicitly stated goals and functions.

- On more than one occasion were meetings of the Minsk Group appointed by the chairman of the Minsk conference (upon preliminary coordination with the US delegate) on dates that they knew in advance to be most inconvenient for us, to prevent Russia from contributing its efforts to the rapprochement between the conflicting sides. These attempts deserve a more detailed coverage. Since 1993, when Russia's mediation gradually began to bring tangible results, seemingly accidental goofs, first looking like unfortunate coincidences, related to dates of the Minsk Group sessions began to occur. Either Italy's, or Sweden's representatives would now and then appoint forthcoming meetings on those dates or close to those dates when Moscow would be busy with the preparation to or with actually holding events attended by the top leaders of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. We had notified of this in due time, or else this was at any rate known in advance. We had taken specific trouble to communicate those arrangements to the

chairmen of the Minsk Group. First time it happened, we dismissed that as an unfortunate coincidence, but when it happened for the second and the third time, pretending this was due to anything other than a very clear intent no longer made sense.

When the first in the row of such aggravating 'coincidences' occurred shortly after September 20, 1993 (this was precisely on the dates when the meetings of the Council of the CIS heads were being held in Moscow, just when the meeting between President Heydar Aliyev and President Levon Ter-Petrosyan was prepared and eventually held, as was the first meeting between the former and the Nagorno-Karabakh leader Robert Kocharyan), we were compelled to send another diplomat – the director of the CIS Department of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs V.I. Kuznetsov, – to substitute Russia's official envoy at the meeting of the Minsk Group in Paris. He was sufficiently 'in the swim' regarding the situation and was, moreover, my superior in terms of his diplomatic rank. Yet, our Western partners actively complained of Russia's failure to ensure its due representation at the meeting.

The second time a similar situation occurred with the meeting in Prague, on April 12-15, 1994 (April 15 was just the date when another meeting of the Council of the CIS heads was held in Moscow) where Russia was represented by Nikolai G. Fomin, counsellor of our embassy in the Czech Republic. And again the meeting had inexplicably coincided in time with the date of the meeting between the presidents of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan in Moscow. Quite naturally, we could not possibly miss such an excellent opportunity to organise a direct meeting between them and prepare an important statement on Karabakh. And Eliasson was informed of the pending event in Moscow two weeks in advance. Later he naturally spoke of these incidents as unfortunate coincidences.

When the same repeated for the third time, we had no other choice but to boycott demonstratively a similar meeting of the Minsk Group in Vienna on September 12-14, the preparation to which was attended with the same old tricks. The dates had been duly discussed in advance (September 21-23), and we had confirmed our intention to participate. Suddenly, against all arrangements, Eliasson notified everyone of an urgent, and equally inexplicable,



necessity to change the date and move the meeting 10 days ahead. And September 8-9 were the days when, on the instructions of the Russian President, Mr. Kozyrev and the head of Russia's mediatory mission were holding bilateral and multilateral meetings between the top leaders of the conflicting sides: the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh leader.

On September 11, 1994 I addressed an explicit letter to Eliasson in which I noted that 'there is an apparent intention to obstruct Russia's mediatory efforts, and there is, moreover, a strong desire to make it look like Russia is neglecting its duties within the Minsk Group and shunning cooperation with it'. Since such 'contrived off-sides' had assumed a systematic nature, we asked Eliasson to inform all members of the Minsk Group that the Russian Federation will not see itself as bound by any agreements or obligations which may be achieved at meetings held in the absence of its envoy.

The Moscow negotiations on the draft ceasefire agreement were consistently rejected by the Minsk Group, not being recognised as real negotiations and being mentioned on the agenda as 'other meetings and consultations'. That is why, I also forwarded to Eliasson a copy of the written commission of one of the delegations at those negotiations issued by their top leaders, stressing the fact that this factor merely served as yet another proof of the atmosphere of disloyalty and of backdoor manipulations within the Minsk Group surrounding Russia's role, all of which I had conveyed to him in my earlier letters. I specifically noted that Russia is open to serious and honest cooperation with the Minsk Group but will, naturally, never consent to folding its mediatory efforts. This letter was only one in the series exchanged between me and Eliasson on the subject of Russia's and CBSE's mediation in the peace process.

It would seem only praiseworthy that Russia's delegates worked directly with the leaders of all the sides involved in the conflict, and at the top level too. It would seem logical for the Chairman of the Minsk Group to coordinate the dates of such meetings with Moscow, and not with Washington, or with any other parties for that matter – after all, no one else was involved in any work of that kind. But the situation was precisely the opposite – the dates were coordinated with anyone but Moscow and, what's more, everything was being done in order to disrupt or even ruin Moscow's peacemaking activities.

One of the factors behind the change of the meeting date was the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Senior Officials that was to be held in Vienna on September 14-16, and our Western partners had to make it there to prepare (not so much for the sake of facilitating the peace process as in order to spite Russia) a resolution on the creation of a multi-national CBSE peacekeeping force for Nagorno-Karabakh. Should that opportunity have been missed, it would be much more difficult then to prepare a similar proposal for the Budapest summit. But one would be mistaken to assume that such fervent activity had resulted in adoption of any serious resolutions in the interests of actual deployment of CBSE forces in the conflict zone. What is characteristic is that the only resolution adopted at the Committee of Senior Officials was that on **examining the possibility** of creating multi-national CBSE forces, while the Budapest summit had barely demonstrated a '**political will**' to create such forces. Not much, was it?! Nonetheless, this was presented as almost a viable alternative to possible deployment of Russian separation forces, and done along with the active generation of all possible hindrances to our peace-keeping efforts.

After three such 'unfortunate coincidences' in a row (Paris, Prague and Vienna) we could not possibly continue to confine ourselves to low-key wrangling with the chairman of the Minsk Group regarding each such case any longer. We had no other choice but to publicise the whole situation in order to block possible maneuvers of this kind in the future and ensure regular progress of Russia's mediatory effort. In September 1994 we had to make a statement agreed with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the media to the effect that if such incidents will continue to take place, we will see ourselves compelled but to discontinue our practice of participation in the meetings of the Minsk Group, even though this was by no means our desire.

There were cases when our partners demonstrated a remarkable lack of fundamental ethical norms in their conduct. In April 1993 US Ambassador John Maresca expressed his annoyance at the withdrawal of the Azeri side from the consultations in Geneva and the positive response of Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert to President Yeltsin's April 8 initiative concerning Russia's mediation. This was a serious threat for the US to find themselves 'out of play'. He told me at the time that he intended to support the Russian President's

initiative and wangled a visit to Moscow with precisely that purpose in view. This was the very pretext under which our work with him, and with the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow, Volkan Vural, went through the last days of April. You can imagine my surprise later, when the Department of State spokesman made a statement on the leading role of the United States altogether omitting our work in Moscow on the negotiations schedule upon the Russian President's initiative. I was compelled to address a harsh letter to Maresca regarding this matter, which was answered with apologies. Yet those apologies were, naturally, of a private, low-profile nature, while the declarations entailing them were made out loud and quite publicly. This instance of brazen cynicism was by far not an isolated case.

The climax of tactlessness in the conduct of our Western partners in the Minsk Group towards Russia came with the episode of September 11, 1993, at the first not Rome-based meeting of the Minsk 'Nine' held in Moscow. In the closing of the session of September 10, held on the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs premises on Spiridonovka street, we agreed that we would resume our work on the following morning at 10am. Considering that I was the 'host' of the meeting, as well as in view of a number of matters that were waiting to be solved, I decided to arrive ahead of time, at about 9.15 am, – only to find all of our Western partners already there. My early arrival in all evidence disrupted their discussion the subject of which was not hard to guess – how to counter Russia and its mediatory role. Why would they otherwise get together in our absence, before our arrival, and without duly informing us? And, at that, on our own premises! This is the civilised Western world for you! I moreover cannot swear that this was the only incident of the kind, because in other places we may have simply been in the dark regarding their secret get-togethers.

One other episode was related to the preparations to my trip to the conflict region in 1995. A Finnish colleague of ours – the co-chairman of the Minsk Group, Rene Nyberg (10 years later he became Finnish Ambassador in Moscow), who had only recently taken up that post, expressed his wish to accompany me. This was not quite in line with my plans, as it would have clearly been detrimental to the atmosphere of trust and confidentiality in our communication with the leaders of the conflicting parties, but I was also

reluctant to turn down the request as this could look like I was being unhelpful towards a novice colleague. And so I had to say 'yes'.

My companion had, however, plans of his own. He realised that even despite our equal status as the co-chairs of the Minsk Group, he, being a newcomer, so to speak, would hardly be perceived as having the same authority as someone who had long been working on the Karabakh problem. This obviously hurt his pride as he began to make necessary arrangements with Budapest, all very much on the quiet and behind my back (the Hungarian Laszlo Kovacz was the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office at the time) for István Gyarmati to accompany us as a Chairperson's envoy and the chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna. This automatically made the Hungarian the senior diplomat within our company. The Finnish delegate did not trouble himself with informing me of Gyarmati's involvement, simply leaving me face to face with an accomplished fact. Despite their refined European exterior and manners, some of our partners went at times as far as to demonstrate such a remarkable lack of correctness...

There was yet another rather subtle maneuver, all with the same purpose of obstructing Russia's efforts and countering its progress. This took the form of 'personification', 'privatisation' of those efforts, i.e. ascribing all effort of the Russian diplomats to the merits of one and only person. That is to say, our Western partners were in the habit of referring to the draft agreement suggested by us as 'Kazimirov's draft' or even 'the paper of Kazimirov'. This subtle gimmick is, for example, very easy to discern in the book by Rexane Dedashti mentioned earlier here. This may seem only desirable for someone willing to achieve fame and recognition of his achievements. But in reality it is none other than a plain attempt to play such a person off against his own country by representing Russia's plan as one man's brainchild, his amateurism, in order to oppose him, probably even appealing to Russia itself through its higher-ranking representatives.

At this point, a conversation between the first deputy Minister of Interior, Igor Ivanov, and the US Ambassador in Russia, Thomas Pickering, comes to mind. Igor Sergeyeovich's secretariat inquired from the US Embassy what it was that the Ambassador wished to discuss with him. The range of issues arising between Russia and the US was truly unlimited, many of those were

even, strictly speaking, beyond the scope of bilateral relations. When the reply came that the matter concerned the situation in Karabakh, Ivanov invited me to be there too.

Mr. Pickering, an experienced diplomat that he was, was nevertheless clearly slightly embarrassed to discover me in Ivanov's cabinet upon entering it. It turned out that he had come upon a commission from the Department of State bringing a non-paper along with him, with clear instructions to convey criticism of my work and my tendency to neglect the CSCE interests. The American side loved positioning themselves as eager advocates of its interests, in order to conceal cunningly their actual self-interest. Igor Ivanov rejected their claims with utmost delicacy and tact, yet failing to give me a chance to speak for myself and explain the situation.

Sometimes we clearly failed to fathom this game of 'forced privatisation' that our Western partners were playing, and even inadvertently played into their hands. I can only marvel, no less, looking through the records of conversations between Kozyrev and the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. Christopher speaks of what the CSCE should better do in respect of the Karabakh situation. Our minister declares literally this: *'Why bother with the CSCE! Kazimirov alone is doing much more good than all of the CSCE!'* The exaggeration was obvious, of course, as well as unnecessary. This may have flattered my self-esteem somewhere at an internal meeting with colleagues, but it was clearly out of place in a conversation with a US representative. My name already regularly provoked dismay with the Department of State.

The above-described methods and maneuvers, all aimed at disrupting our efforts in the Karabakh peace process, could well be included in the training curriculum for future officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supplementing it with similar experience in peacemaking accumulated in the framework of other conflicts.

## **The Uproar Among our Western Partners**

As was briefly mentioned above, the American side took the news of the May 12, 1994 ceasefire agreement with distinct concern, as Russia's active role in achieving this had naturally contributed to strengthening its influence in the region. What was particularly worrying for the US was a potential deployment of Russia's peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone. And they, therefore, invested a good deal of efforts to prevent this from happening – even though this meant acting to the detriment of the peace negotiations and overall mediatory efforts.

Washington's strategy was truly multidimensional. Its key line was to influence Baku and Yerevan directly, to persuade them to reject the plan proposed by Russia. The role of the Minsk Group as the chief smokescreen covering up the true intentions and maneuvers on behalf of the United States, was urgently stepped up: Sweden, who chaired the Group at the time, saw its delegation, headed by Jan Eliasson, being promoted by all means possible. The strings that Turkey potentially had in respect of Baku were also involved. The US also applied a great deal of direct efforts on their own in order to 'restrain' Moscow.

The US Department of State openly and brazenly declared that Moscow's mediatory efforts in the Karabakh conflict resolution should not be encouraged, as this may result in its influence rising in the Trans-Caucasus, which was to be avoided by all means. It was stated that, whereas in Tajikistan Washington was prepared to connive at Russia's activity to a known extent, Azerbaijan, with its considerable prospects in the eyes of the American oil businesses, was altogether a different matter. News of the sides to the conflict being ready to sign an agreement on withdrawal of the opposing troops in Moscow had raised understandable concern within the Department of State. The US Ambassadors in Baku and Yerevan were immediately urged to

address the leaders of the two republics 'for explanations'. Azerbaijan was also threatened with inevitable deterioration of the bilateral relations. The Department of State spoke of the necessity to press harder for the 'negotiations' to return under the aegis of the CSCE Minsk Group. They had no illusions as to the viability and efficacy of the Minsk Group and made no secret of it, yet they stressed that its failure to make any headway was in any case better than giving Russia a green light to act independently in the Trans-Caucasus.

The logical beginning of the whole story was the rise in Sweden's activity starting with May 1994. This is true both in terms of the timeline, and the publicity that it had received, which was greater than the one earned by all the backdoor manipulations by Washington. That is not to say, nevertheless, that the distinguished Swedish diplomats were not active on their own, but, in addition to this, their activity was to a great extent not only encouraged but also skillfully steered by the Americans. And examples of this are far from being scarce.

Earlier that month it was agreed that after May 12 we were to make our first joint trip to the region together with Swedes Jan Eliasson and Mathias Mossberg. The goal of this was to demonstrate to the sides to the conflict how harmonised the efforts of the key mediators – Russia and the CBSE – were.

But exactly at 0 am on May 12 the Karabakh ceasefire agreement achieved through Russia's sole mediation took effect. The Swedish diplomats had to adjust themselves to the situation right on the place. Eliasson was compelled to urgently amend his draft agreement, which he has prepared in advance, bearing the same name into a 'draft agreement on the strengthening of the ceasefire arrangements'. Even though the essence of that draft project could hardly be deemed as particularly substantial and has remained such: it barely contained an appeal by the warring sides to the CSCE, the CIS and Russia suggesting observers are sent to the conflict zone.

The Swedes suggested that I have a look at the text. All in the spirit of loyalty I suggested a few amendments that did it much good. They accepted those. Along with that, I told them honestly that the agreement was lacking succinct and substantial content. This, however, turned out to be far too unacceptable for Eliasson, and he began to insist on keeping to the dates

agreed earlier. We realised that the 'little agreement' on inviting international observers was proposed by the Swedes solely as a 'face-saving' measure for the sake of the CSCE. Not wishing to create an impression of a lack of cooperativeness on our side, we finally decided against insisting on a postponement of the trip, but to this day I believe that this was our common mistake, even though a minor one, perhaps.

The very first day of our trip was spent by the Swedish partners not so much on promoting their hardly informative project, slightly amended through our common efforts, during the negotiations in Baku, as on the efforts to remove the '*big political agreement*' as far back as possible. The same was the situation in Yerevan. Non-flying weather that lasted during those two days prevented us from visiting Stepanakert. The meeting with the Karabakh leaders was, as a result, held in the Armenian capital. On May 15 I had to leave Yerevan, along with the Armenian defence minister, heading for Moscow, to participate in the meeting of the Defence Ministers chaired by Pavel Grachev, while the Swedes again returned to Baku to continue with their campaign in favour of their 'little agreement'.

Back in the early May 1994 Rasul Guliev had probed, upon a commission from Heydar Aliyev, our stance on the possibility of a ceasefire agreement being signed not only by the actual parties to the conflict plus Russia, but also by Eliasson, as the chairman of the CSCE Minsk Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh. The Azeri leaders would then find it easier to sign the '*big political agreement*' not only in the face of their own society and even the opposition, but also in the face of the pressure that they were experiencing from the United States.

On May 17 Mammadrafi Mamedov was summoned by Heydar Aliyev to quit the meeting of the defence ministers chaired by Pavel Grachev and return to Baku. I accompanied him. On the following day Mamedov and I held separate talks with the President. At my meeting with Mr. Aliyev agreement was reached to hold the simultaneous signing of all the three documents (the '*big political agreement*', the military technical agreement of May 16 and of the 'little agreement' on inviting international observers). Upon my return to Moscow on May 19 I faxed a private message to him in which, with reference to those arrangements, I suggested that we make up our mind as to the date of



signing this document in Moscow: June 1 or June 2. I also sent an urgent inquiry requesting the remarks of the Azeri side concerning the text of the '*big political agreement*', and confirming that we will invite Eliasson to sign the 'big agreement' but cannot grant him the right of veto regarding the text that had already been agreed between us, and also expressing my consent to include the 'little agreement' into the '*big political agreement*' (alternatively we could organise separate, yet simultaneous signing of those). We assumed that Eliasson's participation in the signing of those documents would have created serious obstacles for the US and Turkey in their attempts to pursue the policy of setting Russia's mediatory efforts against those of the CSCE. However, it never quite came to the package treatment of those proposals.

What is also quite exemplary is the fact that on May 19 in Vienna, the CSCE Permanent Committee adopted a declaration based on Eliasson's report in which not a single mention was made of the ceasefire achieved with Russia's mediation, but enthusiastic support was expressed instead in respect of the agreement on the strengthening of the ceasefire regime the negotiations on which were allegedly underway with the active mediation of the CSCE and the Russian Federation. The Committee called upon both sides to respect the ceasefire arrangements and sign the agreement within shortest possible time.

On the next day, May 20, it became clear that the arrangements reached with the President Aliyev himself were worth nothing. This was all just another maneuver on his part. We learnt that the Azeri leaders, driven to the edge by their internal tensions and political instability, the pressure from the outside and their own faltering and hesitation, had broken our earlier agreements and signed 'the little agreement' (and at that Rasul Guliev, unlike President Aliyev himself, claimed that the previous arrangements were somehow 'still in force' and that Heydar Aliyev had given Hasan Hasanov and Vafa Guluzade a task to urgently prepare their comments regarding the draft of the '*big political agreement*').

Yerevan and Stepanakert were in no hurry to sign 'the little agreement'. According to information that had been conveyed to us, they objected to the presence of CSCE observers both in terms of the scope of this measure, and in terms of the pace at which it was implemented. They were planning to

insist on the deployment of Russian separation forces, and resolved not to leave the occupied Azerbaijani territories without a 'cushion' like that. We were prepared to possible 'bulldozing' on the Armenian side on the part of Washington, but it never quite came to that. Very soon, just a few days after the signing of 'the little agreement', Baku receded from it, realising that it had in actual fact maintained the status quo, not resulting in the liberation of the occupied territories.

Having overcome by May 27 the parliamentary crisis, the Azeri leaders again began to assure Moscow of their readiness to sign the '*big political agreement*' (even though it was no longer planned for June 1 or June 2, but at any rate before June 10). Perfectly realising that under the tricky circumstances the Azeri leaders had no other choice but to resort to cunning political maneuvers, little confidence did they inspire after all the twists and turns in their line of conduct.

All in all, almost three months had been wasted on fruitless work on 'the little agreement'. The only real, yet indisputably destructive, result was that the focus of attention of the conflicting sides was diverted from the '*big political agreement*'. The consequence being that the Minsk Group, chaired by Sweden, got down to the work on the '*big political agreement*' with a great delay, and, all the same, nothing practically constructive had been contributed by it. And, that said, we had offered them to get down to that as early as May 1994, immediately after the ceasefire agreement was signed, during our first joint trip to the region.

Here I would like to say more about the work that was being done by the Swedish diplomats. Taking into account their professional experience and the general neutral stance of Stockholm, they could have potentially been quite successful in holding the chair of the Minsk Group (which they did over the period between January 1994 and April 21, 1995). Especially, considering that Sweden had no interests of its own in the conflict region and initially proposed more active cooperation with Russia. However, the United States from the very start subtly strove to orchestrate everything. From the very beginning, Sweden had assigned a very special role in this whole business to Americans, all key matters had to be negotiated with the American diplomats, sometimes this was done on the sly, behind our backs, but sometimes

quite in the open. And at the same time Jan Eliasson adamantly denied all my subtle hints to the effect that he was serving somebody else's interests. I will describe here a few particularly notable instances.

In January 1994, having barely grown accustomed to their new role as the chair of the Minsk Group, the Swedes suggested holding a trilateral meeting in Stockholm with the participation of Russia's and US representatives. In December of the same year, during the CSCE summit in Budapest, prior to adopting a resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh, a whole range of matters, including possible introduction of a co-chair status within the Minsk Conference and Group especially for Russia, were discussed at closed trilateral meetings. But whereas Russia's participation as one of those three sides was understandable due to its objectively active role in the peacemaking efforts, the US were present solely on account of being a superpower before whom the Swedes, as the chairing member of the Minsk Group at the time, were expected to bow and eat out of their hands.

In early July 1994 a session of the Minsk Group and that of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly, attended by speakers from Azerbaijan and Armenia, were held simultaneously in Vienna. We took due advantage of that coincidence and held a meeting bringing both of them together (at my suggestion, the Embassy of Sweden had been chosen for that purpose). On the following day I spoke to Rasul Guliev in his hotel room, when, in the middle of our conversation the telephone rang and Jan Eliasson, who was on the line, informed of his intention to drop in and speak to Guliev. As I expected, he was not alone but was accompanied by Joseph Pressel, an American diplomat, and was apparently embarrassed to realise that I had become a witness to their coming together. To enhance the surprise effect I told Guliev that I would leave them and be back in 5 minutes. And that's what I did. Despite his enormous professional experience, Jan Eliasson had not yet lost the vestiges of healthy human shame at one's own failures. His embarrassment showed clearly through his diplomat's demeanour.

Another case was even more absurd. On July 8, 1994, at the same session of the Minsk Group, Eliasson presented a draft of his statement in his capacity of the chairman of the Minsk conference. It only contained a brief mention of the actual ceasefire, most naturally, completely omitting any single allusion

regarding Russia's contribution to its achievement. We, for our part, were not going to brag about our role either. Yet, in the course of the session, I was given a copy of the text of the final declaration adopted at the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly that had just closed. The document adopted by its members had dedicated an unusually large amount of attention (9 items out of the 73!) to the Karabakh conflict, with the ceasefire being clearly attributed to the efforts of the Minsk Group – not a word indicating Russia's direct involvement in its achievement was to be found.

Seeing this foul play on the part of our Western partners, I had to retaliate in some way their distortions by proposing an amendment to Eliasson's draft statement containing an explicit mention of Russia's role in the peace agreement. Justice needs to be done to Eliasson here: he immediately recalled of our gesture of good will towards the CSCE: at the Moscow briefing of May 12, 1994 the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a goodwill statement that the ceasefire was achieved with the mediation of the Russian Federation and the CSCE. I confirmed at the time that this had been done deliberately, and that we welcomed similar wording this time again. Eliasson thanked me for my remark and included the amendment into the text.

Later, however, rather on the quite, he sent this amended version through his assistant to Pressel, who was sitting at the same N-shaped table almost right opposite myself, for approval. Pressel swapped around the names of the negotiators (apparently in the belief that an international organisation should come before a sovereign state). This manipulation did not go unheeded by us. Before the closing of the debates I again inquired about the final wording to be adopted.

Unable to hide his embarrassment, Eliasson had no other choice but to announce out loud: 'with the mediation of the CSCE and the Russian Federation.' The little game came to light and we elegantly retorted the situation by offering our sympathy to our Western colleagues, all in the tones of utter sarcasm, stressing just how hard they found it apparently to maintain objectivity in matters where Russia was concerned. This is just to show the methods that the Swedish diplomats had employed in their work, always mindful of the interests of the United States that had truly little to do with the interest of the conflict settlement.

**Direct pressure from the United States on Baku and Yerevan.** Immediately after the cessation of fire, in mid-May 1994, James Collins, Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the New Independent States, and his deputy Joseph Pressel, who was appointed the US representative in the Minsk Group a month later, made an urgent trip to Yerevan, Baku, Ankara and Moscow. The timing chosen for this trip was in itself indicative. Since Pavel Grachev convened a meeting between the defence ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the commander-in-chief of the Nagorno-Karabakh in Moscow on May 16-17, the United States urgently needed to 'slow down' the two countries involved in the conflict, and indirectly – via Yerevan – also Stepanakert.

On May 14 Collins announced to Levon Ter-Petrosyan that Yerevan would do better by rejecting Moscow's plan. In answer to the president's logical inquiry as to whether Washington had any alternatives to suggest, Collins began to press for the lead role of the Minsk Group. Mr. Ter-Petrosyan expressed his discontent with its work stressing, however, that the key players in it were Moscow and Washington, and all steps taken by the Group first needed to be coordinated between them, instead of fuelling the struggle for influence in the North Caucasus. He suggested that Collins examines the Russian conflict resolution plan in order for Russia and the United States to develop a joint peacemaking policy.

On the evening of May 15 Collins and Pressel held talks with Heydar Aliiev. In the presence of the press they emphatically stressed the full support by their country of the work of both the CSCE and the Minsk Group and, at the same time, proclaimed their own readiness to establish special bilateral relations with Azerbaijan. President Aliiev, who had already undertaken an obligation within the framework of the ceasefire agreement to send Mammedrafi Mamedov to attend the meeting of the chief military commanders in Moscow on May 16-17, succumbed to the pressure from the American diplomats and began to demand publicly that a CSCE representative, Swedish colonel Berg, takes part in that meeting as well. But this was merely the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.

On May 17 Heydar Aliiev not only met with the US Ambassador Richard Kozlarich, but even recalled his defence minister Mammedrafi Mamedov from the meeting convened by Pavel Grachev. Meeting with me on the follow-

ing day in Baku he explained that step of his with the rejection of the harsh, dictatorial tone that had indeed been quite unwisely chosen by our minister, despite the absolutely unnecessary presence of media representatives during the entire meeting of the defence ministers. The true reason was, however, far simpler and more pragmatic – the powerful pressure from the US diplomats who perceived the deployment of Russian forces in the conflict zone as a far worse perspective than a ceasefire achieved with Russia's mediation.

On May 16-17 Collins held consultations in Ankara discussing possible restrictions on Russia's initiatives. He recommended that Turkey step up its role within the CSCE in matters concerning the deployment of international observers and, in the long term, international peacekeeping forces, as well as insist on the tight control on the part of international organisations over the movements of the Russian troops being part of such forces to restrict the freedom of independent operations by Russia. Those issues were discussed at the Council of Ministers' session on May 18 and at the meeting with President Demirel on May 19 (as a result, two Turkish officers were assigned to become members of the CSCE group of observers, and it was further suggested that Turkey creates a combat service support centre for the international military contingent). Turkey had indeed decided to step up the pressure on President Aliiev both along the line of their bilateral contacts and by means of encouraging the political opposition in Azerbaijan to protest more actively against the rapprochement with Moscow. The discussion covered a possibility of delaying the assistance promised by Turkey earlier blaming such a delay on the stance taken by the President Aliiev. All in all, at the instigation of the United States, Turkey engaged in the work on the disruption of the Russian plan, proceeding from its own interests and the US interests in the Trans-Caucasus region.

Summarising the results of his trip, Collins noted that Heydar Aliiev vigorously opposed any independent peacekeeping operations by Russia or the CIS, yet he feared that the opposition may be united on the wave of anti-Russian sentiments and become powerful enough to oust him. That is why Collins suggested that he joins the peacekeeping mission conducted under the CSCE aegis, which would make it look like a political compromise. He declared that in his opinion the Armenian side was far more cautious with its

steps because of its greater dependence on Russia, but it too was in favour of joining the efforts of Russia and the CSCE. Collins believed that Russia could well take upon itself the operational command of the peacekeeping forces under the general operational control of the CSCE, while a corresponding mandate for this was to be developed by Eliasson.

The torpedoing of the May 17 Moscow meeting by Heydar Aliev (the recall of defence minister Mamedov to Baku and his refusal to sign the document drawn up there) had become a direct consequence of the pressure from the United States. Some of the State Department officers did not particularly attempt to conceal this. It is also curious that on the same day the Baku press published a denial issued by the press service of the Azerbaijan Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning the open meeting presided by the President of Azerbaijan on May 13, during which the introduction of Russian troops had allegedly been discussed. The press service announced, however, that such matters as the introduction of Russian troops into Azerbaijan, or into any other country for that matter, were not on the agenda of that meeting.

The intentions and plans of our Western partners were equally revealed in the declarations made by the NATO Deputy Secretary General Sergio Balanzino. After Heydar Aliev signed the NATO *Partnership for Peace* programme in Brussels on May 4, he began to talk cautiously about the possibility of Yerevan's participation, which, in his opinion, would pave the way for NATO's direct participation in the Karabakh peace process.

## **And Something Else About the Neutrals**

A lot has been said by now about our collaboration with the Swedish diplomats, Jan Eliasson and Anders Bjurner, and the tensions between us and them. It is also worth adding that Eliasson has subsequently held the positions of the deputy minister of foreign affairs for six years, the state secretary of Sweden's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden's representative to the United States, its Ambassador in the US, and in 2005 he was elected the chairman of the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, being simultaneously appointed Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs in March 2006. Eliasson always paid great attention to important topical problems faced by the world community, including armed conflicts – anything ranging from environmental issues and AIDS to the conflict in Darfur was in his focus of attention.

Eliasson's successor in all matters related to the Karabakh business, that is to say, his successor as a co-chairman of the CSCE/OSCE Minsk Group, Anders Bjurner, is now his country's ambassador to Belgium and representative to the European Union.

On April 21, 1995 Finland succeeded Sweden in the task of co-chairing the peace process (previously it was not a member of the Minsk Group). Justice has to be done in respect of the Finnish diplomats: it was a competent and conscientious team that was assigned to work on the Karabakh problem. Unlike the Swedes, almost all of its members had previous experience of working in the Soviet Union or, at least, spoke Russian, which was important since the negotiations between the parties to the conflict were conducted in this language (simultaneous interpretation into English was introduced later; the Minsk Group also made use of both these languages).

In the capacity of the chairman of the OSCE Minsk Conference, the Finnish team was headed by the deputy minister of foreign affairs Heikki Talvitie, Finland's ex-ambassador in Moscow (1988-1992), and later its



ambassador in Stockholm – both these capitals being of key importance to Finland. Later, in 2003, the European Union made him its special representative for the South Caucasus, and in 2008 he became the special envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for the same region. Heikki Talvitie was born in Vyborg back in the times when it was part of Finland, yet he had demonstrated a remarkable ability to find common grounds with Russians. In the recent years he worked in the field of non-governmental relations between Finland and Russia, heading a sort of Finnish-Russian friendship society).

The second fiddle in the Finnish team was played by the Ambassador Rene Nyberg, who had previous experience of working in Moscow, Lenin-grad, Brussels, Bonn. Prior to his involvement in the Karabakh affairs he served as Finland's representative to the OSCE. He later headed the department of relations with Russia at the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2000-2004 he was Finland's Ambassador in Russia and in 2004-2008 – in Germany.

Timo Lahelma, an expert in international law, later became Finland's Ambassador in Tehran combining this with holding an office of Ambassador to Yerevan and Baku.

The advisor to the Finnish team, Terhi Hakkala, later worked at the Finnish consulate in St Petersburg, was the second person at the Finnish Embassy in Moscow, eventually becoming her country's ambassador to the three Trans-Caucasian states, being nevertheless based in Helsinki, and finally became the head of the OSCE mission in Georgia, where she has earned dubious fame after Saakashvili's assault on South Ossetia. She was on holiday in Helsinki at the time, yet later she had an argument with her interim for that period, the senior British observer Ryan Grist, who spoke up against Tbilisi's military aggression.

Advisor Christer Michelsson has in the recent years become an envoy at the Finnish Embassy in Moscow. Analytical work and interpretation was the task performed by the diligent Eva-Rita Karhula.

The first person for me to meet among the members of that team was Rene Nyberg whom I first encountered at one of the events held at the OSCE headquarters in Vienna. An attractive, well-mannered and relatively young man he was, with a good command of the Russia language and of a number

of other European languages. Our contacts with him became regular in March 1995. And in April he and I worked together hand-in-hand for more than a year as co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group. It soon became clear that Nyberg was the most active member of the team, yet his attitude towards his Russian colleagues was far less positive than that of his superior Heikki Talvitie. Nyberg demonstrated a distinct propensity to criticise and pick bones with us, sometimes assuming the mentoring tone, which was again felt during his term as the ambassador in Moscow.

The coming of the Finnish team put an end to the tensions and arguments among the co-chairmen concerning involvement of observers from the CIS structures at negotiations. Over the preceding months that controversy had considerably blighted our collaboration with the Swedes who were acting particularly clumsily in that respect. After all, we had previously repeatedly agreed to attend negotiations between the three sides to the conflict in the capacity of observers. Russia had decisively repelled the tilts at the CIS observers. The Western partners had deemed it better to yield fearing a deadlock for yet another round of negotiations, as well as their backstage intrigues becoming subject of a public scandal and thus coming out to light. We firmly brushed aside their procedural tricks (for example, their demands to obtain approval from the Minsk Group concerning the presence of CIS observers).

The Finns were faced with the necessity to look for a compromise solution and succeeded in finding quite an acceptable one: CIS observers were to be invited by Russia to assist during the negotiations, and Finland had no objections in that respect. This was what we settled upon.

Nevertheless, the collaboration with the Finns was not an entirely cloudless one: it was if not one thing, then another. Their entering the co-chairmen ranks was marked by a heated debate on two other matters: the location where the Karabakh negotiations were to continue and my trips to the conflict region. The attempt by the Finns to move the negotiations away from Moscow was something of a sequel of Anders Bjurner's efforts to prevent the signing of the agreement on termination of the armed conflict from being accomplished in Moscow. Since the Swedish diplomat had failed to achieve the removal of Moscow's mention in the agreement as the location of its signing, it was apparently decided to do away with the actual root of the issue, i.e.

to transfer the negotiations to another location. Two different problems, and yet they have a common denominator.

The Finns began to suggest persistently that the negotiations be held in Vienna, the reasoning for this being that after the Budapest summit the negotiations that were previously held in Moscow with Russia's mediation were transferred under the aegis of the OSCE (i.e. now conducted not only by Russia but by the other co-chairing member as well), and the OSCE headquarters were precisely in Vienna. The deeply contrived nature of this argument is more than obvious (as if all negotiations in which the UN are involved are always and necessarily held in New York!).

We made a counter-proposal based on the equal status of co-chairing members' rights and previous experience – to hold negotiations alternatively in the two capitals: Moscow and Helsinki.

Once in Vienna, Rene and I were invited by his successor – Finland's new head of mission in the OSCE – for a lunch together. That was where Nyberg suggested his 'compromise scenario' which he lobbied, and with a great deal of aggression too: to hold negotiations alternatively in Vienna, Moscow and Helsinki. The idea behind it was clear: if the negotiations could not be absolutely removed from Moscow, its role had to be minimised as far as possible. I had to state firmly that our ambitions were not to claim standing for 51% of the thing, yet we would never consent to play not only mere 33% but equally a 49% role.

Nonetheless, Rene continued to bring up a variety of arguments against holding negotiations in Moscow both in his correspondence with me and in our telephone conversations. He even made an attempt to negotiate the dates for the next round of talks with the sides to the conflict before we even agreed on the location he had offered, which could potentially result in a rather delicate situation for our position as co-chairmen. Moreover, Nyberg suggested that our dispute be brought up before the OSCE Minsk Group for examination, apparently hoping to find support on the part of the majority of its Western members.

Our response was to prepare a rather exhaustive memorandum 'On the location of further negotiations in the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis' and submitted it to the Finns. Its contents deserves to be related in detail here as it sub-

stantiated our stance on the matter. We began with noting that by establishing at the Budapest summit the structure of co-chairing the Minsk Conferences the heads of the OSCE 22 member states had assigned the co-chairing members, among other priority tasks, with that of conducting urgent negotiations with the view of reaching a political agreement on termination of the armed conflict. The competence of the co-chairing members naturally also includes the negotiation procedure – the choice of time and location, etc. Individual opinions of ordinary members of the Minsk Group may be taken into account, but the final decision is essentially to be made by the co-chairmen. All matters concerning locations where meetings or negotiations were to be held were always decided upon by the chairman or the co-chairmen.

We particularly emphasised the fact that we believed it wrong to present matters in such a way as if after the Budapest summit the negotiations had assumed a drastically different nature, as if everything was started from scratch. There was a considerable history and experience behind and all this had been gained in Moscow, and only there. In fact, one could speak of ‘Moscow talks’, just as there had been ‘Geneva talks’, ‘Paris talks’, etc). The Budapest decision had taken all those aspects and circumstances into due account. In respect of those particular talks it conveyed the idea of continuity (‘based on the progress so far made in the framework of peace mediation’).

We also stressed that our suggestion to hold individual rounds of talks alternatively in Moscow and Helsinki was in line with the OSCE’s previous practice. Under Italy’s chairmanship in 1992-1993 negotiations conducted in the framework of the Minsk Group were held mainly in Rome, and none of its members had ever brought up the issue of relocating them to Vienna which had by then already become home to the OSCE headquarters.

During Sweden’s term as the chairing and a co-chairing member no one ever objected to Stockholm being the place of meetings or negotiations. Swedish diplomats had repeatedly acted as observers from the Minsk Group during the talks in Moscow in the course of 1994, which were held with the mediation of the Russian Federation. And in February 1995, after the OSCE summit in Budapest, where Sweden and Russia were elected co-chairing members, both our delegations took part in the next round of talks in Moscow, and there was never any question of relocation to Vienna.

It was explicitly stated in our memorandum that the fact that the new co-chairman began his work in his new capacity not with introducing fresh suggestions concerning the peace-making process, but with persistent suggestions to change the location of negotiation appeared to be rather odd and obviously did nothing other than diverted attention from the key objectives of our work giving instead rise to unnecessary tensions among the co-chairing members. Especially considering the fact that the co-chairmen had themselves demanded from the parties to the conflict to lay aside all their debates concerning procedural matters.

We called the attention of the Finnish side to the lack of any stipulated norms that would prescribe that negotiations conducted in the framework of the OSCE should be held in Vienna. Moreover, one of the parties had explicit objections to holding negotiations at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna – the location of the OSCE headquarters. Representatives of this European organisation participated in a variety of talks held in a variety of locations.

The board of co-chairmen of the Minsk Conference, as we stressed, was in itself one of the OSCE structures. Russia and Finland were both equal members of that conference. Neither Moscow nor Helsinki were in fact outside the OSCE scope of competence.

Moscow was one of the most naturally expected locations for holding negotiations in question and signing such an agreement, considering Russia's tight relations both with Azerbaijan and with Armenia, as well as its active role in the Karabakh peacemaking process. The document adopted in Budapest had also duly emphasised 'the decisive contribution of the Russian Federation.'

The very format of the negotiations – between the sides to the conflict – was established in Moscow; it has never been employed for Karabakh negotiations elsewhere (the Minsk Group long avoided it preferring to follow the guidelines adopted on March 24, 1992 instead).

The 'integrated consistent negotiation basis' created in the aftermath of the Budapest summit was based on the draft agreement drawn up by Russia which had incidentally been already agreed upon between the sides to the conflict for more than 50% of it earlier, in the course of the talks held in Moscow.

Important meetings and talks on the Karabakh conflict, including summits, were held in Moscow and in other Russian cities (Zheleznovodsk,

Sochi). On April 15, 1994 a Statement by the Council of the CIS Heads of States was adopted in Moscow and it was to play an important role in the soon-to-come ceasefire achieved through the mediation of the Russian Federation.

If the choice of Helsinki as the location where to hold negotiations was a clear tribute to the equal rights of co-chairing members and the history of the OSCE, that of Moscow was a reflection of the reality, which consisted in its close ties with the Trans-Caucasian region and the practical steps that it had taken to achieve the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, as well as an environment in which such efforts had naturally developed.

The sides to the conflict never had any objections to holding talks in Moscow; furthermore, it had long been agreed with them that this would precisely be the location where the signing of the ceasefire agreement would take place. This was duly reflected in the 'integrated consistent negotiation basis'.

Particular emphasis was on the impossibility to omit the objective factors in these peace talks. It was more than obvious that all suggestions regarding possible change of the location where they were to be held were due quite different, purely political, ulterior motives that had nothing to do with the essential interests of the Karabakh conflict resolution and could by no means be ranked above those. Quite naturally, the Russian co-chairman, who was involved in the conflict resolution, could not afford playing up to side interests of some of our partners within the Minsk Group. Moreover, excessive immersion into procedural matters to the detriment of the actual substance of the peace process could potentially seriously harm the Minsk peace process, as well as the reputation of the co-chairing members and even the OSCE itself.

It was equally noted that, from the practical point of view, Moscow was also the most convenient option. It had both an Azerbaijani embassy and an Armenian embassy, was linked to both capitals by direct air flights, and, in addition to that, benefited from having the means of rapid telephone communication with Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert, including communication through closed channels, which is always useful in negotiations. Other locations, like Vienna or Helsinki, had none of these advantages, including no possibilities of covert communication with the leaders of the sides to the conflict.

While I was preparing that document for the Finnish team, it occurred to me just how useful it would be to be able to fathom the essence of the issue with Minsk, as the OSCE made wide mention of that city (in referring to the conference, the group, the peace process) in connection with the Karabakh peace process, yet no meetings or negotiations had ever been held there.

Another thing that entered my head was that considering the equal status of the co-chairing members for the sake of eliminating unnecessary tensions the following scenario was worth consideration at least: each of them would alternatively decide on the location where the next round of talks was to be held. And yet further multiplying of the number of locations for negotiations was most inexpedient since the public opinion could easily brand this a sort of 'political tourism'. Moving the location of peace talks further away from the actual zone of conflict does not always do good to the cause.

It must now be said that that the wealth of arguments, – and weighty arguments they were, – had done the trick. Debates around the location of further negotiations that had taken several weeks under circumstances that seem somehow traditional for Finnish diplomacy- at the sauna belonging to our embassy in Helsinki, which proudly bears a plate testifying that it had been visited by the Finnish President Urho Kekkonen himself. Ambassador Yuri Deryabin invited deputy minister Heikki Talvitie and myself to 'stew' a bit together. That pastime had helped us to reach an agreement that each round of peace talks would be alternatively held in Helsinki and in Moscow (Although later the Finnish side apparently found it too burdensome to host every other round. Later still they snatched our idea for each co-chairman to appoint alternatively the location for the next round, holding one round in November 1995 in Bonn and another in July 1996 in Stockholm instead of Helsinki.)

Another aspect of tensions with the Finns appeared due to the obstacles that they put up to prevent independent trips of the Russian mediator to the conflict region. The root of the problem was that our Western partners, including the Finns, had clearly underestimated our age-long experience of co-existence with the Armenian and the Azeri people, and the resulting basis for mutual understanding and relative trust ever present in our contacts with the parties to the conflict. Instead of availing of this remarkable resource,

those unique opportunities that Russia could offer, it seemed to our Western partners that Moscow's representatives were determined to threaten the two young states during such contacts, put pressure on them, and that inspired them still further to use all means available to prevent our direct contacts with the sides to the conflict. The Finnish team were merely conductors of that policy, even though a certain inkling of 'jealousy' regarding more active and prominent colleagues had also played its role.

Our partners thus hoped to deprive us of an opportunity to directly influence the sides to the conflict, but I have to confess that even in the framework of joint trips Russia's delegate was always able to arrange an additional meeting with the top leaders of the warring sides.

Sometimes the active opposition on the part of the Finnish diplomats assumed forms and dimensions that were nothing short of amusing. Rene Nyberg, who had been specifically notified by me that at the end of April 1995 I was again planning to travel down to the conflict zone, expressed his intention to join me. I gathered that good relations and effective partnership were worth the trouble. Yet, the Finnish diplomat was apparently concerned that, despite our equal status as co-chairing members of the Minsk Group, either side or both may perceive the more experienced Russian partner as the senior in that tandem. So, all totally behind my back, Nyberg persuaded Ambassador Istvan Gyarmati, envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, (which post was held by the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time), to join the party, as this scenario would have ensured the seniority of the Hungarian diplomat. To avoid possible rancour and tensions we pretended not to heed those intrigues, but were quick to find an antidote to those tricks.

The Western partners claimed dodgily that either side would possibly regard me as a co-chairman of the Minsk Group or, worse still, that this was the I was going to present myself, in order to conceal their actual anxiety and jealousy about my trips to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert. Needless to explain why both these pretexts were far from being correct. This is how Iranian Rexane Dedashti describes what anonymous Western members of the Minsk Group had told her in this respect: 'Kazimirov tried to present it so as if his visits to the sides to the conflict were not in the capacity of a co-chairman of the Minsk Group but as a plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian Presi-



dent. The Finnish delegates attempted to prevent this by notifying in its turn the sides to the conflict that during that visit the Russian delegates spoke not in the name of the Minsk Group.<sup>7</sup> This fact, shameful as it was, had taken place on the part of our partners at least once.

The Western partners were naïve to believe that the status of a Minsk Group co-chairman could possibly add more authority to my words in the eyes of the leaders of the sides to the conflict, because it was in reality much more important for the latter to know Moscow's opinion and not that of the Minsk Group. And each time while in Baku, Yerevan or Stepanakert I stated clearly in which capacity I was acting: on behalf of the President of Russia or the Minsk Group.

There were also other details which were most characteristic in depicting our differences with the Finns insofar as our approaches to peace mediation were concerned. There was one time when Nyberg failed to thrust himself on me on this trip because he was on holiday at the time. So his only stipulation was for us to coordinate the agenda of my trip and my steps in its framework. Holidays were apparently more important to him. As for us, we could not afford to even think about holidays – over 4 and a half years of my work on Karabakh I had accumulated quite a few entitlements to vacation, yet later, when leaving for Latin America, I had to content myself with monetary compensation instead.

The surprisingly early 'fatigue' of our Western partners, who were in charge of managing the Minsk peace process, is quite characteristic. The Italians held the chair of the Minsk conference for only 17 months, the Swedes – for 16 months, the Finns – for 20 months. All this is very indicative, as all of these countries who had expressed their willingness to take an active part in the conflict resolution had no real national interest in it, even though a chance to earn points acting as peacemakers (or, more importantly, backing up those to whom the true interests of these countries were tied, whether that was the US or the European Union) was highly valued.

All in all, the best account of the progress made by our Finnish partners as co-chairing members was given by themselves when, driven to the edge of despair, they finally achieved a release from that position at the OSCE Lisbon summit in 1996 (what is more, they initially planned to wind down their mis-

sion 11 months after its launch but I managed to persuade them to wait till the Lisbon meeting). The then minister of foreign affairs (and now the president) of Finland Tarja Halonen presented on February 11, 1997 before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Finnish Parliament a report on her country's role in the peacemaking efforts in the Nagorno-Karabakh armed conflict. This report unambiguously shows that one of the key tasks of the Finnish diplomats in its framework was to act as a deterrent in respect of Russia and its own direct active efforts in conflict resolution (under the neat pretext of the integrity of the Minsk peace process, which was, however, not marked by any particular effectiveness).

Dedashti, author of the monography 'The OSCE and the Nagorno-Karabakh armed conflict', explicitly writes, though looking at the problem from quite a different angle, about the Finnish diplomats having resorted to involving the United States: 'In their capacity as a co-chairing member of the Minsk Group, the Finnish diplomats moreover made considerable efforts during 1995-96 to engage the United States into the Minsk peace process in order to gain support for their own stance in respect of the Russian mediators.' Tit for tat, as they say.

## **Karabakh Peace Efforts in Yevgeny Primakov's Time**

On January 9, 1996 Yevgeny M. Primakov was appointed the minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation. He had previously served as head of Russia's foreign intelligence service for a number of years and, before that, was the director of two academical institutions (the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Institute of Global Economy and International Relations), the chairman of the Soviet of the Union of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, a candidate member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the USSR Communist Party. He dedicated his initial period in the new capacity entirely to getting the hang of the situation and the affairs at the ministry refraining from making public appearances at any events.

However, precisely between January 9 and January 12 another round of the Karabakh peace negotiations was held with Russia and Finland acting as mediators, and the days of January 13-15 were spent on OSCE Minsk Group consultation, first en corps and then in the absence of the sides to the conflict. During our first meeting the new minister enthusiastically responded to the suggestion to meet on January 13 with all of the Minsk Group members. This was the first public appearance of Yevgeny Primakov as minister of foreign affairs.

Members of the Minsk Group representing 11 countries, as well as the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, which had been recognised only as a side to the conflict, were grateful to the new head of the ministry, because previously they were normally only granted meetings with one of his deputies.

The meeting was on the whole quite successful, except for the discontent of the Armenian side with one of Primakov's remarks. It was also notable that the new minister was quite in the swim as far as the details of the Karabakh conflict were concerned. As a candidate member to the Politburo, he had spent several weeks in Baku right before the bringing of the Soviet troops

there on January 20, 1990, – the fact which had secured him a due place on the Azerbaijani Popular Front's list of enemies of Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev later had to personally remove him from that list.

Closer towards the end of the talks, apparently wishing to encourage the members of the Minsk Group to seek resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict more actively, he remarked that there was nothing exceptionally difficult about it. This would have gone alright had he not suddenly added: 'All that needs to be done is to resolve the issues of Lachin and Shusha.'

The Armenian delegates (both those from Yerevan and those from Karabakh) were plainly shocked by those words. They believed the issues of the status and security in Nagorno-Karabakh to be far more important, while, as far as Lachin and Shusha were concerned, they deemed those issues to have been already decided upon and in their favour too, which made them persistently crush all attempts by the Azeri side to bring this up during negotiations. After the meeting with Yevgeny Primakov was over, Arkadi Ghukasyan came up to me and in no uncertain terms gave me a piece of his mind the way the new minister spoke about the issue.

Yet, regardless of the interests of the sides, Mr. Primakov's optimism was quite understandable, albeit somewhat excessive and did not reflect the real difficulties of the resolution of this conflict.

Perhaps it was that unreasonable optimism of the new minister that later became a source of his apparent frustration with the complicated and problem-ridden course of negotiations between the warring sides with the mediation of Russia and Finland. Only much later, during his trip down to the conflict region in May 1996, the minister was able to see for himself just how difficult it was to coordinate the positions of the parties to that conflict and implement even that which they seemed to have agreed upon.

The trip by Yevgeny Primakov to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert on May 8-11, 1996 followed particular painstaking preparations. This was on the very eve of the Moscow meeting of the Council of the CIS Heads of States (May 17, 1996). The Karabakh peace negotiations continued to stall, and that move on the part of the minister was intended to give them another impetus. At our working level we projected this to the in order to achieve progress at the very top as well in the event of a favourable outcome.

What we wanted was to ensure the success of his visit by laying two bases for it: from the political aspect it seemed possible to bring the sides to sign a joint statement by their respective top leaders in favour of peaceful resolution, and from the humanitarian angle – to conduct an exchange of prisoners of war.

We perfectly realised how difficult the work on the body of such a statement would be, as well as we realised the apparently conditional nature of the ‘all our prisoners for all your prisoners’ formula of exchange, as all of the sides were likely to keep some of those prisoners of war that they had secret or simply be unaware of those who were held captive by private individuals. In the framework of the preparations to Minister Primakov’s trip I had to step up my activity sharply as far as telephone talks with the sides to the conflict went, and then to visit all of the three capitals holding separate talks with Heydar Aliyev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.

The draft of a joint political declaration proved to be particularly vexatious. For the sake of making it acceptable to all the three sides it was drawn up by me using mainly extracts from the agreement on termination of the armed conflict, which had been agreed upon by all the sides with the help of Russia’s mediation, this being marked in bold italics in the text. That made it much more difficult for the sides to object to the wording already agreed upon by themselves during the negotiations.

Choosing to ‘quote’ in the draft declaration that which had been agreed upon between the sides in the framework of the draft agreement, – the agreement which was on the whole still very much up in the air, – we based this decision on the fact that important political provisions were left up in the air awaiting the conclusion of the negotiations on the agreement. And those could already be in demand before time and be put into effect immediately in the form of a separate document as a declaration of the top leaders of the sides. I discussed that idea with each of them separately.

In view of the improbability of signing or adoption of a joint declaration by Heydar Aliyev (because of Robert Kocharyan being a party to it), we had examined a number of different scenarios. It was quite possible that Mr. Aliyev would not directly refuse to sign the document along with Kocharyan, but would cover his reluctance to do so with a pretext of impossibility to

accept some provisions in the body of the declaration that are important for Azerbaijan.

At first, we did not wish to make the connection between signing the declaration and the meeting of the CIS countries leaders in Moscow on May 17 in any way obvious to the sides, that is, we sought the approval of the text in the course of Yevgeny Primakov's trip. Yet we would content ourselves with signing it on different sheets (like the May 12, 1994 ceasefire agreement), or with its adoption without signatures or even through simple approval. Another possibility was to publish it simultaneously in Moscow, Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert on May 12 – the second anniversary of the historical ceasefire agreement.

However, in the event of approval of the document that progress had to be further built on by means of proposing to upgrade its significance and formalise it through signing or adopting it in Moscow on May 17 in the course or beyond the framework of the Council of CIS , Heads of State session. This could be reasoned with the fact that such a scenario would ensure a signature by the Russian President, who was also the chairman of the Council of CIS , Heads of State on it. This was also important as on January 19 the Council of CIS , Heads of State addressed the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia with an appeal to that effect signed by President Boris Yeltsin.

Since Robert Kocharyan's presence among the parties signing the declaration along with the presidents could have proved to be unacceptable in the eyes of President Aliyev, the entire procedure could be tactically split into two parts: the first was the grand ceremony held on May 17 during which the declaration was to be signed by Heydar Aliyev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Boris Yeltshin, then the latter holds a brief meeting with Robert Kocharyan who was expected to accede to the declaration signed by the two presidents. This scenario may have well been deemed by Heydar Aliyev as a compromising and consequently more acceptable. Kocharyan had to realise that he could not possibly be invited to the meeting of the heads of states.

Sadly, all our ingenious maneuvers proved to be in vain, never destined to be implemented for the good of the cause (and not for a cogent reason either, but due to sheer chapter of accidents).

Yevgeny Primakov had been allocated a spacious aircraft specifically for this trip to the Trans-Caucasus. The schedule was arranged in such a way so as to pick up the group of ethnic Armenians in Baku on May 8 (the prisoners of war and those who were under arrest, that is), take them to Yerevan on the minister's airplane, pick up the Azerbaijani prisoners of war there who were held in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and on May 10 (which was incidentally President Heydar Aliyev's birthday) take them to Baku, where the Karabakh trip was to be concluded. After that, Primakov's schedule included a brief visit to Tbilisi.

On May 8 Yevgeny Primakov arrived in Baku accompanied by Boris N. Pastukhov and myself. Heydar Aliyev and he chose to have a two hour talk in private (just like they did in January 1996 in Moscow). Mr. Primakov told us later that Mr. Aliyev had done his best to dissuade him from going to Stepanakert, even though eventually failing to do so.

Later on negotiations were held with a larger number of participants. The issue of POW exchange had been negotiated by me beforehand and required no further discussion. So it was merely re-affirmed that on the same day we would take 39 ethnic Armenians who, as the Azerbaijani side claimed, were prisoners of war (although there was a number of those who had been arrested by the Azerbaijani authorities while travelling by trains and in other circumstances but not in direct relation to military hostilities) along with us upon our departure for Yerevan.

The focus of attention was on the draft of the political declaration proposed by us. President Heydar Aliyev spoke in principle in favour of its adoption. But Minister of Foreign Affairs Hasan Hasanov suddenly declared that one particular phrase would only be deemed acceptable by the Azerbaijani side if this would be part of a bilateral declaration with Armenia, but never if Nagorno-Karabakh would too be a party to it. In all probability, President Aliyev and Minister Hasanov had already agreed on which of them was to play 'the good guy' and which was to be 'the bad guy' for it was hardly possible that this frank attempt to sabotage the talks was the minister's purely personal initiative. But, after all, the agreement had been reached long ago that this declaration would be a trilateral one, and all of the three sides had already approved of this very phrase appearing in the draft agreement!

This tilt by Hasan Hasanov was quite easy to counter, but Mr. Primakov, wishing to save the already agreed upon phrase, immediately consented to a bilateral declaration without Karabakh's involvement. Any other reaction of our minister would have easily offset those intrigues. He could well have made some dilatory statement or found some conditions that had to be complied with to make him consent and later ask me about the views of the sides. But he said what he said, thus putting me into a very delicate position. On the one hand, it was quite clear that Yerevan would never agree to sign that declaration with Baku only, without Karabakh's signature. On the other hand, the key negotiators there were Heydar Aliyev and Yevgeny Primakov and butting in suddenly to correct the words of our minister would have been a rather awkward step, to say the least. But this was the only way to save the fate of that declaration.

So I had to intervene, in violation of all possible rules of etiquette and laws of hierarchy. Addressing Heydar Aliyev, and not Minister Hasanov, I remarked that Yerevan would never consent to sign a pact that would not be signed by Karabakh – after all, it had already been agreed that it was to be trilateral. But President Aliyev prudently left this remark without reply, and our minister reckoned it possible to settle these matters separately with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, thus giving Hasan Hasanov's subversive maneuver a chance to succeed.

When there were finally three of us together on the plane on our way to Yerevan – the minister, Boris N. Pastukhov and myself – Primakov addressed me reproachfully after a glass of vodka: 'You shouldn't have said that'. I replied in my defence that, as an expert, I had to know what was doomed to fail, and what was not, and it was my duty to bring it up in all clearness. On the evening of May 8 we met with the Armenian minister of foreign affairs Vahan Papazyan and handed over the draft declaration for him to pass it on to President Levon Ter-Petrosyan. The meeting with him had been appointed for the end of the next day, after our visit to Stepanakert.

Having spent the night in Yerevan, we set off at once on May 9 for Nagorno-Karabakh in a helicopter. In his conversation with Robert Kocharyan Yevgeny Primakov did not even touch upon the subject of the joint declaration, the fact which was bound to draw the attention of the Karabakh



leaders. They were pleased to see the Russian minister of foreign affairs visit Stepanakert but, once the talks were over, Arkadi Ghukasyan came up to me and asked directly: 'And what about the declaration?' To avoid disclosing the actual situation I made a vague attempt at joking it off: 'Reaching any agreements with you is something one can only dream of!'

Upon our return to Yerevan we met with Levon Ter-Petrosyan wishing to resume the talks on the draft declaration, but he was apparently already aware of the fact that this subject had not been brought up by us in Stepanakert. The President proved to be most prudent and also avoided making any definite statements concerning the declaration. Nevertheless, I do not completely discard the possibility of his having informed Robert Kocharyan in advance of the draft declaration received from us. Little wit did it take to realise that the plan was to adopt it without Karabakh taking part in the decision.

Very soon Robert Kocharyan phoned from Stepanakert wishing to speak to Minister Primakov. The minister found some pretext to avoid that conversation asking me to speak to Mr. Kocharyan instead. The latter appeared to be rather agitated and told me that we were trying to trick them, seeking to deal with the declaration behind Karabakh's back. To add weight to his words, he claimed to have given orders to send all of the 60 Azeri prisoners of war back from Yerevan where they had been taken the day before in buses for further transportation to Baku on our airplane.

Disentangling ourselves from that delicate situation was a rather tricky task but hardly any other choice was left to us. To retort Mr. Kocharyan's onslaught I emphasised my surprise at his assumption that I was supposed to discuss the matters of declaration with him before I even spoke about it to the Armenian president who was head of an internationally recognised state. After that I stressed the difference in the very nature of the two matters: declaration represented a political step whereas the exchange of prisoners of war was a humanitarian one. I also stressed that during the preparations to the visit no-one ever linked these two matters. I confess now that my first argument was entirely artificial, yet the second and the third ones were absolutely correct. My remark that we had already taken to Yerevan the Armenian prisoners of war transported from Baku was parried by President Kocharyan saying that there were no Karabakh Armenians among them.

I duly reported to Minister Primakov about my uneasy conversation with Robert Kocharyan making the latter anxious about the general results of our visit. It was not hard to imagine that we were in danger of being left with neither the planned political declaration, nor the promised large-scale exchange of prisoners of war. Moreover, this could have been the case after 39 ethnic Armenian war prisoners had already been delivered from Baku to Yerevan. Should President Kocharyan carried out his threat and withheld his 'prisoners', we would have only been able to take to Azerbaijan not the promised 71 ethnic Azeris but only 11 – those that were held in Armenia. Heydar Aliyev (who was incidentally celebrating his birthday on that date) would have believed himself to have been none other than fooled by us, even though the initial cause of that would have been the subtle invective from Hasan Hasanov aided by the president's silent consent. But this would have equally meant failure of the entire mission of Russia's new minister of foreign affairs.

I dare not attribute Robert Kocharyan's change of mind in withdrawing his order (if indeed he had ever given one) to my efforts and ascribe this to the arguments I had put forward. Most likely, it was rather that the Karabakh leaders were themselves reluctant to find themselves at odds with Russia, causing tensions with the mediator that had been most consistently standing in favour of acknowledging Nagorno-Karabakh as a legitimate side to the conflict. Levon Ter-Petrosyan may have well played his part in softening Kocharyan's position by naturally refusing to enter into any bilateral pacts with Baku.

The only positive result of the trip was the exchange of war prisoners. 110 people were released and given an opportunity to return home from captivity. 102 immediately availed of that opportunity. Among those released were two or three Russian nationals who left for home. This was significant progress in itself – previously any exchange that had taken place would only involve single individuals or small groups of 2-3 people.

Despite the failure regarding the joint declaration, Yevgeny Primakov's visit had an unquestionably large political significance in demonstrating Russia's active role in the Trans-Caucasus region, as well as its interest in constructive peaceful resolution of that pile of old problems that had been accumulated there through the years, particularly with regard to armed conflicts.

By the time the summer came the difference in the conditions in which I had to work in Karabakh during the previous and the current minister's term had become all the more evident. I had no personal links or contacts with Kozyrev, yet his apparently naïve and short-sighted focus on the major problems affecting our relations with the West and his treatment of all other issues, including Karabakh, as secondary or even minor had, surprisingly as it was, allowed me to work with a great deal of independence in my decisions, despite all my deference to the natural hierarchy. Kozyrev never bothered to really delve into the essence of the Karabakh situation (in spite of his two visits to the conflict zone), he had practically entrusted me with acting solely at my own discretion, limiting the manner of control with the general supervision exercised by his deputies Anatoly L. Adamishin and Vitaly I. Churkin, who also did little to restrict my freedom of actions and judgement.

Yevgeny Primakov, who had close relations with the Caucasus regions since his younger years maintaining close contacts with many prominent figures in that region or those hailing from the Caucasus, on the contrary paid notably more attention to the situation in the Caucasus, and in Karabakh in particular. The troubled time he spent in Baku on the eve of bringing the Soviet troops had only added to his special interest in, and awareness of, the problems of Karabakh, which he later described in his memoirs 'My years in mainstream politics'. Yet over the years of opposition and confrontation preceding his entering the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the developments in Karabakh had gone so far that his latest update dating 6 years back proved to be clearly insufficient.

Our first meeting took place back in the times before he became a minister. We had good common friends, among them the wonderful doctor and person Vladimir Burakovsky (after whom the Institute of Cardiac Surgery, located in the vicinity of Rublyovskoye shosse crossing the Moscow ring road, was later named), members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Leon Onikov and Yuri Khilchevsky, who later became deputy minister of culture in the USSR, and diplomat with a background in the intelligence Alexander Churlin, to name but a few. We sometimes met at friends' gatherings, in highly informal circumstances. We were never really close, yet even before his coming to work at the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, he used to lend me assistance now and then as far as Karabakh affairs were concerned, all upon mutual understanding that this was to remain between the two of us.

Despite the patriotic principles of the new minister and his personal favourable attitude to me, I now found it more difficult to pursue my line of independent work. Primakov went much deeper into the matters than his predecessor and expected more from us than we could possibly do in the context of aggressive mutual distrust and stubborn confrontation between the sides to this war. I remember his frustration after one of the rounds of negotiations was over, when two or three days of hard work had resulted in reaching an agreement on barely 2 phrases in the whole text of the draft agreement on termination of the armed conflict. Assuming that the remedy in that case was to switch to a higher profile, the minister began to engage his first deputy Boris Nikolayevich Pastukhov, in the Karabakh affairs. Yet this was not the source of problems, as even before that we enjoyed a privileged access to the top leaders of all the sides.

Moreover, the key partner in those negotiations, and the hardest to deal with too, – Heydar Aliyev, – persistently urged me not to abandon the Karabakh peace negotiations. Apparently banking on my ambition and vanity he even repeatedly promised to erect a monument to ‘the peacemaker’ in Baku (naturally upon the condition that the course of the negotiations would be in line with Azerbaijan’s interests). But when I informed him of my leaving for Latin America, those promises did not deter Minister Hasanov and the Baku media from launching one whole thing of a campaign of my stigmatisation followed by a happy ‘burial’ to crown it.

Kozyrev had sanctioned my departure for Latin America almost a year before that, forwarding a memo to the president, however, Yeltsin’s foreign policy aide, Dmitry Borisovich Ryurikov, took a stance against it. He insisted that I should better continue with my work in Karabakh as this field was in need of further tangible progress. I tried to explain that Russia had already achieved a lot (not only in terms of a ceasefire, but many other aspects pertaining to the negotiations process as well), that we were unlikely to achieve much more in the nearest future because of the uncompromising positions of the parties.

Yevgeny Maksimovich had first adopted a position close to that of Ryurikov, yet later, after considering such matters as my age (he and I were born the same year), decided not to object and forwarded another memo to the president on my appointment as the ambassador to Costa Rica, the country where, back in 1972, it had fallen to be my duty to open the first Soviet embassy in Central America. This was my rather unusual wish before retiring (ambassadors are very rarely appointed to the same country twice, but I had a valid and almost facetious, though with a touch of bitter irony in it, argument in my favour – previously I used to be an ambassador of the USSR, this time I was going to be an ambassador of the Russian Federation).

Clearly realising that my age of 67 could probably turn the decision against my appointment, Mr. Primakov had taken necessary measures in advance to ensure that the State Duma Committee for International Affairs does not inquire about my... date of birth. The session of the Committee dedicated to my appointment went smoothly with a number of speakers, among them Alexander Dzasokhov, Boris Gromov and Vitaly Sevastyanov, speaking in my favour. The latter knew me since I was an ambassador in Venezuela which he had visited as an astronaut and the head of our chess federation, confronted me with a difficult choice during the committee session. A candidate in my position is normally supposed to stand bolt-upright, almost like a guilty pupil, demonstrating his deference before the members of the committee in every manner possible, but he went up to me from behind the table and gave me a hearty hug. I'm afraid that at that moment I made both mistakes of the two possible: my embrace in response was rather limp and my vows of loyalty might have seemed somewhat grudging.

In September 1996 I handed over all my work on Karabakh, including that on the preparation to the OSCE summit in Lisbon, to Ambassador Yuri A. Yukalov, who had returned from Zimbabwe shortly before, and on September 3 he was appointed the plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian President on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in my place (the actual title was far longer and more complicated but this is what its essence briefly was). I remember my efforts to vindicate before him and our Finnish colleague Rene Nyberg the importance of preparations to the Lisbon summit and, especially, of the need to downplay the two principles there – that of territorial integrity and

that of the right of nations to self-determination, for this would have been a sure path into a deadlock. This was exactly what did happen. The old proverb about being hoisted by one's own petard has long proved its truth.

Together with Yuri Yukalov we visited Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert, where I had to introduce him to the leaders of the three sides of the conflict, and bid farewell to them myself. Heydar Aliyev gave me a most peculiar send-off. After our conversation and the presentation of an Azerbaijani carpet Mr. Aliyev said: 'I would like to make one more present to you' and asked me to come up to where he was on the other side of the table. He opened a file there and gave me a photo depicting the dinner at the Armenian restaurant *Serebryanny vek* in Moscow. I was sitting at the one table with Arkadi Ghukasyan and one of the most controversial figures in the Karabakh conflict, journalist Zoriy Balayan, there.

I remembered that occasion very well. Gukasyan had invited me to that restaurant after the negotiations in Moscow were over, altogether failing to inform me that Balayan was going to be there too. We did not know each other in person either. When Gukasyan introduced me to him, I was irritated at having not been warned in advance about his presence. I rather believe that this was not so much of evil intent on the part of Arkadi Ghukasyan as his failure to think ahead of all those subtleties. But turning around and leaving would not been an option either – we had a lot to discuss with him about the course of our negotiations.

'How could you possibly sit at one table with that fascist?!' Aliyev exclaimed. I had to begin with congratulating the president on the successful work of his intelligence service even when it had to be at an Armenian restaurant – this was definitely his school! Offering explanations concerning Zoriy Balayan and why it had so happened did not make much sense. So I barely told President Aliyev in a semi-jocular tone that real gurus of diplomacy have to deal not only with the government of their country of accreditation but equally not to shun contacts with the opposition at times either. This was how we parted with Heydar Aliyev, not knowing that this was to be yet the penultimate of our almost 60 encounters.

## **An Intermediate Summary**

Leaving for Central America in September 1996, quite in accordance with my own plans, I believed that this was my definite farewell to Nagorno-Karabakh and a life dedicated to dealing with the whims of the sides on account of every minor matter. It proved, however, to be far from easy to cut my mental ties with this affair. During my term in Costa Rica and Guatemala, to which I was simultaneously accredited, I eagerly lapped up every single piece of news coming from Karabakh, though such were somewhat scarce in that part of the world.

Occasionally I would get phone calls there from my ex-partners in the Karabakh negotiations, Robert Kocharyan, Rasul Guliev, David Shakhnazaryan or Rene Nyberg. Shakhnazaryan told me about the resignation of President Levon A. Ter-Petrosyan (to whom he is related through their children's marriage). Guliev himself had promised to visit me in San Jose but it never really worked out in the end. So the only one who actually visited me at my post was Gerard Libaridian, who had already left Yerevan returning to his family back in Boston. So even voices from New York, Boston and Helsinki all kept the memories of Karabakh alive.

Upon my retirement at the age of 70 I had a meeting with Igor Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs (having dedicated 47 years of my life to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and later the Russian Federation, I simply could not be allowed to continue with my service due to my advanced age). It was agreed to I would be occasionally invited as an expert to offer my analysis and participate in consultations on Karabakh affairs. A trip by the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group to Yerevan and Baku was planned for mid-December of 1999. I was offered to join them on an informal basis.

A long-term colleague of ours, Azerbaijan's Ambassador in Russia Ramiz Rizayev, claimed that Heydar Aliyev would allegedly be glad to see me back

working on the Karabakh process again, even if my status was now purely unofficial. I remembered how the Azeri president tried to talk me into continuing my work in Karabakh instead of leaving for abroad, but I nevertheless 'disobeyed' and left. I was glad to learn that he seemed to bear no grudges in that respect. Despite the inevitable complications with which mediation in peace talks is always fraught, our relations with Heydar Aliyev were on the whole rather smooth and sometimes even confidential. I remember how he occasionally confided to me his opinions about a number of public figures. Once he said that from the political standpoint he was supposed to praise the leaders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic back in 1918-1920, even though they were nothing short of real bastards.

Receiving the three co-chairmen of the Minsk Group in Baku, President Aliyev, ever faithful to his habits, got into a huddle with them once the meeting was over. When the time came to take leave, he asked his guests, who were by then ready to leave: 'And how come Kazimirov has come along with you? He spent so many years messing us about with this whole conflict resolution business. Has this been coordinated with Paris and Washington?' The French and the American delegates naturally replied that it had not. Our co-chairman chose to say nothing, even though he had plenty of arguments at his disposal. Not only the other co-chairing member states but even the sides to the conflict had no say as far as the appointment of mediators was concerned – such decisions were within the exclusive competence of the co-chairing member in question. Only within the OSCE system was appointment by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office required, and even then only with regard to the co-chairman of the Minsk conference and not of the Minsk Group. So here it was purely a matter of joining my own team, albeit in an unofficial capacity! Did President Aliyev realise this himself? Or was it his intent to declare me a *persona non grata* in the eyes of all the three countries at once?

Meanwhile, in keeping with the custom, he had already appointed a time for a *tete-a-tete* conversation with me later. Our co-chairman knew about this but dared not tell me about that episode during their meeting with President Aliyev, merely conveying the president's words to our ambassador Alexander V. Blokhin.



The latter urgently got in touch with me and we arranged that we would go to meet President Aliyev together, to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding or complications. The conversation to the point of the matter was naturally hardly possible in such circumstances being reduced to a rather dry farewell, barely savoured by the presence of our ambassador.

I already had certain experience of difficulties in communication with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hasan Hasanov and other representatives of Baku, but our healthy relations with President Aliyev somehow seemed to make up for it. Instances of 'dirty politics' had also not been unknown before: for example, after the November 20, 1993 incident Minister Hasanov was generous in addressing harsh compliments to me in his note, and prior to my departure for Costa Rica he had worked hard to drag my name through the mire in all possible ways in the media. So I was more or less accustomed to matters of that kind. What was a mystery to me was that turn-up for the books demonstrated by President Aliyev himself. Had it been for my foes having convinced him of my alleged bias towards Azerbaijan? I believe that 5 years after the end of the war he felt reluctant to have someone nearby, let alone have them involved in the negotiations process, who knew all about the whims and twists of his policy on Karabakh: the plans to resort to military hostilities, the failure to comply with the demands of the UN Security Council, the refusals and breakdowns of ceasefire arrangements, his faltering, foot-dragging, etc, etc.

Would it have been sensible for me to continue to be part of the Russian co-chairman's team considering all this? Some of those among our superiors believed it was not worth bothering about. But the way it was, this is how the problems of Karabakh became rather a subject of my interviews to the press and presentations at conferences than of any practical efforts on my part.

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The extremely complex and rather controversial range of problems surrounding the Karabakh conflict is hard to make head or tail of, without identifying its core or main link. This is undoubtedly the fate of Nagorno-Karabakh and its status. The rest, including the occupation is the result of the war breaking out on that account.

The fate of Nagorno-Karabakh is the bone of contention lying at the root. This is not even disputed by anyone, that is, anyone except the sides to the conflict! Each of them claims that Nagorno-Karabakh is theirs beyond all argument, and that the adversaries are not entitled to any claims to it whatsoever. Or, at least, that it may not belong to their opponents. For them, recognising its status as disputable means to weaken their positions and claims. Hence the radical position and the eager use of the words 'not for anything', 'out of question' and 'never'. But, even taking into account the political and propaganda interests of the sides, it is necessary to carefully bring them to the acknowledgment that Nagorno-Karabakh is the **root** of the dispute. This would have an immense psychological impact and significance for the leaders themselves, and for a turn in the public thinking towards reconciliation. Such an approach would not contain an element of antagonism – it is the shortest way to rational search for compromises, even though it most definitely requires time.

The fate of Nagorno-Karabakh will have to be decided by the peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia themselves, no matter how much anyone there hopes for a 'wise uncle' to come and heed their arguments, decide everything for them.

All those who examine the situation being pure onlookers should on no account narrow down their view of it, taking it in the entirety of its historical and geographical context. That is not to say, of course, that it is a matter of delving back into the depth of centuries, yet the events of the past centuries are not going to fade or leave the picture altogether. The fate of the Armenians of Nakhichevan, Baku, Ganja, Sumgait, or the fate of the ethnic Azeris displaced from Armenia back in the Soviet times, are not to be forgotten.

The grave mass violations of the humanitarian norms, deportations and flight of refugees from the advancing adversary forces have all added fuel to this armed conflict cementing the alienation between the Azeris and the Armenians. And this is sad. Their children and grandchildren are not going to live together or co-exist peacefully on the same territory any time soon. Yes, alienation is by all means a sad fact, but worse still is the fermenting mutual animosity and even hatred, their incitement and the ever-present threat of the war breaking out again. The cause and effect relationships are not to be completely dismissed either, because calling for resolution of the

armed conflict sometimes goes perfectly hand in hand with the actual steps towards aggravating it.

The collapse of the Soviet Union played its undeniable part in adding to the political severity of the Karabakh conflict making it essentially international. A number of Soviet republics declared their independence by all means not in keeping with the law of April 3, 1990. The Western preachers of the rule of law chose to turn a blind eye to this, not wishing to respect a system of law that was alien to them and their tradition, but that choice did nothing but fuelled the flame of the military conflict. Large-scale armed hostilities first broke out in Karabakh precisely in the late 1991 – early 1992. The Republic of Azerbaijan did not even bother to re-affirm its continuity from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan. On the contrary, it even disowned its legacy in its new constitution, thus undermining its own references to the internationally recognised national frontiers.

No matter what the lawful interests or the inflated ambitions of any of the sides were, the international community should value nothing else above **prevention of resumption of armed hostilities**. And that is not to say that one has to wait for a realistic threat of such to appear. The priority for the OSCE and the co-chairing members of the Minsk Group is speedy enforcement of peace, yet strictly by political and diplomatic instruments. This is what was initially proclaimed in the Moscow declaration.

Our work as diplomats is, let us acknowledge this, not always consistent with our goals to ensure our own interests and maintain continuity in our business. Seeking new venues may not be a goal in itself but merely an instrument. One has to make sure that the proposed novelties and alternatives are effective both in terms of resolution, and in terms of achieving one's own goals, and by no means to rely on any random luck. Much of what we were defending adamantly in the face of the pressure by our Western partners and actually succeeded in defending was later surrendered to their immense joy (among those aspects were the role and the place of the CIS in the peace process, for example, as it was stated in the preamble to the peace agreement, our format of negotiations, their documentary basis, etc). Another obvious fact was the ousting of the Russian language which dominated the Karabakh negotiations at the beginning.

Our striving (this time along with the Western partners) to keep the peace process 'afloat', so to speak, at all costs had resulted in its current deformation, the withdrawal of one of the sides to conflict from this process, contrary to the resolution of the OSCE Budapest summit and the mandate of the co-chairing members of the Minsk Group. The inability of the OSCE to comply with its own resolutions, carry through to the end the implementation of agreements signed under its aegis is nothing short of stunning!

The Karabakh peace negotiations are currently at risk of closing a kind of vicious circle. If the sides (and at that all of them) agree on the basic principles of peaceful resolution (which for the time being appears to be rather problematic) and proceed to elaboration of a draft agreement based on those principles, the above scenario is exactly what is going to happen. Was it, after all, not possible to reach this point based on the draft agreement of 1994-1996, avoiding beating about and messing about the three projects of 1997-1998 in keeping with the formula approved in Key West, the Prague Process and other scenarios proposed by the co-chairing members of the Minsk Group? They probably lacked patience and persistence in their work with the sides, falling into the trap of the naïve temptation to discover a magic formula of instant resolution of all problems somewhere right at hand.

In conclusion, a few words about myself. Work in peace mediation makes one accustomed to the fact that one is out of favour with all the sides. A mediator brings no favours and no benefits to any side in a conflict but merely seeks concessions and compromises from it to the benefit of the interests of the adversary. The leaders of neither parties seem to be able to see how you do the same in order to squeeze a compromise out their adversary defending their own interests, should such seem reasonable and lawful.

Grudges against mediators are a common and inevitable disease of the sides to any conflict. I had in my due course also become target of this peril. Each of the sides had its own claims and would pour them out, most frequently, into the press. Only the laziest of the Azerbaijani and Armenian media had failed to address its portion of criticism to me in my time. The party finding itself at disadvantage in each particular case naturally always spills most venom in its accusations. Baku would unfailingly accuse me of

pro-Armenian inclinations, or even of serving the Armenian cause. The perception in such situations is always reduced to seeing only two colours: black and white (that is, everything under the moon has to be either on the Azerbaijan side or on Armenia's side), however primitive, demeaning and pathetic such aberration is. Life is so multifaceted, with plenty of other colours and shades, as well as interests of other countries in place. I would describe my own position as not even a pro-Russian one but a truly Russian one instead. Or maybe even an ultra-Russian one.

No other country of the world could have such a strong interest in peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the stabilisation of the Azeri-Armenian relations, the development of stable relations with these countries, as Russia. The interests of, say, the United States or France or even the neighbouring Turkey cannot withstand even an approximate comparison with ours. None of those countries has such deep, multi-faceted and tight historical and present-day ties with Azerbaijan and Armenia.

My mediation experience in the Karabakh war (and before that – in Angola) had taught me intolerance to any military hostilities (at the time), still more so – to any prospect of their resumption today or even perhaps in the future. It is quite logical, therefore, that one, who has spent years of his life struggling for peace and its effective enforcement, cannot abide bellicose threats, arms race, armed clashes, as well as hate propaganda between the two nations and other preparations to hopefully resuming hostilities and bloodshed, no matter from whom all of these emanate! Whoever proves to aspire for reversal to military hostilities – I am determined to stand firmly in their way. That war was already a price too great to have been paid by both nations. And by us too, to be frank!

Even back at the time of the actual hostilities both Elchibey and Heydar Aliiev demonstrated remarkable wobbling in their approaches to solving the conflict, their tendency to stake on military force, the psychological complex resulting from the loss of Shusha and Lachin, frustration of peacemaking initiatives, arrangements and even breach of officially signed documents, in a word, their unsoundness as partners in negotiations. But, unlike Elchibey, Heydar Aliiev was capable of calling for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, even if not of promoting it himself.

The Armenian side were not an easy lot either, but they at least steered clear of such drastic wobbling. They usually responded positively to peace-making proposals from the mediators, accepting the terms and more or less respecting the arrangements made. Naturally, there were exceptions to the rule, but those were luckily not all too frequent.

I am convinced that even today the paramount objective in the Karabakh conflict is to secure a lasting ceasefire.

Anyone who has at least some experience in mediation cannot possibly remain indifferent to the wrecking of arrangements achieved and even of agreements signed. So who was more to blame for such in this case? Who had repeatedly sabotaged the short-term ceasefire arrangements in 1993-94? Who had refused to withdraw their troops during the armistice, thus almost ensuring the occurrence of possible incidents? Who is now trying to deny that it had been conceived as an open-ended one? And, finally, who is now fully ignoring the commitments under the February 1995 agreement on enhancement of the ceasefire regime? All of this in contempt of the commitments that had been officially assumed.

Finally, can the side which is constantly playing false generally count on currying much favour and sympathy? And this conflict is sadly steeped in lies, manipulations and deceit. The commonly known overstatements – the alleged 20% of Azeri land under occupation, with over a million people displaced, – have become truly proverbial. The simple calculation is that no one will try to check the veracity of these figures, dig into the population statistics of those 7 districts. And, naturally, the time that has past since the events in question took place, these decades have made it easier for liars to play their part since much truth has turned out to be forgotten or half-forgotten, and for many of the new generation may even be completely unknown. All of this is so helpful for anyone wishing to distort people's view and attitudes to the past.

I remember how I avoided talking about Karabakh to the press at the end of the 1990s to avoid offending the sensibilities of either side. But later I came to the conclusion that this was on the whole **no problem of mine**. Too much in that conflict hinged on deception, most frequently, deception of one's own people. Every author must strive to be as accurate and truthful as possible, and if someone feels hurt or peevd on that account, that is entirely their own

problem and the problem of those who prevaricated, deformed the truth, tampering with the facts to make them serve his own interests, or simply told barefaced lies. Let them stand up and speak for their 'truth' on their own, if they find the strength to face the facts confirmed by documents.

There are three key factors that shape my attitude to the conflicting sides today. I will take some more of your time to reiterate them in short: 1) effective confirmation of the ceasefire arrangements, rejection of staking on solution by force, a pragmatic approach to negotiations; 2) fidelity to commitments assumed, particularly if such are legally binding, and 3) moderation of the official propaganda and its complete intolerance to falsehood.

Any conflicting side that would have outscored the others in these criteria must be subjected to uncompromising criticism and condemnation until it resolves to take up the path of peaceful settlement of the conflict.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which adopted the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, was transformed in January 1995 into the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). For more information about the creation of the Minsk Group, see below.
- <sup>2</sup> *Die OSZE und der Berg Karabach-Konflikt*. (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2000). S. 289.
- <sup>3</sup> While publishing this essay on March 30, 2007, the Baku newspaper *Realnyi Azerbaidzhan* accompanied it with the opinions of well-known Azeri political scientists Eldar Nasimov and Rasim Musabekov concerning the mandate of the Minsk Group. Both claimed that the Minsk Group 'has a CSCE mandate.' But none of them will be able to provide any references to it – by whom and when it was adopted and where that enigmatic, one may even say virtual, document was published. A mandate is a specific text indicating the goals and objectives of a corresponding body, not an amorphous intuitive notion, nor any approximate perception. For, in truth, no such text exists. Let them cite at least one quotation, at least one word from it, but certainly with reference to the source! One can speak about the mandate of the CSCE only metaphorically, in a figurative sense, but not as an OSCE document – for such is non-existent.

**PART TWO**  
**HIS MAJESTY THE ARGUMENT**

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## **There Is No Dispensing With Mediators (1994)**

**Now, when a new hope to break the deadlock of the Karabakh conflict has appeared, we asked the special representative of the Russian President for the negotiations on the political settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh, head of Russia's mediatory mission VLADIMIR KAZIMIROV, to tell us more about the thorny path to peace in that region.**

The sides to the conflict first signed a protocol on termination of military operations and withdrawal of troops, with Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev facilitating this step. This was followed by a meeting between the respective chairmen of the Supreme Councils of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Babken Ararktsyan and Rasul Guliev.

The preparation of a big political agreement on the cessation of the conflict is well underway, under Russia's auspices.

The work on this agreement covers all principal issues related to the first phase of the settlement, which, the Russian diplomat believes, can only be phased. An absolute priority is to achieve a suspension of fire and hostilities – this is a key to resolving all other issues. To make such a suspension last, a mechanism capable of minimising the chances of resumption of hostilities is required. And only once an end to the bloodshed is safely secured, can we proceed to solving other riddles.

The most effective means of confirmation of cessation of military operations would be deployment of peacekeeping separation forces. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has long been putting the question about such a multipartite operation. But such an operation requires an international mandate and funding. Russian troops are definitely not going to be deployed there on their own, Vladimir Kazimirov claims most emphatically. Russia by no means demonstrates any 'imperial ambitions' here, as the West claims. The

said protocol of the meeting of defence ministers does not say a word about buffer troops – only about withdrawal of troops and deployment of observers.

The procedure for the implementation of the protocol signed by the defence ministers is supposed to be the following: the conflicting sides withdraw their troops from their positions, so as to put them beyond the reach of fire from the opposing side. Heavy armament should be withdrawn by at least 20 kilometers on each side. The units armed with firearms should be symmetrically withdrawn from the line of contact, so as to create a mutual security zone, which will be under the control of mixed observation posts. Far too complicated, yet also feasible in principle, is an asymmetrical withdrawal of the opposing troops, although in that case it should be effectively balanced by the distance depth and regulation of numbers of forces at a new line.

The problem lies in the fact that the Azeri side does not wish to move backwards further into its own territory, and the Karabakh Armenians are most reluctant to just abandon the captured territories. To date both sides suffer from the situation when their minds are dominated by emotions, not logic. The existing atmosphere of tensions makes reaching any agreements impossible in the absence of a mediator. And yet the chief prerequisite is the replacement of the bellicose, militarist approach demonstrated by the warring sides themselves with a rational political approach. There can be no overcoming of the quagmire of confrontation.

Fixing the cessation of military operations will turn the next page in the history of this peace process – the transition to liquidation of the major negative consequences of the conflict, primarily consisting in the liberation of the territories seized in the course of fighting. Following the cessation of fighting, with the observers being in place, the parties will be deprived of those excuses that they are presently so keen on using. And only then will the time come to proceed to the restoration of transport and energy communications, ensuring the return of refugees whose total number has now exceed one million.

Sad as it is, the peace process is aggravated by the ferocity of this conflict, which is marked by violations of all possible norms of humanitarian law – primarily the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. Victims among the civilian population are many. These are the

usual things for any war – rocket attacks and bombing of settlements, hostage taking (including upon orders from private individuals for subsequent exchange for their captive relatives), ill treatment of prisoners of war, to the point of summary executions on the spot.

Only during the next, third stage, when time will come to tackle the effects of the conflict, will we be able to move on to dealing with the central problem – determining the future legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs believes that artificial divide of these three stages is unacceptable. What is, on the contrary, to be sought is maximum possible link up, and, whenever possible, even their partial combination. Intervals are to be avoided by all means, for such may generate an impression of freezing the unsettled situation, which will merely contribute to mutual distrust.

The key question, of course, is how and when the underlying issue of the whole controversy – that of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh – will be resolved. If negotiations on that score are launched now, the effect they will have is obvious: – an inevitable heat of the emotions, and further bloodshed. The negotiation process will inevitably reach a deadlock, while the hostilities will break out on a new scale. What is clearly reassuring is that this is the only point (!) on which all the sides to the conflict seem to be unanimous: Yerevan, Stepanakert, Baku, and even Moscow itself, believe that the status shall be determined during the final stage and, – which is particularly important, – on the basis of a compromise.

Attempts at solving this problem on the principle of ‘territories in exchange for status’ represent nothing more than a poorly camouflaged military solution to the conflict and that is enough to deem them unsound.

It is time to finally realise that shirking from adherence to the agreements reached, disruption of the implementation of documents signed by high-ranking officials by no means lead to peace and stability. No one is capable to solve this problem, apart from the leaders of the parties to the conflict.

Written down Vladimir Tyurkin  
*Rossiiskaya gazeta, March 26, 1994.*

## Russia and the CSCE Minsk Group

### **It is time to reveal the truth about the real role of certain ‘mediators’ in the Karabakh peace process**

*It's been 5 months without bloodshed in Karabakh. Yet, the ceasefire achieved under Russia's auspices has not yet been turned into lasting peace. So why is it that neither Russia, nor the so-called Minsk Group of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) seem to be able to achieve this? We asked the Ambassador-at-Large Vladimir Kazimirov, who is both the head of the Russian mediatory mission and Russia's representative in the Minsk Group, to answer this question.*

A lot has been said and written recently to the effect that the contradictions between Russia and the CSCE have been growing in the framework of the conflict settlement in Karabakh. It is true that differences exist, yet not with the CSCE but within the Minsk Group itself, whose 11 members include the actual conflicting parties. Or, more precisely, with several rather influential members of the ‘neutral Nine’.

The relations between Russia, who is an active mediator in this conflict, and some of its partners within this Group are complicated by the persistent pretensions of the latter to a central role of the Minsk Group in the Karabakh peace process, which constituted nothing less than an attempt to belittle Russia's independent mediatory efforts.

Russia feels the impact of that conflict far more acutely than any other country and it had been consistent in its mediatory efforts – whether independently or along with other CIS members – long before everyone else, including the Minsk Group, got involved. Its opportunities, resulting primarily from its historically close ties with the Trans-Caucasian nations, are truly unique. Hence, the progress achieved by the Russian mediators, including the ceasefire, which has been holding for five months now.

Let us note that some of our partners in the Minsk Group usually are becoming more active only when Russia manages to achieve some progress. Their persistence in advocating the 'central' role of the Minsk Group is so clearly out of proportion with its actual achievements. Especially notable are the attempts of certain forces in the West to create the myth about the productivity of the Minsk Group work. The European Union and the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly compete in churning out special statements in support of the Minsk Group and its leaders expressing gratitude and total confidence. So long as the generous oral advances have so far no support in terms of real actions, the true motives behind them – to ignore Russia's efforts and ascribe the progress achieved by our country to the Minsk Group's credit – begin to surface.

Sometimes, however, they choose a different strategy, paying a verbal tribute to Russia's 'decisive contribution', but in actual fact they continue to push it aside in the framework of the cooperation. A myth about some alleged 'CSCE plan' in the Karabakh peace process is being actively created. But aside from the rather vulnerable last year's schedule, which, on top of all, was not adopted by all of the sides to the conflict, the Minsk Group has literally no plan to offer. That is why its leaders attempted to appropriate, under the pretext of developing a 'consolidated peace plan', the draft 'big political agreement' proposed by Russia, yet were let down by their own immoderate desire to alter it to suit their needs.

The Karabakh conflict turned out to be the very first peacemaking experience for the CSCE. Its experience in conflict resolution is next to none, it has no mandate, no mechanisms, no funding for carrying out large-scale peacemaking operations. And the Minsk Group does not even have a resolution on its establishment, nor a clear-cut mandate. Apparently this is the reason why it takes up every possible initiative – in order to justify its pretensions to a 'central role'.

After travelling to the conflict region in October 1993 the Personal representative of the CSCE Chairman-in-Office recommended among other things to examine more carefully the forms and methods of the Karabakh conflict settlement. This was noted in the 1993 CSCE operational report. Because, let us be frank, during its two and a half years of operation the Minsk Group did not always choose the right reference points and priorities,

and was more than once tardy with declaring its position. For example, only by the end of 1993 had the Minsk Group come to realise and acknowledge cessation of fire as a priority for the entire conflict settlement process. The Minsk Group itself had not even once achieved a ceasefire, which did not stop it from taking the credit for it each time when Russia managed to achieve an end to the bloodshed. Here is one other indicative example: Chairman of the Minsk Conference Mr. Rafaelli was granted, as a result of a prolonged correspondence, by the supreme leaders of the conflicting parties the right to appoint the date of armistice, yet never availed of that right. It is now anyone's guess: why?

Up until September 1993 the Minsk Group avoided acknowledging the tripartite nature of this conflict. It was also long reluctant to work on the agreement as a legal document that would be binding for all parties. Preference was given to less well-defined options, such as schedules, plans, etc. For many months our idea of creating a joint coordinating commission – which is now advocated by some members of the Group – continued to meet with stubborn resistance.

By the autumn of 1993 Russia was the first to come to the conclusion that the needs of conflict resolution require more than just observers – what is indeed needed is a peacekeeping operation involving military forces for separation of the warring sides. That proposal coming from Russia was blocked for a long period. And now we are observing frantic attempts to find contingents for the creation of the multinational CSCE forces. It was only very recently that the simplest idea to separate the warring sides' troops was accepted, at long last.

The ceasefire arrangements have been holding for over five months.

And, nevertheless, the Minsk Group seems to be in no hurry to send CSCE observers to the conflict zone, despite its chairman, Mr. Eliasson, having repeatedly declared for months on end that this was the top priority task and insisted on a separate agreement to that effect being signed.

Examples of this kind of mistakes are plentiful. Let us, however, note that Russia did not at all maintain silence during the debates on these issues at the Minsk Group sessions.

Our opponents are trying to trace contradictions between our point that

the CSCE need to play a central role in ensuring the security and stability in Europe and our critical stance on the Minsk Group's activities, to its actual role. And yet, there is no contradiction here. The clear inefficiency of the Minsk Group is what induces us to seek, among other goals, the transformation of the CSCE into a full-fledged regional organisation.

The fundamental document in the framework of the Karabakh peace process is the resolution of the CSCE Council dated of March 24, 1992, which shows that the defence ministers of the member states comprising this organisation proceeded from the important, yet by no means exclusive role of the CSCE. They proceeded from the concept of mutually complimentary well-coordinated efforts, but not at all from the concept of monopolistic management of the entire conflict settlement process exclusively in the CSCE framework. Another fact to be noted is that not a single agreement pertaining to settlement of conflicts on the territory of the former USSR that would have been signed under the CSCE aegis or signed by its representative. By agreement with the parties to the conflict the Russian mediator for the first time expressed readiness to mention in the preamble to his draft agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, that it was being concluded 'under the CSCE aegis', along with suggesting to the Minsk Conference Chairman to sign that agreement on behalf of the CSCE (along with the CIS and Russia).

A number of Minsk Group members, however, resists any mention of the CIS, let alone a signature on its behalf, condescending to as much as a mention of 'the CIS member states', whereas CSCE documents adopted at the highest level explicitly indicate the possibility of involving such a peacekeeping resource as the Commonwealth of Independent States (Helsinki document of 1992, Section III, Clause 52). We shall add that, unlike the Minsk Group, the United Nations always seeks maximum involvement of regional and sub-regional organisations.

The complementarity and coordination of the UN, CSCE, CIS and Russia's efforts are the true keys to achieving quick progress. The alignment of roles can hardly be determined once and for all – indeed it may well change in the course of developments in the peace process. It is quite clear that at this stage, owing to a number of objective factors, Russia is the country that has assumed the role in the vanguard of this process.



To wait for the CSCE to become capable of conducting large-scale peace-making operations means to get stuck in uncertainty losing several precious months. Moreover, the current ceasefire also cannot be viewed with certainty as open-ended – a political agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict must be secured as soon as possible.

The CSCE's role in the Karabakh peace process must grow in real life, and not on paper. Important steps in respect would be the deployment of CSCE observers, the opening of the Minsk Conference. But for the time being we have achieved neither.

It is not us who is trying to play Russia's efforts off against those of the Minsk Group.

We believe that we are working for one and the same cause and should better coordinate our efforts and support each other. However, some representatives of the Minsk Group are less concerned with the goals of conflict settlement than with their own political and economic interests in the Trans-Caucasus region. In pursuit of goals that have nothing to do with the conflict settlement, they in actual fact compromise the CSCE through their attempts to use its structures as a mere cover-up for their own geostrategic schemes and manoeuvres.

Could it be so that a 'double standard' is sought in respect of the CSCE: a leading role in the East and a very modest one in the West?

Constant hindrances are put in the way of the Russian mediatory mission in the framework of the Karabakh peace processes because far from everyone is all too happy with Russia's active role in it. This, God forbid, may result in it boosting of its influence in the region, in the revival of the integration processes across the CIS! The words of one American politician to the effect that instability is at any rate preferable to the return of the Russian influence in the Trans-Caucasus, are quite indicative in that respect.

A decisive end must be put to the debates concerning the 'distribution of roles', that are so harmful to the Minsk Group and its operation; also, its mandate needs to be clearly defined, and we must concentrate on the essence of those problems in the framework of the peace process that would be referred to the competence of this organisation.

Segodnya, October 14, 1994

## **Speech About the Mandate of the Minsk Group Delivered at the Meeting of the CSCE Permanent Committee**

*Vienna, October 24, 1994*

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to remind that on September 23, 1992 Chairman of the Minsk conference Mr. Mario Raffaelli (and I have no doubt that our Chairman Mr. Mario Sica remembers it very well) sent to the Acting Chairman of the CSCE Mr. Moravčík a letter in which he requested certain clarifications to be introduced into the Minsk Conference mandate. We can only speak about the mandate of the Minsk Conference (unlike in the case with the Minsk Group). I will refrain from offering references, since this is a well-known fact already. Nevertheless, even with the mandate in place, the Minsk Conference chairman has required certain clarifications in its respect. The Minsk Group has no such mandate, and no inquiries concerning further clarifications thereof can be made. This would be more like an aimed shot into open space.

German delegate Mr. Günter Joetze claims that such a mandate does exist. He reiterates that the group is fairly capable of operating without a mandate. Well, it possibly is, but will its efforts be really effective in that case? The result of all this is that (and this is not just sheer abstract speculations but actual practice) the Minsk Group has addressed a great deal of issues, yet few matters had been eventually carried through to the end. Whether mandate is to be introduced or not is a matter of efficiency, of the firmness of purpose as far as consistent step-by-step tackling of the goals and objectives which will be set forth in such a mandate. What is needed is not random, chaotic activity along a variety of lines with the sole purpose of justifying the claim to a central role in the settlement of this conflict.

The existence of the Minsk Group is impossible to call in question. The actual question is not about acknowledging its existence, but rather the efficiency of its operation. There is probably no other criterion as significant as efficiency as far as the settlement of bloody conflicts that are damaging all the peoples of the region. There can be other criteria that are important as such, but if efficiency is not enough in itself, this devalues even the 'tireless efforts'. What is more, does the term 'constant efforts' incidentally ensure our understanding of what exactly the Minsk Group is called to deal with and what the focus of those 'constant efforts' should be? No, this does not seem to become clearer or follow from the wording.

Reading through quotations from CSCE, CSCE Council, the Committee of Senior Officials documents that you will come across here, you will find that hardly anything is said anywhere about the goals and objectives of the Minsk Group. What is found is the expression of general support or trust but this is by no means the same as identification of goals and may not be regarded as a valid substitute for the latter. Or else, the goals and objectives of the Minsk Conference or the Minsk process, which apparently comprises the activities of both the future conference and the Minsk Group prior to the opening of the conference.

That is why the analysis through a magnifying glass of this wording is required if one wishes to keep things straight. For example, the duties of the Minsk conference chairman may not be equaled with the goals of the Minsk Group and interpreted as such. In other words, a lot remains unclear on this score. It is better to duly acknowledge our joint, mutual omissions, failures and shortcomings on this score, to rectify them, finding a way out of the tricky situation rather than persevere in these failures to the detriment to the efficiency of the CSCE Minsk Group.

Here I would like to be quite frank as to what had stimulated those issues when they arose. This was, in fact, due to the fact that the Minsk Group or, rather, some members of the Minsk Group with increasing persistence brought up – both orally and in writing – the issue of the central role that the Group was playing, or else, was supposed to play in settlement of the Karabakh conflict. Special emphasis should be made with regard to the timing, that is, when this issue began to be brought up – the autumn of 1993. This –

July, August, September, – was the period when alternatively successful or unsuccessful attempts to achieve a ceasefire with the mediation of the Russian Federation. The ceasefire arrangements held for approximately two months last year, thanks to limited, one could even say, minute quantities: i.e. arrangements to introduce or prolong the ceasefire by 1 week, 3 days, 10 days.

That is why it is by no means a coincidence that on September 23, 1993, the Committee of Senior Officials for the first time came forth with a statement highlighting a central role of the Minsk Group in the settlement process. So wherein lies the problem? Why did the Russian delegates suddenly refuse to support the statement on the central role of the Minsk process? The point of the matter is simple: this statement is put forward with no other intent or meaning but to deny the role of the mediatory efforts and actions of the Russian Federation, or, at any rate, as an attempt to make them recede into the background. This rivalry is clearly unnecessary, and we have repeatedly stressed that we need not rival, but rather support each other and, especially, extend full support to those partners of ours in the framework of the peace process who manage to achieve greater progress and facilitate further advances. For this reason little does it matter who exactly will be most instrumental in achieving that progress. It is something else that really matters: the fact that blood is no longer spilt and that the prospects of a political resolution become nearer.

We believe that discussion about who should play a central role in the settlement barely hinders the progress of the cause. At no point, not even once have we proposed to stipulate that Russia plays the central role in this settlement process, even though greatest progress has so far been achieved through the efforts of the Russian Federation. It is the escape from claims to some monopoly or central role that is needed. Building cooperation in the situation we have now is going to be more than just complicated.

Firstly, the role of different states and international organisations in this settlement will be determined not on the basis of documents or wording that appears in some or other resolution but solely by actual practical efforts and achievements. Seeking statements thereof on paper is nothing but purposeless, a purely scholastic, dogmatic undertaking.

Secondly, can it be said for sure that the entire rather protracted peaceful settlement process in Karabakh may pass under the sign of a dominant role of

any particular participant in this peace process? After all, roles can be surely expected to change more than once along the development of this process. For the time being we believe that it is currently too early to speak of anybody's central role not only in respect of the Minsk Group, but also of the CSCE. But just imagine the following scenario. Tomorrow the CSCE will deploy an observer mission, or take other practical steps, open the Minsk Conference. Will the role of the CSCE not increase in that case? We are convinced that it will inevitably grow. And it will grow in real life, not just on paper.

Or let us envisage a different scenario. All will be agreed and signed alright, yet later serious violations of the signed armistice will occur, hostilities will be resumed, and intervention of the UN Security Council under the provisions of Article 7 of the UN Charter. Is it not clear that the central role in this matter will thus pass on to the UN?

The key players in the peace process in Karabakh are the United Nations Organisation, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Russian Federation. It is universal knowledge which of these players has the greatest experience in peace-keeping operations and maturity of mechanisms or the general peacekeeping experience. And that is the UN. And who has the least experience in this field, the least tested mechanisms? I leave it to each and everyone of those who take part in today's discussion to find an answer to this question for themselves.

I ask you to pay particular attention to the balanced, realistic approach of the UN to stating its own role and that of its agencies in peaceful resolution of international disputes. The 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes proclaims the **important** role of the UN on the whole, and its General Assembly in particular, as far as peaceful resolution of international disputes is concerned. **Central** role is only mentioned with regard to the UN Security Council, and even there the wording is extremely cautious. This was proclaimed by that very international organisation, which is both global in its scope of operation and the most representative, with a great experience in conflict and crisis resolution – which is much greater than any of us here have in the framework of a pan-European organisation. Let us not strive after such pompous turns of speech.

A question arises: what is the true priority in the settlement of this conflict? Our answer is most unambiguous: the ceasefire that has been holding for almost half a year must be secured. This can be done only by way of signing a political agreement on termination of the armed conflict. Nothing else can be more effective and reliable in fixing the termination and in sparing us from the unpleasant scenario of having the current situation in the region 'frozen'. Only an agreement like this would allow to proceed to elimination of the negative aftermath of this conflict.

I am immensely grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all the participants in today's discussion, for your patience. I would also like to add one more comment to the letter which was circulated by the Chairman of the Minsk Conference Mr. Jan Eliasson. He claims in his address that the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Senior Officials has adopted a resolution on the creation of a Minsk Group. Such a resolution as in reality never been adopted. This is apparently a misunderstanding or a random mistake and shall be treated as such. Thank you.

**To the Chairman of the Conference  
on Nagorno-Karabakh held under the CSCE aegis  
Mr Jan Eliasson**

*Moscow, November 1, 1994*

Dear Mr Eliasson,

Please accept my expression of gratitude for your letter of October 21 along with my most sincere congratulations on the occasion of your new appointment, even though it has now become somewhat more difficult for you to monitor the settlement process in Karabakh.

We have begun our dialogue with Ambassador Bjurner in Vienna and I hope we will be able to continue it in Moscow very soon. That said, a number of points mentioned in your letter demand a response.

You express here your regret regarding the fact that at this crucial point in our peacemaking efforts we have to spend our time and energy on discussing the mandate of the Minsk Group. But, after all, this problem arose by no means coincidentally: the reason for this was precisely that the Minsk Group is primarily preoccupied not so much with the problems of peaceful settlement, as with the 'distribution of roles'. We have repeatedly stressed the abnormality of such approach.

The persistent demands to acknowledge the 'central role' of the Minsk Group in the conflict settlement have quite naturally given rise to numerous questions. Now why is that? Why such demands and what is behind them? What is the purpose of the Minsk Group, who were the ones that had established it? What is its domain of competence, its goals, its mandate? Without getting all of these clear first, how can one speak of the role of the Minsk Group, still less, of the efficiency of its work?

We are witnessing a unique case in the history of the CSCE operation. Not a single agency or authority had ever made any resolutions on the estab-

ishment of the Minsk Group. That is why it was never given any mandate. I am compelled here to call attention to the obvious mistake in the Appendix to your letter. It is claimed there that the 11th session of the CSO had resolved to convene an 'extraordinary meeting' (it was the endless follow-up of that meeting that later de facto transformed into the Minsk Group). Journal 4 points out that there has never been any resolution to this effect (precisely because of the lack of consensus).

The resolution of the 11th session of the CSO amounted to supplementing the journal with the draft of a failed document. Whenever there is question of settlement of an armed conflict, what is needed is special, extra clarity and accuracy, which, sadly enough, were not respected in this case. I would even say that the CSCE perhaps knows of no other case similar to that of the Minsk Group: not a single one of its agencies or mechanisms operates in the absence of a clearly defined mandate – not even the tiniest of its missions, no matter whether its basis is a short-term or a long-term one. Suffice it, for example, to check the resolution of the 17th session of the CSO (Clause 3) on the establishment of a special group with a very brief term of operation of the open-ended forward team of CSCE observers in Nagorno-Karabakh. The lapse with the Minsk Group can be seen as a paradigmatic example. It has no other explanation except for the disarray and lack of order within the Conference during its transition from a forum to an organisation and for the CSCE lack of experience in peacemaking.

All attempts to demonstrate that some sort of mandate does exist verge on something of a hoax. For example, the US delegate claims that a mandate ostensibly exists indeed. The German delegate declares, speaking on behalf of EC+4, that there is generally no need for a mandate here. Please note this perfect Babel in respect of opinions in that matter – this could only be a result of a total confusion and even chaos. A mandate has to be precise, stipulating specific goals and tasks. It is a clearly worded text, and not a totality of perceptions, an interpretation of most general statements that can vary a great deal.

The lack of a mandate cannot be covered up by the hypocritical question: why has Russia been ignoring this before? Firstly, it would be at any rate far better to fill in that gap, rather than keep pretending that everything's alright.



Secondly, Russia has never directly brought up the question of a mandate because there has never been a question of laying a claim to a dominant role in the settlement process. And yet we have indeed brought very similar matters. We have repeatedly offered to analyse the work of the Minsk Group, to learn appropriate lessons, however, effectiveness is obviously not everyone's concern here. One and a half years ago, on March 1, 1993, in Rome, Russia's representatives suggested drawing up 'Operating rules for the Karabakh conflict settlement'. The draft document proposed by us contained a number of elements that could partially compensate for the lack of a mandate for the Minsk Group. That suggestion was, however, not even brought up for discussion.

It is worth noting that on September 23, 1992, your predecessor, Mr Mario Raffaelli, the point of clarification of the Minsk Conference's mandate before the Acting Representative of the CSCE, even with that mandate being available and in effect. There is no way for us to avoid a return to that since certain ambiguities in it have not been eliminated.

I beg to differ with you with regard to your saying that 'the goals and objectives of the Minsk Group were clearly stipulated by a number of resolutions adopted by the Council and the CSO'.

Even when reading carefully through the appendix to your letter, one will not be able to discover any reference to the domain of competence, powers, or specific goals of the Minsk Group. Certain statements refer to the role of the Minsk Conference, its chairman and even of the Minsk process, but not to the goals and objectives of the Minsk Group.

Suffice it to take the very same quotes cited by you in the appendix to your letter, yet arrange them not chronologically, but according to their contents – and this becomes fairly obvious, for precisely these goals represent the core of the mandate of any mechanism or agency. And they cannot be substituted with whatever epithets or taffeta phrases, nor even with generous financing.

If you nevertheless continue to believe that the goals and objectives of the Minsk Group are allegedly clearly defined, then would you please try to describe its tasks, sticking closely to the texts of the CSCE resolutions. You will soon find that these pieces are clearly not enough to 'make a dress', so to speak.

As for those who are so enthusiastic about this 'clothes', it is high time they were told the truth: 'The Emperor is naked!'

I would like to hope that this does not repeat itself within the CSCE. For any work based on a mandate would be far better organised and far more efficient than without it.

Is it really all that difficult to rectify the situation by drawing up a mandate? Or does it take too long? A mere ten days perhaps or so? And how many weeks and months had already been wasted earlier on far less important matters?

It is quite clear that the Minsk Group is an agency that is both temporary and auxiliary in nature. It may not be given *carte blanche*, nor may it appropriate the powers of its superior – the Minsk Conference.

I shall not waste time on speculations about a ‘central role’ of the Minsk Group. I shall limit myself to barely noting how fragmentary and even inaccurate the references to the resolutions of the 23rd and the 25th sessions of the CSO cited in your letter are. And those inaccuracies are far too many. Is it a mere coincidence that the quotation from the CSO resolution has omitted the words about direct contacts between the parties and the summit meeting in Moscow? You might object that the Moscow negotiations and the meeting in Moscow had no direct connection with the Minsk process. Yes, those steps were taken under Russia’s auspices. Nonetheless, the ceasefire that was achieved by Russia was for some obscure reason persistently attributed with the Minsk Group (see the Resolutions of the Security Council).

The matter concerning the statement about a ‘central role’ of the Minsk process also needs to be sorted out. The 23rd session of the CSO reaffirmed that ‘...that is an obvious inaccuracy’. But the CSO can’t have possibly reaffirmed this, for it had until that moment never declared anything of the kind. Further on: the Minsk process clearly refers to the Minsk Conference as well, since it is going to be a milestone event. Little is, therefore, left here for the Minsk Group.

The resolution adopted by the 25th session of the CSO speaks about the Minsk Conference, and not about the Minsk Group.

And here is the last omission found in the same paragraph of your letter. I have reproduced the paramount formula concerning the role played by the CSCE in Russian with scrupulous care. The translation of my letter was kindly provided by the Swedish Embassy in Moscow. That is why in the Eng-

lish text the word 'major' was replaced with 'important'. And as for the 'central role' of the Minsk Group: is it not, after all, quite indicative that the acknowledgement of such only began to be sought precisely in the autumn of 1993, after Russia successfully accomplished a number of mediatory measures?

I would not like to challenge your view of the Minsk Group's contribution into the conflict settlement process as you describe it in your letter, even though I could well suggest some corrections. I shall limit myself to asking only this: is this contribution consistent with the claim to something like a 'central role'? Our country, on its part, is not laying any claims to such a role, but you can easily compare the contribution of the Minsk Group with what has been done by Russia and the CIS. To help you do so I attach some selected considerations that you will find in the appendices.

Incidentally, if Russia's contribution is acknowledged so sincerely, then why is it that we still find ourselves unable to make ourselves heard by our partners within the Minsk Group? Why is it that Russia's proposals are accepted only when it becomes no longer possible to avoid accepting them? How much time and effort had been wasted on this during the two and a half years in question! The harmonisation of mediatory efforts is undoubtedly helpful so long as this does not imply opposition to Russia and suppression of its role in the mediation.

You say that triggering parallel processes is to be avoided. But who are those that are trying to trigger them off? After all, all of these points were initially introduced into the framework of the negotiations precisely through Russia's mediatory efforts. And that is why it first has to be determined what goals the Minsk Group is meant to achieve, to avoid eventual overlapping of efforts and rivalry.

We welcome the idea of multi-national security forces. It was precisely Russia that was the first to suggest this back in the autumn of 1993. It is another thing that gives rise to doubts: should the peacekeeping operation in Karabakh be conducted under the CSCE aegis, even though this organisation had neither experience in that respect, nor any tested mechanisms. Both alternatives in the CSCE framework are highly disappointing: either a serious risk of the operation being prepared hastily and carelessly, almost improvised, arises, or its fundamental preparation would take too much time. But there is

a sensible solution: to commence an operation under the UN aegis, and then to pass it on to the CSCE once the situation is more stable and peaceful. It would appear to me, Mr Eliasson, that the Chairman of the Minsk Conference is not only entitled, but also obliged to evaluate the efficiency of operation of the Minsk Group. Who else would be more capable of analysing all that is being done by it, what comes out of it and what fails, and why? We are, after all, faced here with a complicated conflict, with the situation where the positions of the parties are not infrequently mutually exclusive, and in this situation we must sum up each step of ours, draw appropriate lessons, before proceeding to the next step.

All of the above can only make sense in a situation where the weight of specific arguments is acknowledged – otherwise, all dialogues, any correspondence are utterly useless.

You deny that the work of the Minsk Group was aimed to counteract Russia's mediatory efforts, and as a proof of that you refer to the high appreciation of Russia's contribution describing it as 'decisive'. We appreciate these words, but we nevertheless prefer to judge them by deeds.

If the contribution made by the Russian Federation was indeed decisive, then why are the Minsk Group's meetings sometimes held without any consideration for the availability of Russia's representatives on the scheduled day? Why is Russia the last to be consulted with regard to the dates of these meetings, only when all the other members had already reached an agreement? So far the attitudes within the Minsk Group are dominated by mistrust towards all of Russia's efforts in the framework of conflict settlement. This was repeatedly manifested in actual practice, which naturally hinders the progress of the peace process.

Russia's delegates would like to refrain from emphasising their country's role and achievements, yet, in a situation where some sort of central role is constantly being referred the point of the matter, we have no other choice but to demonstrate the inconsistency of this claim with the actual deeds (see Appendices 2 and 3 to this letter here).

Sometimes our opponents seem to proceed from the presumption that joint multilateral efforts are or must be advantageous to the efforts of an individual state. In practice, this, however, proves to result in pushing aside not

only the efforts of Russia alone, but equally the joint efforts of the CIS structures, even though the Commonwealth of Independent States is probably suffering the greatest detriment as a result of this conflict. In this kind of matters specifics have much more weight than abstract opinions and comments.

The collective nature of mediation can by no means invariably serve as a guarantee of effectiveness. It is not the number of states participating in the joint efforts that determine their success. Note also that once faced with major complications related to the operation of the Minsk Group in plenary session, the Chairman of the Minsk Conference was often compelled to resort to convening restricted-attendance meetings. And that restricted attendance was not even always just 'the neutral Eight' or 'nine'. There had also been several meetings held with only five participants present, 'five + one', and even three. It is curious that the principle of team spirit, the fact that the other members of the Minsk Group, which is an intrinsically multilateral mechanism, found themselves, at least temporarily, 'on the sidelines', were of little embarrassment to the initiators of those 'narrow format' meetings.

And indeed, it becomes somehow easier to find common ground between the conflicting sides when there is only one mediator involved or, else, within a narrow circle of such than at a plenary session held in extended format. There is no gainsaying that assent with solutions found and support on the part of the collective body are of utmost importance. Just think what would have been our common progress in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, had the Minsk Group demonstrated support for Russia's efforts instead of opposing them. That is why our minister recently wrote namely this: 'Today a maturity test for the CSCE consists in renouncing the vying for the laurels of "chief negotiators" in the Karabakh conflict settlement for the sake and benefit of supporting the diplomatic efforts and, in the final analysis, the peacemaking efforts of Russia as well'.

I believe that our exchange of opinions through our correspondence is by now already exhaustive enough, and it is time to close this chapter indeed.

I concur with you as to that it would be better to leave all these vexed issues behind and to move on with our joint efforts and goals. But that would first require the harmonisation of the approach to these matters. We have

submitted some details and ideas for the Minsk Group's mandate to the Permanent Committee; discussing them with all of the Nine present, along with analysing the operation of the Minsk Group, would not come amiss. Consensus is what is required insofar as procedure is concerned in order to avoid more misunderstandings as new meetings of the Group will be scheduled. Neither can we consent to the separation of the duties of the Minsk Conference and the Minsk Group chairman. This would have given a misleading impression that the Group was established as an independent agency, with no links to the Minsk Conference. We hold Ambassador Anders Bjurner in high esteem and are ready to cooperate with him as the deputy chairman of the Minsk Conference, as was the case with Ambassador Mario Sica during the chairmanship of Mr Mario Raffaelli. Finally, we simply must be realistic and put a decisive end to these useless and even detrimental debates about the necessity of anyone playing a central role, opting instead for displaying prudence and pragmatism when it comes to consideration of the possibility to deploy peacekeeping forces in Karabakh.

I believe that the wise settlement of these issues will benefit our cooperation making it more effective.

Please accept my best regards,

*Vladimir Kazimirov.*

**Appendices:**

1) Analysis of extracts from the CSCE Council and the CSO documents pertaining to the Minsk Group.

2) Comparison chart of the peacemaking efforts of the Minsk Group and the Russian Federation.

3) Selected points pertaining to the Karabakh conflict settlement brought up by Russia, yet omitted by the Minsk Group or adopted by it with a significant delay.

*Appendix 1*

ANALYSIS OF EXTRACTS FROM DOCUMENTS OF THE CSCE COUNCIL AND THE CSO PERTAINING TO THE MINSK GROUP  
*(Covering all provisions pertaining to the additional session in Helsinki, as well as of the Stockholm and Rome sessions of the CSCE Council, and to the 11<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> sessions of the CSO).*

*Extract from the unadopted draft resolution of the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO (May 1992) – prior to the de facto formation of the Minsk Group:*

‘...Call an emergency meeting of the States taking part in the Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh agreed by the Council of Ministers on 24 March 1992 ...to explore urgently all aspects of the situation, with a view to reopening the dialogue among the parties to the conflict.’

**That is to say, there has never been any formal resolution on the creation of the Minsk Group. The only decision ever made in this respect was to supplement the 4<sup>th</sup> issue of the journal by the text of the unadopted draft suggested by the US. But even that draft suggested convening one extraordinary meeting and not a series of meetings, let alone regular operation of a new auxiliary agency within the CSCE. The goals and objectives of that meeting were stated in most general terms.**

Appraisals and statements of support of the work

of the Minsk Group’s and the Minsk Conference’s Chairman

– ‘The Ministers asked the Chairman of the CSCE Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh, Hon. Mario Raffaelli, and the “Minsk Group” to continue their tireless efforts to advance the peace process.’ (**Stockholm, December 1992**).

– ‘The Ministers ... welcomed the appointment by the Chairman-in-office of Mr Jan Eliasson as new Chairman of the Minsk Conference as well as the role of Sweden as the next supporting State of the Minsk process. ... The Ministers confirmed the preliminary decisions by the CSO on the financial implications of the Minsk Group..’ (**Statement by the chairman of the Council, December 1993**).

– **The 16<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** expressed its appreciation of the actions of the Minsk Conference Chairman ‘aimed at finding a solution to the problems still standing in the way of convening the Minsk Conference’ (**September 1992**).

– **The 24<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** adopted the budget of CSCE operations related to the Minsk process, including the 1994 expenses for the Minsk Group meetings to be held up until the opening of the Minsk Conference. ‘All

relevant CSCE financial regulations will be applicable mutatis mutandis to the activities of the Minsk Group' (**November 1993**).

– **The 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the CSO** 'took positive note of the continued efforts by the Minsk Group...' (**September 1993**).

– **The 25<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** 'expressed its full support for the activities of the Chairman of the Minsk Conference, Ambassador Jan Eliasson' (**March 1994**).

– **The 28<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** 'took note with appreciation of the report given by Ambassador Eliasson, Chairman of the CSCE Minsk Conference and Group...' (**September 1994**).

– **The CSCE Permanent Committee** 'welcomed the report of the Minsk Group Chairman, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, and expressed its gratitude for his continuing efforts, and those of his colleagues, on behalf of a peaceful resolution of the conflict...' and 'reaffirmed its full support for his latest round of negotiating efforts to achieve an early ceasefire as a first step in a political process aimed at achieving a comprehensive solution to the conflict...' (**May 12, 1994**).

– **The CSCE Permanent Committee** 'expressed its full support for the preliminary Agreement to consolidate the ceasefire, mediated by the CSCE and the Russian Federation' (**May 19, 1994**).

Appeals to the states and conflicting sides pertaining to the activity of the Minsk Group

– **The 17<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** called upon 'all CSCE participating States to coordinate their efforts, aimed at promoting a negotiated settlement, with the activities of the Minsk Group' (**November 1992**).

– **The 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the CSO** 'urged all parties to intensify their negotiating efforts within the Minsk Group in order to facilitate progress towards a durable and balanced solution to the conflict' (**September 1993**).

About the role and objectives of the CSCE, the Minsk Conference, its chairman and the Minsk process on the whole

– **the CSCE** 'must play a major role in promoting a peace process relating to the conflict. They agreed that the situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh requires further CSCE action.'

'... a conference on Nagorno-Karabakh under the auspices of the CSCE would provide an ongoing forum for negotiations towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis...' (**Helsinki, March 1992**).

– **The 8<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> sessions of the CSO** declared for the speedy convening of a conference dedicated to Nagorno-Karabakh (**March, April – May 1992**).



– **The 16<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** suggested to the Acting Chairman of the CSCE and the chairman of the Minsk Conference ‘to continue their contacts with a view to removing the obstacles and achieving the conditions which could provide new impetus to the Minsk Process’ (**September 1992**).

– **The 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the CSO** reaffirmed (?) ‘the central role of the Minsk Process in organizing credible international participation in negotiations and monitoring to end the conflict’ (**September 1993**). **The word ‘reaffirmed’ represents an instance of obvious inaccuracy**, since none of the previous resolutions stipulated the central role of the Minsk process in respect of anything at all.

– **The 25<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** stressed that the Minsk Conference ‘has a central role in the search for a political solution to the conflict’, as well as called for an immediate ceasefire and resumption of peacemaking efforts in the framework of the Minsk Conference (**March 1994**).

– **The 28<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** called upon the Chairman of the Minsk Conference ‘to continue his efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict’, as well as called upon the Acting Chairman of the CSCE to take, with the assistance from the Minsk Group chairman, necessary steps for active exploring of possibilities to deploy multinational CSCE peacekeeping forces (**September 1994**).

About cooperation with individual countries and international organisations

– In Clause 6 of its resolution the **additional session of the CSCE Council in Helsinki** primarily welcomed the complementary efforts of individual states as well as their joint efforts (the EU and its member states, the CIS and its member states, etc), along with stressing the importance of their cooperation with the UN (**on March 24, 1992**).

– **The 17<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO** called upon the CSCE member states ‘to coordinate their efforts, aimed at promoting a negotiated settlement, with the activities of the Minsk Group’ (**November 1992**).

– **The 28<sup>th</sup> session of the CSO**, acknowledging the decisive contribution made by the Russian Federation into the comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, ‘reiterated the urgent need for continued and intensified harmonization of the mediation activities undertaken by the Minsk Group and by its member states into one coordinated effort’ (**September 1994**).

– **The CSCE Permanent Committee** ‘reiterated its conviction that continued and intensified harmonization of all negotiating efforts is necessary to achieve success’ (**May 19, 1994**).

About goals and objectives of the Minsk Group ( ? ? ? )

The core of any organisation's mandate is its scope of competence and its goals. The specific goals of the Minsk Group have not been stipulated in any of the above listed resolutions by the CSCE Council, the CSO or the CSCE Permanent Committee. Among those mentioned are some of the tasks set before the Minsk Conference, its chairman (who is in some places referred to as the chairman of the Minsk Group) and the Minsk process on the whole, but at no point specifically before the Minsk Group.

The focus is mainly on 'active part', 'efforts', 'contacts', 'negotiations'. In some places there is a general mention of their purpose being the peaceful resolution of the conflict. It is never specified what those contacts are for, what those negotiations are about. It is therefore hardly appropriate to regard the Minsk Group as a 'permanent forum for negotiations'. That function is fulfilled by the Minsk Conference.

## *Appendix 2*

### COMPARISON CHART OF THE PEACEMAKING EFFORTS OF THE CSCE MINSK GROUP AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (1992 – through October 1994)

<b>Comparative intensity of work with the conflicting sides</b>	<b>Minsk Group</b>	<b>Russia</b>
Number of summit meetings	0	12
Number of messages by top leaders and officials	0	7
Number of meetings of ministers	2	12
Number of mission trips to the conflict region	12	27
Number of sessions held	25	0
including: of the Minsk Group	13	0
of the 'neutral Nine'	3	
of the 'Five'	2	
of the 'Troika'	0	
Number of rounds of negotiations held	0	15
Number of meetings of the heads of parliaments	1	4
<b>Efficiency indicators</b>		
Specific proposals concerning ceasefire	3	14
of those successful: i.e. ceasefire achieved	0	7
Proposals to extend ceasefire;	1	4
of those extended:	0	3
Organisation of meetings between representatives of the conflicting sides	0	4

### Humanitarian acts

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) Exchange of 4 prisoners of war (2 for 2) arranged by the <b>Minsk Group</b> | 2) Over 30 women and children released with <b>Russia's</b> assistance |
|--|--|

### *Appendix 3*

#### SELECTED POINTS PERTAINING TO THE KARABAKH CONFLICT SETTLEMENT

(in respect of which the Minsk Group had failed to find an effective approach)

***The following proposals brought forward by Russia were adopted with a significant delay because of the opposition that they encountered:***

- to acknowledge the involvement of three sides to the conflict, i.e. its tripartite nature (adopted only in September 1993);
- to acknowledge the ceasefire as a priority for the entire settlement (up until the end of 1993 the tendency was rather to try to amend the military operations instead of achieving their cessation);
- the necessity of separation forces (since the autumn of 1993, with a whole year lost);
- the necessity to withdraw the troops from the contact line (accepted for consideration only in the spring of 1994);
- to tie the Minsk Group schedule to the UN Security Council's resolutions (debated in May-June 1993, there was wide-scale opposition to that proposal brought forward by Russia);
- to establish a joint coordination commission (debated since March till September 1993), that proposal from Russia was repeatedly turned down, but currently its implementation is being stepped up);
- the need for a legally binding document – an agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, and not a mere schedule or calendar of events;
- the need to promote direct negotiations (during the preparation of Resolution 853 of the UN Security Council the 'Nine' dismissed Russia's proposal concerning direct contacts);
- to support the work on the 'major political agreement' (to replace the 'minor one' on which they had wasted over three months in the spring of 1994).

***Issues not resolved by the Minsk Group or those the consideration of which was not completed:***

- no coherent conflict resolution plan for its current phase;
- failure to avail of the conflicting sides' consent to determine the date of the cessation of military operations (1992–93);
- the approval of the mandate for the forward team of observers dragged on far too long (since March 1993) as did the signing of memorandums of understanding;
- the conflict zone has not been defined;
- the procedural and political preparation of the Minsk Conference was neglected;
- not enough attention was given to the in-depth consideration of the problems of Lachin and Shusha;
- rejection of the possibility of cooperation with the CIS is rejected;
- underestimation of the importance of concluding a political agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, even though the deployment of observers and international security forces is practically impossible in its absence.

## **The CIS Contribution to Putting an End to the Karabakh Bloodshed**

The tragic standoff between the Armenian and Azeri communities in Nagorno-Karabakh and in the neighbouring regions lasted six years, since 1988, entering the phase of particular ferocity in 1991. Many years have passed since May 12, 1994, **when an end to the bloodshed was achieved under Russia's auspices, with the assistance of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Minsk Group, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (currently the OSCE).**

Unfortunately, no peaceful solution has been found for the complex challenges accompanying this inter-ethnic armed conflict, the very first such conflict in the Soviet Union, and also the most protracted and violent. The two long-suffering neighbouring nations are still experiencing the consequences of the devastating war. The situation that we now have has been described as 'neither war nor peace.' Extremely complicated, challenging negotiations have been underway for many years now assuming a variety of forms in search of mutually acceptable compromise. Yet, however hard it may seem, the main thing is – **Azeri and Armenian blood is no longer spilt.** Life seems to teach us once again the truth of the popular saying 'A lean compromise is better than a fat lawsuit.'

Unhappy with the protracted conflict, the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh leaders, along with the global community, continue to monitor the process of negotiations, the peacemaking efforts of individual states and international organisations, including the efforts made in the framework of the OSCE Minsk process, which was co-chaired by 1994 by the Russian Federation (first along with Sweden, then with Finland, and since 1997 with the US and France).

A lot has been written about the Karabakh conflict and the history of its peaceful settlement. Nevertheless, **the contribution of the CIS member**

**states into putting an end to the bloodshed in the Trans-Caucasus** continues to be passed over in silence. Little is known about it to the wider public, especially in the West where the official circles of a number of countries, including some of the Minsk Group member states, refuse to reject the role of the Commonwealth as such. Denial of the role that the CIS played in the Karabakh conflict settlement was demonstrated on the part of governments of the Minsk Group member states. As for the media, it is only to be expected that the Russian press dedicated more space to covering Moscow's efforts, whereas the Western media, – which vaunted and praised the efforts of the Minsk Group, – proved to be extremely chary of words even when it came to speaking of Russia's independent contribution, let alone the role of the CIS which was altogether omitted.

Drawing a clear distinction between the efforts of Russia in achieving an end to the hostilities in Karabakh and the efforts taken in the framework of the CIS is naturally hardly possible, so intertwined those steps and efforts were. More than once it was precisely Russia that had initiated the consideration of that problem by many of the CIS agencies that it chaired. Its striving to use the CIS resources for the purposes of extinguishing the conflict in Karabakh is only natural.

This gap needs to be filled and this omission needs to be rectified. The role of the Commonwealth of Independent States in putting an end to the bloodshed in Karabakh needs to be reminded at least briefly. The list of measures taken in the CIS framework at the time can hardly be described as particularly thrilling reading, yet letting it sink into oblivion means no other than playing into the hands of the enemies and ill-wishers of the CIS.

The role of the CIS in those efforts has its own history. When the Soviet leaders failed to handle the problem of the Karabakh conflict, the presidents of the RSFSR and Kazakhstan were the first to offer their services as mediators. The mediatory mission of Boris Yeltsin and Nursultan Nazarbayev to Baku, Ganja, Stepanakert and Yerevan (September 20–23, 1991) and their **meeting in Zheleznovodsk** with the Azerbaijani, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian leaders in the follow-up of that trip can be regarded as the first multilateral effort on that score. In the joint communiqué adopted on September 23 the key guidelines for further peacemaking efforts were set out:

phasing of the process and the priority of achieving a ceasefire. Special emphasis was given to the sovereignty of both Азербайджанской Республики and Республики Армения and to the principle of non-intervention that the mediators into their internal affairs adhered to.

The disruption of the understanding achieved there on the part of the conflicting sides in no way minimises the significance of the Zheleznovodsk initiative of the two Soviet republics, which later became CIS members. That meeting became the starting point in the creation of conditions necessary for launching the negotiations. That was the first time the leaders of all the three conflicting sides were brought together. The Zheleznovodsk meeting came to be a beginning of a subsequent series of meetings of their leaders starting with 1993. It is by no means a coincidence that Russia and Kazakhstan were henceforth the two most active mediators in the Karabakh conflict.

On December 30, 1991, just three weeks after its establishment, the CIS leaders called upon Azerbaijan and Armenia to resume the negotiating process.

In 1992 the Commonwealth of Independent States was still in the process of its institution building. Nevertheless, the Council of the CIS Heads of States in Kyiv, March 20, 1992) **adopted a resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh**, which was the first document to contain a statement of readiness to send a group of observers and collective peacekeeping forces upon receiving a respective request from Azerbaijan and Armenia following the signing a ceasefire agreement and other forms of hostilities in the Karabakh conflict zone.

Those were the very first resolutions on Karabakh. It is worth noting that the CIS leaders had agreed to keep the UN, the CSCE, and other international organisations and other countries informed of all decisions adopted, provided all of the latter agree to organise effective cooperation with them. That primordial openness, readiness for cooperation with a commitment to complementary of peace-making efforts, with no claims whatsoever to any monopoly in settling the conflict will later come into marked contrast with the Western powers' approach to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

Azerbaijan was not yet a member of the CIS at the time. Baku put forward a reservation regarding the Kyiv resolution signed by its envoy with a reservation: 'To take effect after ratification by the parliament'. All the same,

the leadership of Azerbaijan at the time had proven to be short-lived and failed to take any serious measures for its ratification.

Almost simultaneously and concurrently with this went the process of laying the basis for peacemaking efforts in the framework of the pan-European forum – the CSCE. On March 24, 1992, at a meeting of the Council of CSCE ministers in Helsinki a resolution was made to **convene as soon as possible a Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh in Minsk** with 11 states taking part, along with the interested parties. Because of the positions of confronting parties the Conference appeared impossible to convene and it was decided to call for an ‘extraordinary preparatory meeting’ of its participants (Rome June 1–5). The first meeting was followed by the second, then third etc. This was the *de facto* beginning of the so-called Minsk Group’s actual operation.

Few people know these days that the Minsk Conference, and later the Minsk Group, as well as the OSCE Minsk process on the whole, owe their name to the fact that this is where the Conference had been planned to be convened, because the headquarters and the secretariat of **the Commonwealth of Independent States** were located there. It was on this ground that Belarus became a participant – as a receiving party.

The role played by the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Karabakh settlement became even more prominent after Azerbaijan’s accession to the CIS and the Collective Security Treaty (September 1993). The Council of the CIS Heads of State had repeatedly discussed, with an active contribution from the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and around it, and adopted documents aimed primarily to facilitate cessation of fire. Thus, on December 24, 1993, in Ashgabad, the heads of **the CIS member states adopted a resolution**, in which they called to put an undelayed end to that war, sign an agreement on the cessation of military operations, and declared their readiness to act as guarantors of its implementation in the framework of the CIS Collective Security Council’s mechanisms. That document also contained an appeal to the UN, the CSCE, and other international organisations to provide political and diplomatic support and comprehensive assistance to the CIS efforts in peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict.

In February 1994, upon the instruction of the chairman of the Council of the CIS Heads of State, its executive secretary sent out to the presidents of the



CIS member states the paper '**Coordinated approaches to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict**', containing, among other materials, the CIS' statement of readiness to facilitate the search for a political resolution, to support the mediatory efforts of the CIS member states, with a special emphasis made on the political will of the parties.

That paper contained the first ever forceful statement on an immediate cessation of fire being the key priority, the imperative of the peaceful settlement. It was stressed that the CIS was ready to support it with sending its observers and separation forces of those of its member states who would wish to take part in it in collaboration with the CSCE and the UN. (Once again note this readiness that the CIS demonstrates in respect of international cooperation!) A number of provisions concerning other aspects of the conflict defusing were recorded.

The protocol resolution adopted by the Council of the CIS Heads of State on March 9, 1994 contained a re-affirmation of the support for the mediatory efforts of the CIS member states and the peacemaking initiative of the Russian Federation. The following formula in the document: '**The top priority, the imperative of the peaceful settlement is an immediate cessation of fire and of all hostilities**', acquired its strength, and determination to send separation forces and observers to the region was reaffirmed. The Council of the CIS Heads of State appealed to the CSCE and the UN to provide assistance to the Russian mediatory mission.

Statements of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia were taken into account at **the Council of the CIS Heads of State session in Moscow on April 15, 1994**. The statement made by the Council expressed the support of the efforts made by the CIS heads of states, including the persistent peacemaking efforts of Russia, welcomed the conciliatory mission of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

The Council reaffirmed the aspiration to seek the only possible compromise solution through all means available. Like a refrain, the supreme forum of the Commonwealth reaffirmed the three of its most urgent demands – an immediate ceasefire, cessation of all military operations and its sustainable fixing. The Council again called upon the global community, the CSCE and the UN to support the measures taken by the CIS to facilitate settlement of the conflict.

A month after that statement was made by the CIS heads of states, several days after the meeting of parliamentary delegations representing the conflicting sides in Bishkek organised by the leaders of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on May 4-5, the first decisive task was finally solved: on May 12, 1994, under Russia's auspices and with its mediation a lasting ceasefire was achieved. The fact that it has been holding for so many years, aside from isolated incidents, remains incontestably the **major achievement in the whole of the Karabakh peace process, the only progress that has had an actual impact on the lives of people in the region.**

These obvious results of the firm and forceful course pursued by the heads of the CIS member states and other structures can by no means be contested.

Moreover, this ceasefire, which is rather unique for the modern global practice, is for a number of reasons maintained in rather unusual conditions: without separation of forces away from their contact line, even without withdrawal of heavy armaments, without creation of a middle ground or a buffer zone, without deployment of separation forces or neutral observers in it, i.e. under the objectively high danger of hostilities being resumed.

It is worth stressing once again that forums of the **Council of the CIS Heads of State** provided an opportunity – so rare in those times – to **arrange high-level contacts: meetings of the Azerbaijani and the Armenian leaders, or sometimes even of all parties to the conflict.** On September 23–25, 1993, two meetings between Heydar Aliev – who was acting president of Azerbaijan at the time, – and the President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan, as well as a private talk with the leader of Karabakh Armenians Robert Kocharyan, were held in Moscow with the assistance of the Russian mediator. Many were the meetings held between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan ever since, and this facilitated the détente of the regularly of rising tension in the conflict region, the fixing of ceasefire and the search for compromise solutions.

(Such meetings still not infrequently coincide in time with sessions of the **Council of the CIS Heads of State**, with the Russian leader of state sometimes taking part in it. Thus, on April 1, 1999 in Moscow a long series of meetings between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia was launched, which were central to the negotiating process at that time. The final phase of

one of such meetings held in Moscow, in January 2000, was attended by the chairman of the Russian government Vladimir Putin.)

The problems of Karabakh were examined at other Commonwealth forums. For example, on July 19, 1994, the **Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs** ordered its chairman to forward to the ministers of foreign affairs of the Minsk Group member states and some other influential members of the CSCE an appeal to facilitate the ceasefire fixing and a speedy signing of an agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict. The Council of Foreign Ministers proposed the concept of an operational Troika to facilitate the implementation of that agreement (representatives of Russia, the CSCE Minsk Conference, the CIS).

Sometimes, on the instructions from the chairman of the CIS Heads of State and the Russian president, certain issues pertaining to the détente of the situation in Karabakh were brought up during the trips of the then **CIS executive secretary Ivan M. Korotchenya** to the region.

Russia's representatives had on many occasions informed the CIS executive agencies of the developments in the Karabakh settlement.

A major role in achieving an end to the Karabakh bloodshed was played by the **contacts and effective communication between the parliaments of the CIS countries**. Established in 1992, the **CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly** soon created its own **conciliatory mission** with the purpose of facilitating the resolution of the Karabakh conflict. It was headed by Medetkan Sh. Sherimkulov, the speaker of the Kyrgyz parliament. The mission made a number of trips to Baku, Yerevan, Stepanakert where its members met with deputies from Azerbaijan and Armenia, representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh, trying to convince them to work for the cessation of bloodshed. Other participants in those trips included the Secretary General of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly Mikhail I. Krotov and Yours Truly in my capacity of a plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian President and head of Russia's mediatory mission in Karabakh. The mission reported on the results of those trips to the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly.

The first such trip taking place on September 17–21, 1993 was attended by members of the Belarusian, Kazakhstan, Russian and Tajikistan parliaments. The members of the mission were received by the acting president, the

chairman of the Azerbaijani parliament Heydar Aliev, the president of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan, the chairman of the Armenian parliament of Babken G. Ararktsyan, and also met with the Nagorno-Karabakh leaders. By agreement with the parties to the conflict the peacemaking group had twice crossed the frontline in the vicinity of the town of Barda. Press conferences were held in Yerevan and Baku with the participation of the heads of the Azerbaijani and Armenian parliaments.

Contacts between parliamentarians of Armenia and Azerbaijan were notably extended after the accession of the Milli Meclis to the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in the autumn of 1993. They had held repeated meetings in the framework of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly and the Assembly sessions. Those contacts had facilitated the meeting between the speakers of the Azerbaijani and Armenian parliaments – Rasul Guliev and Babken G. Ararktsyan – at the Azerbaijani-Armenian border (Ijevan-Qazax, March 12, 1994).

On the initiative of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and with the assistance from the Åland Islands Peace Institute on December 21-22, 1993 in Mariehamn, the capital of the Åland Islands (Finland) a **symposium was held for members of the Armenian and Azerbaijani parliaments with the participation of the elected representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh**. The missions of **Armenian and Azerbaijani MP's groups** headed by the vice-speakers of the respective parliaments Affiyadin D. Dzhililov and Artashes Tumanyan, the Karabakh delegation was headed by Karen Baburyan. That meeting helped the Azerbaijani and Armenian parliamentarians, as well as representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh, to learn about the experience of civilised conflict resolution between Swedes and Finns, with the peculiarities of self-governance at this entity which is part of Finland but where the local population is dominated by ethnic Swedes.

Of no less importance was the entering into very useful informal communication the members of the mission. On their way to the Åland Islands they were received by the St Petersburg mayor Anatoly Sobchak and his first deputy Vladimir Putin who was in charge of international contacts at the city administration at the time. Special attention given by Russia's northern capi-

tal's administration had facilitated the quest for mutual understanding between the representatives of the conflicting sides. Contacts between them continued in St Petersburg and on the way back; in Helsinki they made a joint visit to the Finnish parliament;

A special place in the efforts of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly to achieve a ceasefire belonged to the **meeting of the chairmen of parliaments** of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the elected representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh **in Bishkek on May 4–5, 1994**. The respective delegations were headed by the speaker of the Armenian parliament Babken Ararktsyan, the vice speaker of Milli Meclis Afiyaddin Dzhililov, 'speaker of the Karabakh parliament' Karen Baburyan.

Among those involved in the active efforts in facilitating the rapprochement of the parties were Chairman of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, Chairman of the Russian Council of Federation Vladimir Shumeiko, speaker of the Kyrgyz Parliament Medetkan Sh. Sherimkulov, the Secretary General of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly Mikhail I. Krotov and yours truly.

The meeting in Bishkek came as a kind of sequel of the symposium in Mariehamn. At Medetkan Sh. Sherimkulov's invitation, it was attended by a delegation of the Åland Islands in the capacity of a guest and an observer. However, the Bishkek meeting significantly differed from the meeting in Mariehamn conceptually. Whereas what had taken place in the Åland Islands was a certain exchange of experience in peaceful resolution of inter-ethnic controversies, in the Kyrgyz capital the goal was to adopt an outcome document the core of which was the appeal to put a definitive end to hostilities in Karabakh on the night from May 8 to May 9, 1994, the timing being chosen so as to honour the anniversary of the victory in the World War II (**the Bishkek Protocol**). The participants in the Bishkek meeting were welcomed by the President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akayev, who also addressed them publicly at the opening of the forum. After very tough two-day discussions the heads of the Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh delegations signed the Bishkek Protocol. Affiyadin D. Dzhililov refused to sign it (as President Aliev claimed later that he had not conferred upon him relevant powers to sign that document in Bishkek without consulting the head of state, before his own departure for the NATO summit in Brussels).

On May 8, as a result of the negotiations held in Baku by the head of Russia's mediatory mission, Heydar Aliev gave his consent to the signing of the Bishkek Protocol by the speaker of Azerbaijan's Milli Meclis Rasul Guliev with only two minor amendments. This provoked strong protests on the part of the opposition in Baku, the 'party of war' was demanding resignation of the speaker, which resulted in practice in a grave parliamentary crisis.

Nevertheless, this was the first concerted appeal to a complete ceasefire, even though signed by the heads of the legislative, and not of the executive, power, but still approved by the top leaders of all three parties. It was of particular significance for the purposes of consolidating the 'parties of peace' and a decisive break-up with the vicious circle of protracted hostilities.

Still in the same atmosphere of resolution, literally on the following day, May 9, the separate signing of the document on the termination of fire, which had been prepared by the Russian mediator, by the defence ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh army commander began in Heydar Aliev's cabinet in Baku, and was later held on May 10 in Yerevan and on May 11 in Stepanakert. Its text contained a direct reference to the appeal made by the parliamentary leaders. The Bishkek Protocol had therefore become a direct forerunner of the end of bloodshed in the Karabakh conflict.

On May 16, Chairman of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly Vladimir F. Shumeiko and the head of the Assembly's peacemaking group in charge of Nagorno-Karabakh Medetkan Sh. Sherimkulov adopted an appeal to the parliaments of the CIS member states based on the results of the meeting in Bishkek. That appeal declared namely the preference of establishing of peacekeeping forces for Karabakh under the UN aegis or of establishing such multilateral forces in the framework of the CIS, and it was suggested that this matter is discussed at the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly in early June 1994.

Following this, on June 8, a new meeting between the speakers of the Azeri and Armenian parliaments and representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh was held in St Petersburg as part of a Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly session, with the Interparliamentary Assembly's Chairman, the Kyrgyz speaker of parliament, the Secretary General of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, and the plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian

president present. Such meetings continued to be held, primarily, in an effort to secure the achieved ceasefire.

In July 1994 such a meeting was held upon the initiative of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna during the session of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Considering the personal commitment of the Minsk Group Chairman Jan Eliasson to the cause, the Russian delegates and the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly suggested to him to hold it on the premises of the Swedish embassy in Austria, and that is where it was held in the end. Между тем the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which had given special consideration to the Karabakh conflict (9 clauses in its resolution out of 73 were dedicated to it), demonstrated an obvious disbalance: the mediatory efforts of Russia were carefully omitted there, despite their key role in bringing about the desired ceasefire, and the credit for this was actually attributed to the Minsk Group,

In the days marking the anniversary of the Bishkek Protocol signing, May 3-7, 1995, the conciliatory mission of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly again travelled down to the conflict region. The group was headed by the Chairman of Russia's Federation Council Committee for the CIS affairs Vadim A. Gustov and among its members were members of the Russian, Belarusian and Moldovan parliaments. The peacemaking group brought to the Azeri refugees 40 tonnes of Russian humanitarian aid, mainly medication, and discussed the upcoming prisoners-of-war and regular prisoners exchange with representatives of both sides.

Another event worth to be mentioned is the meeting of the heads of parliaments of Azerbaijan (Rasul Guliev), Armenia (Babken G. Ararktsyan), Georgia (B. Gogvadze), Kyrgyzstan (A. Matubraimov) and Russia (Vladimir Shumeiko) held on September 5–6, 1995 at the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly St Petersburg headquarters – the Tauride Palace. It was attended by the Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Spencer Oliver, head of the Moscow delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross T. Mepa, representative of the OSCE Acting Chairman Ernő Keskeny. The participants adopted a declaration entitled 'On the Path to Peace and Stability in the Caucasus' calling for prevention of an armed struggle, avoidance of confrontations, normalisation of economic relations,

creation of conditions necessary for safe return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes. This was the first meeting of the speakers of the three Caucasian parliaments the focus of which were conflict settlement processes. Such meetings of the three speakers of the Trans-Caucasian parliaments were henceforth (but, naturally, without Russia) held by PACE, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, parliamentary leaders of some Western countries.

On September 7, the chairman of the Council of the CIS Heads of State, the president of Russia and the Chairman of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, the chairman of the Federal Assembly of Russia met in the Kremlin to discuss the results of the St Petersburg meeting of the heads of parliaments.

That is to say, for a prolonged period, including during the critical stage of peacekeeping efforts, when the bloodshed in Karabakh had to be stopped and a lasting ceasefire had to be ensured, the activity of the members of the CIS parliaments and the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly played an **indispensable role**.

The **transnational television company *Mir***, which was established in October 1994 and has dedicated a fair amount of its broadcasting time to the settlement in Karabakh, had engaged in large-scale awareness-raising efforts. It highlighted the yearning of ordinary people living in that region for peace and good neighbourly relations with other nations. On September 15–16, 1994, in Moscow, the *Mir* television company organised, with the assistance from the Russian mediatory mission, a meeting between the heads of the television agencies and journalists' unions of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. In the press release the participants in the meeting declared that they had reached an agreement regarding the necessity of gradual overcoming of the situation of information conflict, the unacceptability of portraying the neighbouring nations as enemies in the media, of denigration of individual representatives of these nations on ethnic and professional grounds in the media. They called upon the media and journalists' associations in the CIS countries and across the world to refrain from publication of materials that could jeopardise the developing process of reconciliation of the parties.



Adherence to the spirit of Commonwealth permeated many other peace-making initiatives implemented by Russia in the interests of peaceful settlement in Karabakh. Its multiform efforts in that respect enjoyed the moral, political and diplomatic support of the other CIS member states.

In the course of Moscow negotiations on concluding an Agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, which were carried on upon Russia's initiative and with its facilitation, all parties approved **a number of statements concerning the role of the CIS**. In the preamble of the draft agreement it was noted that it was being concluded 'under the CIS auspices'. For example, it stressed the resolution to facilitate 'the establishment of peace, stability, trust and cooperation in the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States'.

Provisions were also made for the signatures of the three mediators: Russia, the chairman of the Minsk Conference, the CIS representative to be put under the agreement along with the signatures of the parties to conflict.

These negotiations were also attended by observers from **two of the CIS structures** (the executive secretariat and the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly). They did not take the floor, but were able to speak to the participants 'in the corridors', keeping their superiors abreast of the situation.

The **approach of the influential Western partners to cooperation with Russia and the CIS** in the framework of the Karabakh settlement is quite indicative and deserves special examination. Whereas Russia's active position on the international arena had compelled them to take it into account and interact with it, – albeit constantly trying to restrict its role and involvement, – cooperation with the CIS was unambiguously sabotaged. It would have seemed crystal clear that Azerbaijan and Armenia are both members of the CIS, and the third party to the conflict was too located on the CIS zone, It is quite obvious that the situation around Karabakh has significantly affects the interests of all of the CIS members, the Commonwealth in general, some of the CIS members had close ties with the Trans-Caucasus and were deeply interested in elimination of the conflict, say, no less than members of the Minsk Group.

In all that time the Western powers and the OSCE agencies, including the Minsk Group, had not even once, not a single time, neither in essence, nor even in form – **responded to the repeated summit appeals by the Com-**

**monwealth of Independent States**, for cooperation in the framework of the Karabakh settlement and endorsement of Russia's and the CIS efforts.

Just imagine what a surprise, what an uproar even would have arisen should the West have tried to exclude the Organization of American States (OAS) or the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in matters concerning settlement of any armed confrontation in Latin America or Africa. Yet in the matter in question the CIS was viewed as a hindrance by some Western figures even insofar as peacemaking was concerned – they were far more interested in sowing discord between the newly-emerged states, hinder the integration tendencies and structures. Their reluctance to acknowledge the role of the CIS went as far as refusal to allow any mention of the CIS as such.

In the aftermath of the OSCE summit in Budapest (December 5–6, 1994), which established the regime of co-chairmanship in the framework of the Minsk process specifically for Russia delegating to her the holding of negotiations on the agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, Western delegates, acting via the Swedish chairman, **attempted to modify a number of provisions in the draft agreement**, including the statements concerning the role of the CIS that had already been agreed upon between the parties. A number of the Minsk Group members did not wish to see either a signature of the CIS representative, or indeed any mentions of its role, generously allowing the term 'CIS member states' to appear occasionally in the text.

A heated discussion followed. The Russian co-chairman intervened preventing the removal of CIS related formulae. The Swedish delegates suggested renaming the agreement into a Consolidated Plan of the OSCE and Russia, but the maximum concession that Moscow made was to introduce a subtitle 'Consolidated Plan of the OSCE, the CIS and the Russian Federation'.

Quite typical, though outright tactless was the attempt of the Western partners to **remove the CIS observers from the room of negotiations**. Especially considering that Moscow had never refused to allow the Swedish chairmen of the Minsk Group to attend events organised by Russia and the CIS for the conflicting parties (for example, the meeting of members of parliaments in Mariehamn, a number of negotiation rounds in Moscow).

Naturally, the neutral states of Northern Europe, with their great experience of international peacemaking could have no actual interest of their own

as far as those subterfuges were concerned. The way they were acting was most evidently a result of a **certain pressure** to which they were exposed by **the Western powers**.

And even the United States themselves endeavoured to act along the same lines. One of the most illustrative proofs thereof was the walkout staged by the US State Department on March 17, 1995. It's well known that American diplomacy had long taken a particular fancy to such a trick of the art as submission to their negotiation partners of written theses which are not a fully valid document (as they bear a notice 'Non paper'). It, therefore, turns out that one cannot explicitly refer to this text due to its unofficial status, although little doubt it is that the matter concerns the official position of Washington, but in an 'informal' way. In accordance with this text submitted by the US Embassy to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participation of CIS observers would constitute 'involvement of new key elements into the process', which allegedly 'threaten cooperation' and 'will barely further complicate the already complicated process'. I was compelled to explain that those observers had been present at the negotiations from their very start, while the OSCE summit in Budapest highlighted the importance of observing continuity in holding them.

Russia resolutely repelled attacks on the presence of the CIS observers. Our Western partners chose to retreat fearing a disruption and failure of yet another round of talks and a major scandal surrounding their backstage schemes. On April 21, 1995, Finland, which took over the co-chairing status from Sweden on April 21, 1995, had to suggest a compromise, though on the whole quite acceptable, formula: CIS observers were supposed to attend the negotiations at Russia's invitation, and Finland had no objections to that. Our representatives equally firmly rejected all procedural tricks (for example, the demand to reach an agreement regarding the presence of CIS observers within the Minsk Group).

Our Western partners also strove to take the negotiations out of the CIS's sphere of influence, **to prevent them from being held in Moscow further on, and especially to prevent possible eventual signing of the agreement there**. The fact that after the Budapest summit the negotiations passed under the OSCE aegis and were no longer held by Russia alone, but by the other

co-chairing member as well, served as a pretext for this. Another such far-fetched 'ground' suggested was that the OSCE headquarters were located in Vienna, that is why the negotiations allegedly had to be held there (as if all negotiations in which the UN is involved are necessarily held in New York!).

The course of the Western Minsk Group member states towards transferring the Minsk Conference location to another country right after its opening also deserves attention. The **political motivation** behind all these schemes tied to problems that were artificially created, ostensibly for the benefit of the OSCE, yet, in reality, with the sole purpose of pushing aside the CIS, is obvious. Clearly not only was this far from the interests of settlement in Karabakh, but, on the contrary, hindered the latter. Характерно the UN, with its vast experience in peacemaking, strives to ensure maximum involvement of regional and sub-regional organisations. And even in a document so important for the OSCE itself as *Helsinki-92*, explicitly provided for the use by the pan-European organisation of the CIS peacekeeping mechanism (Section III, Clause 52).

Just like a drop of water, those clashes reflected two different approaches to the situation in Karabakh: some forces aspired to achieve an actual end to the conflict, with this goal justifying openness to international cooperation in their book, yet others used the pretext of a problem settlement and advanced quite quite different plans, all under the mask of OSCE involvement.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs proceeded from the concept of **complementary coordinated efforts by the UN, OSCE, CIS, individual states**, including Russia – all those who were capable of making their realistic and significant contribution. Neither Moscow, nor Minsk sought to play the activity of Russia/CIS to that of the Minsk Group. Our idea was to work coherently, for the same cause, coordinating our actions and supporting each other. One episode is particularly indicative. In late January 1994, at the meeting held in Stockholm on account of Sweden taking over the chairmanship in the Minsk process, we discussed with the Swedish and American diplomats the procedure for further cooperation. Russia's delegate strove to thwart the tendency to play the efforts of Russia off against the efforts of the Minsk Group, to ensure mutual support, and completely eliminate possible opposition to each other in the face of the parties to the conflict. The Swedish and

the American delegates approved of that. Nevertheless, a few days later, Washington blatantly violated that explicit arrangement ordering its ambassadors in Baku and Yerevan to speak up against 'the Russian plan'. This compelled Boris Yeltsin to express in his message of February 1994 addressed to Bill Clinton his blunt bewilderment on that score.

As soon as Russia and the CIS began to achieve tangible progress in achieving cessation of fire, the Western powers began to push obsessively for the inclusion of a rather controversial statement concerning **the central role of the Minsk Group in the Karabakh peace process**.

All attempts to achieve a leading, dominant, or maybe even an exclusive role, not through actual efforts or results, but by decreeing it thereof on paper were counterproductive in advance. They barely served to complicate the coordination of approaches and practical steps. The conflicting sides duly took this into account and used it to sidestep the necessity to make difficult decisions.

The fundamental resolution by the OSCE on Nagorno-Karabakh of March 24, 1992 proceeded from the important, yet not exclusive, role of the OSCE in the peace process, the concept of cooperation with other participants in the peacekeeping efforts. In addition to this, the role of various participants in the process does not have to be strictly stipulated once and for all. Indeed, it may prove to be a variable quantity at different stages of the process. For example, the deployment of observers or peacekeeping forces, the opening of the Minsk Conference would indeed enhance the role of the OSCE, perhaps making it indeed 'central'. But in that case this would have come about in a natural manner and not as a product of paper games with 'magical' wording and turns of speech.

It appears to be far more useful to speak about the actual contribution of each participant into the common peacemaking efforts rather than about abstractly ascribing to each of them a **certain fixed role** in advance. Far more important was to provide the Minsk group with a **specific mandate** that would contain a concise stipulation of its goals and powers, like all other OSCE structures and missions had.

The actual leading role, – that is, not on paper but in actual life – in facilitating the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Karabakh was undoubt-

edly played by Russia, under the CIS auspices. This was objective reality, even though neither Russia, nor the CIS have ever laid any claims to its fixing in any OSCE documents. Yet the Azerbaijan, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh leaders themselves would not speak of it. And if, on the eve of the OSCE summit in Budapest, finding themselves badly in need of a compromise, the Western powers were compelled to openly acknowledge the **'decisive contribution of the Russian Federation'**, the last thing this was due to would have been any prompting on the part of Moscow.

Such was the real contribution by the Commonwealth of Independent States into achieving an end to the bloodshed in Nagorno-Karabakh. Such was the attitude chosen by the Western powers in the course of those peace-keeping efforts. It is time some **lessons** were learnt as a result of the Karabakh experience, the following, for example:

1. The Commonwealth of Independent States and its structures, especially the Council of the CIS Member States and the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, played a **prominent** role in achieving a ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, including its part in the creation a more favourable context for the active mediatory efforts on the part of Russia. No other organisation in the world had given so much attention and effort to that conflict on that level. Many steps were taken by the CIS **at the level of state leaders**, some of those were generally the first steps in the multilateral format. The CIS has a whole series of meetings between the leaders of the conflicting parties, the firm orientation at the cessation of fire and hostilities as a priority, readiness to dispatch observers and collective peacekeeping forces, as well as to guarantee accord and compromise between the parties and to work hand in hand with the UN, the OSCE, all those involved in the peacemaking process in Karabakh to its credit. Plus the actual ceasefire agreement achieved by Russia many years back is in fact inseparable from the CIS efforts.

2. The active role that the **CIS Interparliamentary Assembly** played in the process of achieving an end to the armed confrontation also deserves attention. It became an important step in the preparation of a change in the public opinion and in the attitudes of the executive authorities toward a political resolution of the conflict.

3. The experience of useful activity and persistence on the part of the CIS during the initial stage of the Karabakh conflict settlement can undeniably be of **much use in the resolution of other conflicts** in the post-Soviet region and during other stages here as well.

4. The cooperation between Russia and the CIS as far as ensuring the achievement of a stable ceasefire in Karabakh has confirmed the **viability** of the basic orientation at the **complementarity** of the peacemaking efforts of various international organisations and states in the framework of settlement of the armed confrontation. Russia's and CIS initiatives not only did not interfere with each other but benefited from each other creating more favourable for further steps towards the common goal.

5. The Karabakh conflict has showed that speculative disputes concerning 'distribution of roles' do more harm than good to the conflict settlement process. **The persistent pretension to a central role of the OSCE Minsk Group**, to certain monopoly to the peacemaking cause and mediation had grown into something of an 'infantile disorder' in the process of birth of the pan-European organization, while for certain circles in Europe and the US it served as a mere cover for their real geo-strategic calculations aimed at demeaning Russia's influence in the Trans-Caucasus and disregarding the CIS.

The striving on the part of any individual state or international organisation to take the credit for being a key player in achieving progress, cannot substitute the laborious work of all parties involved in the peacemaking efforts with a view to ensuring coordination of actions and uniform line of interaction with the parties to the conflict and eliminating competition between mediators, as well as ruling out the possibility of the conflicting sides to use the debates among the mediators..

6. As the laws of elementary logic command, involvement of regional political organisations in the elimination of bloody conflicts breaking out within the geographic region of their competence is nothing other but their **natural right** and somehow even **an obligation** (naturally, with due consideration for internal legislative provisions). It cannot depend on the whims of, or permissions from, any countries or governments outside of the conflict zone, or any international agencies (this is not to be confused with compulsory or coercive measures requiring sanctioning by the UN Security Council).

Other states and international structures that sincerely seek peaceful

resolution of conflict situations instead of engaging in geopolitical games in this region on the pretext of conflict settlement, should be in reality **concerned** (just like the UN) not with pushing aside, but, on the contrary, with **engaging relevant organisations of this region in the peacemaking efforts, with coordinating their own efforts with us.**

7. The contribution made by the Commonwealth into the important breakthrough in the Karabakh settlement – achievement of an end to the bloodshed – is being **quite deliberately hushed up in the West**, which is all in line with the policy adopted by a number of states in respect of the Trans-Caucasus and the CIS in general. This is, unfortunately, currently **being unjustly forgotten** across the post-Soviet region (in Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and other CIS countries) as well.

All this barely plays into the hands of the enemies of the CIS, of those who seek to avail of the tragedy of the two nations to the benefit of their geopolitical interests to establish their own ‘base’ in the South Caucasus.

8. It must be acknowledged that in the recent years the CIS agencies have somewhat slackened their attention to the problems surrounding the Karabakh settlement, as if the end of the bloodshed was a true end of the whole affair, and not just the beginning of the process of ending the conflict. **The CIS peace efforts in Karabakh** in collaboration with the other partners **must be**, receive a new impetus, get a second wind, so to speak. Especially considering that currently there seem to be certain underlying preconditions for a breakthrough towards a definitive resolution of the protracted conflict – both in the region and within the CIS itself.

Hardly any other international structure has such a deep and well-based interest in the normalisation of the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, in the normalisation of the general situation in the Trans-Caucasus as the Commonwealth of Independent States. The peace process in Karabakh without involvement of this organisation, or with it taking a passive role of an observer would have been simply unnatural, not to mention less effective or reliable. It appears that this matter deserves more attention from those who seek the elimination of conflicts and their aftermath in the whole of the post-Soviet region.



## Letter to OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubiš

*Moscow, September 29, 2003*

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

I am addressing you with regard to only **one word** which appears in all editions of the official OSCE reference yearbook that have come out to date, wherever the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is dealt with (in a number of English-language editions and in the Russian-language edition of the year 2000, see page 79 of the Russian-language edition).

It is stated there that the ceasefire agreement achieved in the framework of this peace process, taking effect on May 12, 1994, under the auspices of the Russian Federation, was allegedly an **'informal'** one. On what grounds, you may ask.

In my capacity of the head of Russia's mediatory mission and the plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian President for the Karabakh conflict, I was personally involved in the work on developing this agreement and accomplishing all necessary steps in its formalisation. Its distinctive features were chiefly determined by two circumstances: 1) the urgent need to cease fire as long as all three sides to this conflict (Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia) proved to be ready for this due to their 'fatigue' and the achieved fragile balance of forces on the frontline; 2) the reluctance of the Azeri side to meet and sign documents with representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as Armenia's refusal to sign it without representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh being a side to it too. I am certain that you can remember very well the problems with which the 1992–94 negotiations were accompanied.

And that is the reason why we had to choose this form of signing the agreement, by fax, without personal meetings of representatives of the conflicting sides (that method had only been used by the Russian mediator on several occasions before – when formalising short-term ceasefire arrangements in that conflict in 1993).

The sides were unable to exchange messages that would contain obligations to cease fire at an agreed moment. That is why, the format that was

chosen provided that each side sends a message to Russian officials, since it was that country that acted as a mediator (via its ministers of defence and foreign affairs and the presidential envoy for the Karabakh conflict). All texts were identical. Amendments that appeared had been negotiated by the mediator with all sides in advance. In Baku the message to Moscow was signed in my presence on May 9, 1994, in Yerevan – on May 10, in Stepanakert – on May 11. After that the mediator informed the sides of having received a completely identical message from all sides and declared that the arrangements have taken effect. The agreement, therefore, consists of three lists containing an identical text and bearing a signature of the representative of the respective side on each respective list.

That is precisely the reason why this agreement is lacking such traditional attributes of legal formality as a single date and place of signing, a single copy bearing three signatures, colourful seals and an attractive paper-case, a formal depositary, etc, etc. But is it really all of these that determine the nature of an agreement – whether it is to be seen as formal or informal?

Let us turn our attention to something far more significant. The messages have been signed by the chief military commanders – Azerbaijan's ministers of defence Mammadrafi Mamedov and his Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan, as well as the Nagorno-Karabakh army commander Samvel Babayan. This was done upon a direct instruction of the respective leaders of the conflicting sides – the presidents Heydar Aliiev and Levon Ter-Petrosyan, as well as by Robert Kocharyan. Unlike previous ceasefire arrangements which were concluded for certain limited periods, this agreement was expressly designed as an open-ended one. Repeated execution of this agreement in accordance with the standard samples was suggested for a later date, but the Azeri side avoided that (for the same reasons apparently).

Nevertheless, on July 27, 1994 Mammadrafi Mamedov, Serzh Sargsyan and Samvel Babayan signed a new document in which they undertook to respect this ceasefire agreement until the signing of an agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict. Statements to that effect were repeatedly made in public by the heads of states (Azerbaijan and Armenia) and the supreme leader of Nagorno-Karabakh. All this is, in my opinion, far more important than purely formal legal details. Furthermore, this agreement so far continues to be the only real achievement in the history of the peaceful settlement in

Karabakh so far. It did not require approval by the parliaments, but was emphatically approved by the people.

To enhance the ceasefire regime, on February 6, 1995, an understanding on the procedure for the settlement of incidents was signed on the basis of this agreement under the auspices of the Minsk Group's co-chairmen.

Other characteristic features of the Karabakh armistice are also not to be altogether omitted: the parties to the conflict refused to withdraw their troops further away from the contact line, withdraw heavy armaments into the rearward positions, to create a neutral zone or to allow the deployment of international observers or separation forces there. In some locations the positions of the warring sides are separated by a mere couple of hundred meters, which results in frequent clashes and incidents of violence.

This matter is not of purely historical or legal nature, but has a **direct political and practical significance**. The situation, as far as peaceful settlement in Karabakh is concerned, continues to be rather complicated, even dangerously 'explosive', I should say. What we are observing in Azerbaijan is an active campaign in favour of resolving the protracted conflict by military force. It is not for nothing that Baku began to make regular statements which undermined the effect of this agreement. For example, Azerbaijan's former minister of foreign affairs Tofiq Zulfugarov declared not so long ago that this was not an agreement but merely an exchange of facsimile statements.

Nevertheless, the agreement has been by and large respected by the parties all these years. The question arises: why should one then seek so persistently to convince readers of the yearbook that it is 'unofficial', conniving thus, even if perhaps unintentionally but still no less dangerously, at the attempts of the radical nationalists and revanchists to destabilise the situation?

Since the OSCE yearbook is published by the office of the General Secretary, I would ask you, Mr. Jan Kubiš, to take the above into account and take necessary measures in order **to eliminate this mistake in subsequent editions of the yearbook**.

Please accept my most cordial wishes,

Ambassador **Vladimir Kazimirov**

REGNUM news agency, November 14, 2004.

## **Azerbaijan and the UN Security Council's resolutions (reviewing the lessons of the past in Karabakh conflict)**

Speaking at the Forum of the MGIMO Alumni Global Network in April 2013 in Baku, Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev once again stressed that *resolutions of the UN Security Council must be promptly complied with*, sometimes even within several hours of their official adoption. Still, in the meantime, the four resolutions adopted with regard to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict 20 years back continue to remain on paper and on paper only. He is undoubtedly right in saying that non-fulfillment of its resolutions is not contributive to the Security Council's authority, nor to that of the UN in general.

All four resolutions related to this conflict (822, 853, 874 and 884) were adopted while the war was in full swing, that is to say, between April 30 and November 12, 1993. In the stalling negotiation process and in everyday war of words the sides in the Karabakh conflict not infrequently appeal to specific yet isolated provisions of the four UN Security Council resolutions. Sadly, each of them chooses to stress solely the provisions that it finds to be in its own advantage, forgetting about the parts that, on the contrary, impose requirements on such side.

It is worth reminding that the Republic of Azerbaijan is a current member of the UN Security Council, which imposes certain obligations on it, and April 30 this year is the 20th anniversary of the first resolution on the Karabakh war adopted by this key international authority.

The criticism voiced by the Azeri president is targeted both at his adversary in the conflict and at the co-chairs of the CSCE Minsk Conference. But can he possibly not know or perhaps he does know but is unable to acknowledge that Azerbaijan had to date failed to fulfill every single provision of the four UN Security Council's resolutions? It is indeed possible that he was unaware of this, what with spending many years working in the business sec-

tor in Moscow and in Istanbul. But then another question arises here: is the president sufficiently well-informed as to who had been evading the fulfillment of those resolutions and how the 1994 ceasefire had actually been achieved? Many claim to know the gist of the matter but few remember the details, and that is the reason why random tales and deliberate propagandistic distortions alike abound.

I confess, the whole story with the four resolutions and armistice is so hard to forget for someone who used to be the head of Russia's mediatory mission and the plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian president for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, member and co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group. Without mincing words, I must say that Ilham Aliiev's words are a clear attempt to use the very appropriate idea of the need for a timely fulfillment of the UN Security Council's resolutions as a tool for covering for those who were precisely to blame for the non-fulfillment of those very resolutions back in 1993.

It has long been noted that references to the UN Security Council's resolutions on Karabakh hold a very special place in official Azeri propaganda. The events in question naturally receive a highly selective and biased interpretation, with chiefly the provisions pertaining to the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and sometimes those pertaining to the return of refugees being snatched out and bloated out of proportion, as if though this was all those resolutions were about. Baku media also tend to spice up many reports with fake details, for example: 'The four resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council with regard to the liberation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other territories under occupation continue to be ignored by Armenia.' There is naturally not a single reference to any alleged 'liberation' of Nagorno-Karabakh in those resolutions.

The true essence of the matter is much more complicated. Not a single substantive item of the resolutions has been fulfilled either by the Armenian, or by the Azeri side, for that matter. Moreover, the role of the latter in their disruption is quite special or even, as bitter irony commands me to say, it had played a 'key' role in this respect.

It is true that the territories around Nagorno-Karabakh are under either full or partial occupation, and this is, of course, anomaly still persisting today.

But, on the other hand, this situation is a *hard yet instructive lesson* taught by the war itself. Surely, 19 years are more than enough to figure out how and why? But Baku least of all wishes to seek the truth or deal with the problem in earnest, for the cause and effect relation here would deprive them of their mask of 'victim of aggression', revealing them as co-instigators or, further still, inciters of this occupation.

The occupation and the disastrous situation in the forced migrants find themselves are real problems which cannot be done away with simply by means of propaganda. Nevertheless, Baku increasingly uses them as its pet *propaganda tool*, persistently creating an impression that their elimination will mean the actual resolution of the conflict. This helps to relegate the elimination of the chief bone of contention and the cause of the conflict – determining the status of Nagorno-Karabakh – to the sidelines, putting it off 'for later consideration'. It is no coincidence that Baku frequently voices its discontent with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs: after all, they know far too well just what had entailed the occupation and why Nagorno-Karabakh cannot qualify as an occupied territory. The emphasis on occupation helps the Azeri side curry sympathy with those who are not well-versed in the history of the conflict or tend to be forgetful; particularly with people abroad.

Baku seeks to call attention primarily not to the causes but to the grave consequences of the armed conflict, to the sufferings and hardships experienced by the refugees. It is obvious that here they had been counting on the general abhorrence of such a thing as occupation, primarily *emotional* reaction to it, and sometimes it works. But the origins, the very incipience of the armed conflict, were not the occupation but the hostilities, armed clashes. It was not the occupation that had sparked off hostilities (despite today's attempts to portray it thus), but the initial hostilities had lead to the occupation of a number of districts. The question: who was the first to resort to weapons, who persevered in fighting, in vain endeavours to gain the upper hand,- is therefore only natural? And the answer is: precisely the side which now again threatens to resort to armed force! Quite paradoxically, it attempts to pass the consequences of its own errors and miscalculations in this war for a sufficient ground for a new bloodshed.

On today's international arena UN Security Council's resolutions are regarded as guideline documents. Article 25 of the UN Charter states: 'The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council'. Aside from very rare exceptions, UN Security Council's resolutions are drawn up on a *balanced compromise basis*. Selective approach is simply unacceptable in their respect: it is absolutely inadmissible to insist on the fulfillment of solely the provisions favouring one of the sides. This upsets the balance, leading to non-fulfillment of other provisions contained in such resolution by the opposite side. The approach to the key requirements of the UN Security Council and their fulfillment must be *complex*, with due consideration for the timeline and developments in the conflict. And what is furthermore naturally required is *timely*, – and by no means, delayed, – fulfillment of all provisions contained in resolutions, without a single omission (and not according to anyone's whims).

Baku's references to the UN Security Council's resolutions serve as an instrument in voicing its demands of, first of all, an *undelayed, total and even unconditioned withdrawal* of the occupying forces from the territories currently under control of the Armenian-Karabakh troops, and the return of the forced migrants. Ever increasing persistence is heard in their attempts to include Nagorno-Karabakh itself into the scope of these demands (even though the UN Security Council itself was far more cautious, and Heydar Aliev – much more reserved on that matter). Ilham Aliev picks solely the issue of withdrawal of the Armenian forces out of the entire text. This issue held an important place in the resolutions, but not the primary one; it was not initial, so to speak, but derivative.

**First and foremost**, adequate interpretation of the UN Security Council resolutions is impossible without taking into account the situation and the context in which they were adopted (the summer and autumn of 1993 – when the hostilities were at their height) and without due account of the conceptual hierarchy of their demands.

It is obvious that the *top-priority, the foremost demand* was to cease fire, all military operations and hostile acts *without delay*. It runs through all the 4 resolutions as a kind of common core, a pivot, so to speak. This is the most urgent, as well as the most sensitive and pressing, demand without the fulfill-

ment of which there is no question of proceeding with the fulfillment of other demands, for example, the demand to withdraw the occupying troops.

The UN Security Council had stipulated this condition in its very first Resolution 822, but its fulfillment had required from the parties, particularly from Azerbaijan, another year and three more resolutions. As if by way of mockery, up until May 1994 blood continued to spill, the flow of refugees and forced migrants continued to grow. So which of the parties had been violating this demand, invariably contained in all of the resolutions, and bears special responsibility for its own failures in solving this crucial problem having initiated the disruption of almost all the other demands, resulting in complex *non-fulfillment* of the UN Security Council's resolutions.

*The 'undisputable leader'* in terms of the number of violations committed is *the Azeri side*. The Armenians usually responded favourably to the mediators' proposals to suspend or cease armed hostilities (with only two exceptions coming to my mind), whereas the Azeri leadership – both in the times of Elchibey and Heydar Aliiev – even when faced with a likely loss of control over its territories, persisted in its attempts to achieve a breakthrough on the frontline, *relying on armed force* as the only means of resolution in this conflict. It far more frequently evaded peace initiatives, put forward various pre-conditions, rarely agreed to even brief truces or extension of temporary ceasefire (and even when it did, this was usually with the sole purpose of giving itself a respite and time to reshuffle dispositions). On 4 occasions it had explicitly faulted on its commitments regarding arranged ceasefires.

Choosing to stake on armed force, Baku had absolutely no right to forget that it in reality risks losing its own territories, thus accepting that it was partly responsible for the loss of control over its territories as well. The loss of still more lands drove it further into the vicious circle of disruptions and rejections of peacemaking initiatives. Over the years of its active mediatory work, Russia had accumulated a whole calendar of violations of the ceasefire regime, of departures from agreed arrangements and of other failures to respect peacemaking efforts, and the majority of such were on the part of Azerbaijan (Resolution 884 also mentions this, albeit in Aesopian language).

However absurd this may seem, Baku's obstinacy and uncompromising attitude objectively played into the Armenians' hands: the resumption of the



hostilities allowed them to continue advancing, in order to move the frontline further away from Nagorno-Karabakh. Is it after all not clear that had Azerbaijan consented to a ceasefire any earlier, proceeding to the fulfillment of Resolution 822, its 5 districts (Agdam, Füzuli, Jabrail, Qubatlı and Zangelan districts) would have not come under occupation, which fact would have made our negotiations so much easier. But this is clearly beyond Baku to even allow for such a possibility! Acknowledging this would have prevented it from positioning itself as a ‘victim of occupation’.

The political and diplomatic struggle that unfolded around Resolution 822 – the first one in the series is also indicative as such. Azerbaijan had initiated its adoption and even welcomed it, but barely in word. Yet, when in May 1993 Russia, the US, Turkey and Italy, as the chair of the CSCE Minsk Conference, suggested that the conflicting *sides reaffirm their determination to comply with its provisions*, Yerevan and Stepanakert did this but Baku – all *unwilling to cease hostilities* – left the suggestion unanswered.

Azerbaijan’s negative attitude to this key requirement found in the Security Council’s resolutions continued to manifest itself further on. Each next resolution took into consideration respective changes in the situation. Following the first arrangements regarding limitation of armed activity achieved with Russia’s mediation, Baku’s refusal to extend them and the subsequent fall of Agdam, Resolution 853 dated July 29 called upon the sides ‘to reach firm ceasefire arrangements and to respect them’. Resolution 874 adopted on October 14 – during the temporary ceasefire achieved with Russia’s mediation – called to make it both effective and permanent. Following its disruption by the Azeri side, Resolution 884 dated November 12 – the last in the series – ‘*most insistently*’ called to ‘return *without delay* to the ceasefire regime introduced as a result of direct contacts undertaken with the assistance of the Russian government in the framework of its participation in the Minsk Group’. The delay, however, was not to be avoided, amounting altogether to an extra six months wasted.

With all four UN Security Council’s resolutions already in place, Baku had again repeatedly (twice in December 1993 and once in February and in March 1994 respectively) directly scorned the chances to put an end to hostilities, with the December 1993 events somehow proving to be particularly

cynical. By the time it launched its counteroffensive in the winter of 1993-94, resulting in the biggest losses in that war, all of the four resolutions had already been adopted, meaning Azerbaijan was acting in defiance of such. *This was the beginning of the disruption of implementation of those resolutions.*

It is quite indicative that the UN Security Council refrained from passing resolutions on this conflict, for their non-fulfillment by the conflicting sides depreciated them, thus undermining its authority. And that is why no resolutions were adopted either in connection with the heavy fighting in the winter of 1993-94, or in connection with the May 12, 1994 ceasefire in Karabakh.

With its constant references to the UN Security Council's resolutions today Azerbaijan merely seeks to conceal the fact that it had to consent to a ceasefire taking effect on May 12, 1994 not in the least for the sake of fulfilling the UN Security Council's resolutions, which it ignored for over a year (this was more than 6 months after the adoption of the latest Resolution 884), but as a result of a series of military setbacks driving the country's leadership to the verge of a total collapse, meaning an utter defeat and the loss of power. In May 1994 Baku officials for the first time sought a ceasefire themselves, without putting forward pre-conditions, and had even signed an agreement with Stepanakert, despite yet willing to involve Armenia into that as well (even though the Azeri opposition obstinately sought to continue with the bloodshed).

There are certain voices – perhaps not worthy of being mentioned here – which attempt to portray the 1994 ceasefire as the fulfillment of these resolutions. Vain are such attempts, for incongruities are obvious here. Firstly, *it was by no means undelayed*, in contravention of the UN Security Council's demands. And that means a year or half a year more of intense hostilities, and all the victims and destruction that this entailed!

Secondly, a number of conditions stipulated by the Security Council were b never fulfilled. On an everyday basis hostilities may seem to have ceased, but in reality it turns out that this is only true as regards armed operations. The sides may, for example, concentrate their troops along the contact line or effect their transfer from one sector to another, which is impossible under a real ceasefire. Besides, military operations have not been ceased completely, but continue to take place, albeit on a limited scale, in the form of incidents. And these are not mere coincidences, but a conscious policy pursued by Baku.

Azerbaijan has long been neglecting the February 1995 ceasefire agreement signed upon Heydar Aliiev's instruction; obstinately refusing to withdraw the snipers from the frontline, to investigate incidents of violence, to implement confidence-building measures, etc, etc. On the whole the problem of incidents, of turning the line of contact into a shooting range, was brought about by Baku itself, or rather by its refusal to accept a basic armistice and the withdrawal of troops from that line which was agreed upon on February 18, 1994.

Thirdly, hostilities which include various kinds of blockades, whether transport, energy or economic. For 20 years Azerbaijan has been maintaining the blockade of both Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh, and it even goes further, demanding from Turkey to do the same.

Does Ilham Aliiev realise after all what the documentary basis of the ceasefire achieved with Russia's mediation was? That basis was not the UN Security Council's resolutions. True, it was done in keeping with their spirit but not with wording! Russia rigorously followed and promoted these resolutions, insisting, as a Minsk Group member, on all of the Group's proposals being aimed at their fulfillment. But the disregard demonstrated by the conflicting sides with respect to these resolutions had compelled us to seek other ways to armistice, on the basis of other documents: primarily, on the basis of the Statement by the Council of CIS Heads of States on April 15, 1994, the Bishkek Protocol and the tripartite ceasefire agreement. How are they different from the UN Security Council's resolution? The Council of CIS Heads of States, among whom were the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, for the first time made the demand to put an end to the bloodshed *a top priority, an imperative for successful settlement*. This wording was far more clear, specific and rigid than the one used in the Security Council's resolutions. It was moreover reinforced by the demand to ensure a *dependable confirmation of the ceasefire provisions*. This was also when the logical, cause and effect relation required for the elimination of the consequences of the armed conflict as a result of ensuring a lasting and solid ceasefire was formed. Heydar Aliiev agreed that 'without it no transition to the elimination of the consequences of the tragic confrontation is possible'. That is to say, the withdrawal of troops from the occupied territories is carried out once the armistice is reliably secured. Yet Ilham Aliiev seeks quite the contrary: he wants to retrieve the lost

territories without assuming the commitment to prevent possible resumption of hostilities.

Strange as it may seem, this statement by the Council of CIS Heads of States is little known even to journalists and political analysts, – the fact which plays into Baku's hands. It was to support and facilitate the development of this political document that the Bishkek Protocol and, shortly after that, the permanent ceasefire agreement were signed. And that is not a hypothetical, conditioned, but a tangible documentary basis of the ceasefire.

It is to these aspects, as well as to Moscow's efforts, that we owe the fact the ceasefire agreement was signed not as a временное one (to be in effect for a number of days or weeks), but as an open-ended one, by default. It was also for the first time signed not by two but by *three sides to the conflict*. (Before that the UN Security Council's resolutions repeatedly voiced its support ceasefires achieved, with Russia's mediation, between Baku and Stepanakert – that is to say, without Yerevan's involvement – and encouraged direct contacts between those two sides).

A careful reader of the documents pertaining to the ceasefire will note that they contain hardly any references to the UN Security Council's resolutions; there is only one such reference in fact, and even that one is to be found in the Bishkek Protocol). Universally known is the very special emphasis that Moscow attached to the role of the UN and its Security Council in ensuring peace and international stability. It would seem that Russia, as a mediator, could possibly do better by choosing greater reliance on the UN Security Council's resolutions, but this was what we were left to work with, considering the disruption and depreciation of the resolutions by the parties for a whole year. The lack of constructive approach on the part of the warring sides impeded us from achieving the fulfillment of all demands and requirements stipulated by the UN Security Council; we, therefore, had to concentrate on achieving the main objective for that moment – a cessation of fire and hostilities.

By hypocritically kicking up a fuss around the UN Security Council resolutions after effectively wrecking on its part, Baku is vainly seeking to bury in oblivion the documents on the basis of which the armistice in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was in actual reality achieved, that is to say, primarily the statement by the Council of CIS Heads of State dated April 15, 1994. The

reason for this is obvious. This statement makes the transition to mitigation of the aftermath of the conflict (including the withdrawal of the troops and liberation of the occupied territories) directly dependent on the effective confirmation of the termination of hostilities.

This statement is naturally not a legal but rather a political document; still, it was adopted at the highest level, with the personal participation of the Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents (it is to be remembered that the conflicting sides had no vote in the UN Security Council). This statement was furthermore reaffirmed by the respective heads of the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh legislative powers by way of signing the Bishkek Protocol, whereas the signing of an open-ended ceasefire agreement, for which this statement was a direct basis, was already a legally binding document; that in addition to its tremendous political significance.

The plan to proceed to mitigating the aftermath of the conflict only once resumption of military operations is safely excluded, to which Heydar Aliev committed himself in that statement, goes absolutely against the grain with his son and successor Ilham Aliev. He seeks, by fair means or foul, to reverse the sequence of the achieved arrangements: first comes the liberation of territories, and only then, and on that condition, exclusion of military operations might be considered. This liberal manipulation with the structure of agreements reached, in defiance of the essence of the statement by the Council of CIS Heads of State and the UN Security Council resolutions – anything for the sake of retaining the possibility of one day resuming the military gamble.

Still Baku keeps remarkably quiet when it comes to the fact that none of the 4 resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council – not even indirectly, with not a single word and no single clause – provide for even a remotest possibility of resuming military operations. How on earth do they reconcile their glorification and praises of these resolutions with simultaneous preparations to act in stark contradiction with their provisions? False propaganda inevitably conflicts healthy logic.

And here we come to the crux of the matter. In the context of escalation of the long-standing dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh's status, which was probably only natural as one of the consequences of the collapse of a great superpower, could *the line currently pursued by Azerbaijan, its clumsy policies,*

the constant background of its threats and of the arms race which it had taken to an absurd extent be in any way conducive to the Armenians' decision to abandon the strong, advantageous positions they had taken, retreating to rather vulnerable ones? Could all burdens and the negative impact of the conflict be indeed reduced to that odd occupation, with the real threats and the rest just being left out of the picture? This would have meant clear oversimplification of the Karabakh matters. Liberation of the occupied territories requires a completely different political situation, a different climate even.

**Second.** So long as, in contempt of the resolutions adopted by the UN, the war was still at its height, these resolutions condemned the escalation of hostilities, seizures of new towns and districts, repeated violations of the ceasefire arrangements, bombardments and shelling of settlements, and called upon the parties to refrain from breaching the international humanitarian law. Here is another proof of that during the war **neither the principal, nor many other provisions contained in the UN Security Council's resolutions were complied with.**

The *open-ended* armistice achieved with Moscow's assistance is precisely in line with the stipulations of the UN Security Council's resolutions to make the ceasefire firm, effective, lasting, as well as to refrain from any actions impeding or jeopardising peaceful resolution of the conflict. And again, which of the sides is more persistent in putting obstacles on the path of achieving all these goals?

**Third.** All resolutions contain the demand for the liberation of the occupied territories or for an *undelayed withdrawal of all occupying forces*. Ilham Aliiev, echoed by Baku's entire propaganda machine, often claims that all resolutions allegedly stipulate an unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian forces, but this is not so – such is only mentioned in Resolution 853. And, at that, the inclusion of the word “unconditional” was a mistake that had to be rectified later. Well, you can judge for yourselves: is it sensible to count on withdrawal of troops with hostilities still in full swing? This word was later removed from Resolutions 874 and 884. On top of all, one of the sides *repeatedly failed to fulfill the main stipulation to cease the hostilities!* One could not possibly expect the UN Security Council to reward a side to the conflict for doing this. The demand for an ‘unconditional’ withdrawal of troops had

become a *matter for prolonged negotiations* between the parties, but was never settled because of Baku's insistence on universal withdrawal, even from Shusha and Lachin, not even wishing to touch upon the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh's status.

Equally unrealistic are the currently voiced suggestions *to proceed to the liberation of the occupied territories at once* – without consideration of other problems and reconciliation of their circumstances. Therein lies one of the drawbacks of the Madrid Principles. In a package agreement this is automatically excluded, and proceeding to the actual step-by-step settlement is not possible *as long as reliable guarantees of non-resumption of hostilities are lacking*. Bellicose rhetoric is absolutely contraindicated both for transition to step-by-step settlement and for step-by-step implementation of the provisions of a package agreement.

Azeri diplomats were slow to realise that liberation of the occupied territories is impossible to carry out 'in one day', and this had at any rate to be done by stages. And how are they going to achieve a balance of the parties' interests, what steps is Baku prepared to take now, and not in some indefinite future?

The Armenian side basically takes advantage of Azerbaijan's failure to comply with the UN Security Council's resolutions from the very start and with regard to the key conditions in order to evade, in its turn, the obligation to fulfill the provision on the undelayed withdrawal of troops from the territories occupied by them (even though they are not trying to pose as ardent partisans of the fulfillment of these resolutions as Azerbaijan does, albeit rather clumsily, with a rather dubious effect).

Moreover, the Armenian side has been trying to preserve the status quo, and the demand for a 'package', comprehensive settlement helps, as it seemed to them, to delay the withdrawal of troops indefinitely. They failed to take into account that in a situation labelled as "neither peace, nor war" or that of a lasting armistice occupied territories become a kind of chief irritant both for humanitarian reasons on account of forced migrants, and from the point of common sense.

Incidentally, this has been mentioned by me to the Armenian side, when I told them that the pressure on them in this connection would only continue

to grow. Reference to the lasting occupation of Arab lands by Israel, to the myriad of anti-Israeli resolutions by the UN General Assembly, are of little use here (moreover, the Jewish lobby, let us be blunt here, is far more powerful in the US than the Armenian one). The 'winner takes it all' mentality, complacency and euphoria have altogether played a mean joke on the Armenians. They failed to realise that Baku may achieve certain success in switching the attention to one obvious anomaly – the occupied territories – away from the crucial, yet not as blatant a problem of the conflict – the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan's loss of control over Nagorno-Karabakh duped them into an illusion that very little remains to be done – one only just needs to complete all legal formalities and achieve the actual recognition).

**Four.** The UN Security Council's resolutions contain a *number of other conditions* and requirements which were never fulfilled by the parties:

a) 'to restore *economic, transport and energy links* in the region' (853); 'eliminate all obstacles related to operation of communications and transport' (874). From the onset of the conflict Azerbaijan had chosen to introduce a total blockade of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, laying the blame for the blockade of the latter primarily on Armenia. It makes the liberation of the occupied territories a preliminary condition for the fulfillment of these demands. Moreover, Baku had broken all contacts with Armenia, let alone with Nagorno-Karabakh in almost all spheres;

b) a number of appeals were concerned with the negotiation process. Considering that Azerbaijan had refused back on May 19, 1992 to attend the Minsk Conference as long as the Armenian forces stay in Shusha and Lachin, and on April 6, 1993 it walked out of the 'Minsk Five' consultations in Geneva because of the capture of Kelbajar, the UN Security Council resolutions called for 'immediate resumption of negotiations...in the framework of the peace process under the auspices of the Minsk Group' (822), strongly urged to refrain from any steps that would hinder the peaceful resolution of the conflict and to 'continue negotiations in the framework of the Minsk Group, as well as through direct contacts' (853), equally calling for an urgent convocation of the Minsk Conference (874).

*Negotiations in the framework of the Minsk Group* were later resumed, despite disruptions, yet the *direct contacts* with Nagorno-Karabakh were *on the*



*contrary completely* cut off by Baku in late 1993, in defiance of the Security Council's recommendations. So why on earth is this not being complied with?

The resolutions refer to Azerbaijan's adversary as 'local Armenian forces' (822), 'ethnic Armenians of Azerbaijan's district of Nagorno-Karabakh' (853, 884). At that time direct contacts meant contacts between Baku and Stepanakert (ceasefire arrangements achieved with Russia's assistance are mentioned there more than once, but all of them – literally all – were concluded in 1993 with Stepanakert: Yerevan had no part in them whatsoever.

All of the four Resolutions specifically mentioned the deterioration in the relations and the rising tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In none of them and on no occasion was Armenia mentioned as a conflicting party (although this is clearly inaccurate). Rather, it was urged to 'continue to use its influence' on the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian community (853, 884). Nagorno-Karabakh is in actual fact regarded as a side to the conflict, even though it is denoted as an interested party, or just as a party, – just like Armenia (853, 874, 884). The resolution indirectly leads to the acknowledgment that the *conflict is structurally trilateral*.

The resolutions also covered a number of other issues, legal and humanitarian alike, however, here we will examine only the key points that determined the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of certain decisions.

As a result one can only state that to date not a *single substantive demand or appeal from among those contained in the four UN Security Council resolutions has been complied with by the parties to the conflict, and that the disruption of their implementation* began with Azerbaijan's refusal to comply with their key demand in *proper time and of its own accord*. The only tangible achievement in the Karabakh peace process is the armistice, which has been holding for nearly 20 years. Baku's attempts to feign adherence to the UN Security Council's resolutions, as well as to take the credit for the lasting armistice as a proof of its striving to solve the conflict by peaceful means are rather unsound, both morally and politically. The reason for this is that its threats to settle it by military force regularly voiced even at the highest level have become notorious over the years.

To summarise the examination of the problem of the warring sides' adherence to the UN Security Council's resolutions, let us put this straight enough:

— AZERBAIJAN showed itself stubbornly reluctant to comply with the fundamental demand contained in these resolutions – cessation of fire, hostilities and military operations, – for a year following their adoption – and the latter took place a year and a half after the war broke out, continuing to stake on settling the conflict by force. All of this had a negative impact on the compliance with the other demands by Azerbaijan and by the other parties as well. And until now it continues to default on its obligation to fulfill these resolutions as far as cessation of hostilities, restoration of economic, transport and energy links in the region, and direct contacts with Nagorno-Karabakh are concerned. In other words, Azerbaijan has not fulfilled and continues to default on each and every demand or appeal contained in the four resolutions of the UN Security Council, thus initiating their disruption.

— ARMENIA and NAGORNO-KARABAKH continue to ignore the demands to withdraw the occupying forces from the Azerbaijani territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh under the pretext of a 'Nagorno-Karabakh security zone' in the context of Baku's constant military threats and the need for a comprehensive 'package' settlement.

— ARMENIA did not comply to a sufficient extent with the appeal to exert a restraining influence on Nagorno-Karabakh, and is currently trying to substitute it in the framework of the peace process, which is clearly a mistake, in addition to distorting the true configuration of the conflict.

The resolutions of the UN Security Council on Karabakh *can by no means be considered as having been at least partially fulfilled, nor the positions of the parties to the conflict as being in line with them*. Admittedly, the resolutions adopted 20 years ago were not totally flawless or free of errors, nor to remain effectual till the end of times. They were determined by the realities of that time, yet they continue to serve as an important and helpful guideline, a sort of reference point for negotiations in the framework of settlement of this conflict. It is, however, quite obvious that their effectiveness has suffered considerably, having been practically reduced by the conflicting sides to the advisory status.

Beyond all doubt, they should have mentioned Armenia as an actual party to the conflict, which would have highlighted the trilateral nature of the conflict. Sadly enough, the UN Security Council had failed to condemn mer-

cenary warfare, which had taken root in that conflict at the time, later achieving a scandalous scale. There were also other shortcomings.

Today, when attempts are made – with whatever intent – to involve the UN into the settlement of the Karabakh conflict once again, to sum up the results of the previous stage. The recent past is there not for us to shut our eyes to it, but to learn a lesson from it.

The leaders of all sides must in a variety of forms and from all possible platforms *demand a firm political will to seek peaceful settlement, as well as serious efforts and strenuous negotiations* (instead of sham maneuvers, the information warfare and propagandistic shows). So far these efforts are clearly not enough. They must agree on the fundamental guidelines of peaceful settlement that would facilitate, at least later on, the adoption of a new resolution by the UN Security Council in support of the **historical reconciliation between the Azeri and the Armenian people**. This will primarily require total elimination of the threat of hostilities being resumed and can be achieved, for example, by way of signing an agreement on the non-use of force in the framework of settlement of this conflict (together with introduction of international guarantees) , which continues to be evaded by Azerbaijan by all possible means.

The global community must confront the warring sides with this question – *are they ready to recognise the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as the point of dispute?* The entire world has long come to realise it, however, with the warring parties this is not quite the case. Harsh as this may sound, the leaders of all parties to the conflict still have to prove their soberness and their ability to transition at long last to a constructive search for a way out of the deadlock they are currently in. If not, then what is the conflict about, what was the purpose of all those negotiations so far? If yes, then this would be the first step on the path of abandoning the *categorical* demands ruling out any alternative solution to the problem, except in one's own favour – the first step *towards a civilised resolution of the dispute*, elimination of futile, yet dangerous urges to resort to military settlement, and to overcoming the grave effect of the protracted armed conflict.

It is quite obvious that Azerbaijan – the country that had sabotaged the UN Security Council resolutions during the war and now slyly cites them,

whenever it suits its interests, again finds itself *in radical contradiction with them* because of its threats to resort once again to military force. Resolutions sought a termination of hostilities and, therefore, did not contain a single word providing for their possible resumption. On the contrary: it recommended to 'refrain from any acts hindering the peaceful settlement of the conflict'.

Baku has got entangled in its own scheming. How come that such a zealous partisan of respect for the UN Security Council's resolutions as Ilham Aliev portrays himself, is suggesting or even sanctioning such illogical, plainly inadmissible acts as resumption of hostilities, which is obviously not in line with these resolutions but plainly in contravention of those?!

The 20 years of this conflict's history quite reasonably now requires more than was stipulated in the UN Security Council's resolutions – not only cessation of hostilities, but also its *solid confirmation*, i.e. *complete elimination of the possibility of resumption of hostilities*. This is precisely the wording used in the Statement by the Council of CIS Heads of States made on April 15, 1994, with Heydar Aliev's own presence, which statement became the basis for the armistice.

I am positive that the negotiations will only break the deadline when the danger of hostilities being resumed will be completely eliminated, but as long as Azerbaijan – despite emphasising in every possible way its desire to see the conflict settled by peaceful means, – acts in a precisely vice versa manner, protracting the current status quo, all contrary to its own interests.

Such is the actual history of the interaction between Azerbaijan and the United Nations in the framework of the Karabakh peace process.

And so how are we to take Ilham Aliev's words regarding the importance and urgency of fulfillment of the UN Security Council's resolutions?

Will anyone deem them honest and sincere?

*Vladimir Kazimirov*

## A letter to Mr. David Atkinson

Moscow, December 3, 2004

Dear Mr. David Atkinson,

I am the Russian Ambassador Vladimir Kazimirov, I am writing this letter in connection with the PACE draft documents on Nagorno Karabakh (I was engaged in the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in the hottest period of the war, in 1992-96, I was the head of Russia's mediatory mission, the plenipotentiary of the President of the Russian Federation on Nagorno Karabakh, also I was a participant and the Russian co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, participated in stopping the military operations and continue to follow the Karabakh events).

*1. I'll start with Russia's role, which is in no way reflected in the PACE materials. Moreover, clause 6 of the draft Resolution proposes to express gratitude to the Minsk Group co-chairmen and the personal representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for their tireless efforts, especially for the achievement of cease-fire since May 12 1994.*

*It's widely known that the cease-fire in Nagorno Karabakh was achieved **with mediation of Russia** and not the OSCE (CSCE before 1995). Russia wasn't a co-chair of the Minsk Group then (co-chairmanship was set up only 6 months later, in December 1994). The post of the Chairman-in-Office's personal representative was established even later. So, the OSCE, the Minsk Group and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's personal representative have in no way been involved in the **establishment** of truce (I don't want to belittle the latter's services in holding of the monitoring of the cease-fire regime since then).*

The UN Security Council in its Resolutions 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) wasn't ashamed of mentioning Russia's mediatory efforts and the OSCE Budapest summit (1994) did it three times, it expressed gratitude for the

‘decisive contribution of the Russian Federation.’ Don’t the experts preparing draft documents for the PACE Rapporteur know this? Or, maybe, they preferred, against the facts, not to mention Russia’s role in stopping the bloodshed in Karabakh and appropriated it to the OSCE? The PACE hardly needs such inaccuracy.

*This should not be done also because, at first, the OSCE tried even to ignore the truce achieved by Russia (just a week later, on May 19, 1994, the Standing Committee adopted a document meaning as if nothing had taken place). The OSCE guides persistently call the cease-fire ‘unofficial’. It’s desirable that the history should be written more accurately, and reliably.*

2. The important international documents on the Karabakh settlement have always been prepared on a **balanced** base in order to make it easy for the sides to make compromises. None of them was as **biased, with a shift in favor of Azerbaijan**, as your drafts (neither in the UN, nor in the OSCE, perhaps, only in the Organization of Islamic Conference, but this is explainable). One should take into consideration the special sensitiveness of the parties to the conflict to each detail. Hippocrates’ oath, ‘don’t harm’ to the negotiation process, is absolutely suitable here, as each side will for sure use any fault in its interests.

The respectful attitude to your predecessor, Mr. Terry Davis, and the short term of your work on the Report are quite understandable. However, being as close to the truth, to unbiased estimation of the conflict, as possible, should remain the main target. Faults and disagreements with the OSCE, which is involved in the settlement process, should be avoided, as they may cause confusion, hamper its work. The draft has failed to avoid this yet.

3. One of the main reasons is, evidently, that the prehistory of the conflict, the process of military operations in 1992-94, the settlement process, the attitude of the sides of the conflict to the international documents and peace-making initiatives weren’t completely taken into account. And all this had an impact on the current tense situation. Many problems in the Karabakh conflict arose due to joint fault of all sides (ethnic cleansings, occupations, rapid growth of the number of refugees and displaced persons), meanwhile in your drafts this blame is, in fact, laid only upon the Armenian sides. I don’t need to justify them at all, but **an unbiased estimation of the line of actions of all**

**sides is necessary**, especially as Azerbaijan was the main bearer of the force approach to the conflict and was the side, which has been declining the steps aimed at the relaxation of tensions.

4. The selective references to the main international documents (UN Security Council Resolutions, decisions within the OSCE system) are rather dangerous. The sides willingly pick up **only everything beneficial** for them ignoring the rest and deviating from the fulfillment of obligations imposed on them by these documents.

The draft Resolution touches upon the UN Security Council Resolutions and the decisions of the March 24 1992 Helsinki additional meeting of the Council of Ministers of the CESE but the decision of the December 6, 1994 OSCE Budapest summit, the highest and most detailed decision on the negotiations, isn't mentioned. Budapest both completed and corrected Helsinki. The two documents differ in not only in the level but also in the time of their adoption. By March 1992 Karabakh didn't experience the hot military operations it saw later. The Helsinki document even doesn't contain the term 'party to the conflict'. The document only outlined the holding of the Minsk conference (but Azerbaijan put forward new conditions blocking the convention of this conference and later ignored all appeals of the UN Security Council to convene the conference).

The OSCE Budapest summit took place after the sharpest, military stage of the conflict. The heads of 52 states instructed not the Minsk Group but its Co-chairmen to hold negotiations between **the parties to the conflict**. We are still at that very stage, the negotiations should be held not only between Armenia and Azerbaijan, **but between the parties to the conflict, including Nagorno Karabakh** (it is not accidental that the Budapest document reads about all parties to the conflict, rather than two of them, see clause 6 of your draft Resolution).

5. In the UN Security Council Resolutions and OSCE documents (for instance, the March 31 1995 statement of the Chairmen-in-Office and proposals of the Co-chairmen of OSCE Minsk Group in 1997-98) Nagorno Karabakh is now indirectly now directly recognized a party to the conflict (only Azerbaijan, not willing to have a direct contact with this party – against the UN Security Council's appeals – denies this). Your drafts of Resolution

and Recommendations nearly leave out this issue, the conflict is only reduced to Armenia and Azerbaijan, this is beneficial for Baku. (And you correctly represent this problem in clause 18 of the Report). In the preliminary draft of the Resolution (clause 9) the correct appeal to Baku to establish contacts with the representatives of Nagorno Karabakh's political forces was 'slurred over' by inclusion of the Azeri community of Nagorno Karabakh in the text.

*Azerbaijan, rather than the Azeri community of Nagorno Karabakh is a party to the conflict. There is no difference in the positions of Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh's Azeri community, the interests of the community are defended by Baku. The Azeri vocabulary deliberately scornful in relation to Nagorno Karabakh's Armenians shouldn't have been used in the PACE either. (Its **main population** was called **a community**. May we say 'British community of London,' 'Azeri community of Baku,' 'Russian community of Moscow'?).*

6. The drafts contain references to 4 Resolutions of the UN Security Council, but only the demand to withdraw the occupation forces was accentuated. The whole complex of demands of these Resolutions, including the most important issue, namely, **how timely and completely the parties fulfilled them**, remains aloof. These Resolutions may be adequately interpreted only taking into account the conditions of their adoption and the hierarchy of demands and appeals by meaning. All four Resolutions were adopted at the peak of the military operations (April-November 1993). That's why it's natural that their **most principal, key demand was to cease fire, military operations and hostile acts**. I am acquainted with the facts of that period like no one else.

During that period and later, till May 1994, i.e. **more than a year Azerbaijan's leadership persistently ignored the main demands of all 4 Resolutions and continued staking on the forcible solution of the conflict**, several times violated the cease-fire, deviated from agreements about it and from other peace-making initiatives. Azerbaijan's leadership concluded a truce not for the fulfillment of the UN Security Council Resolutions but **because of the threat of complete defeat on the front and loss of power**. There were enough problems with Armenians as well, but they were more flexible and constructive. This has a most direct relation to the grave consequences of the war, as seizure of territories, growth of the number of dis-



placed persons are also **on the conscience of Azerbaijan's leadership**, and not only on Armenia's and Nagorno Karabakh's.

Resolution No 853 demanded **unconditional** withdrawal of occupation forces, but the next Resolutions, No 874 and 884, didn't contain this word, as the UN Security Council couldn't have 'awarded' one of the parties for the sabotage of its Resolutions! The formulations of Resolution No 884 are eloquent. We can't but take into consideration that, as a result, the withdrawal of troops became and was the subject of negotiations between the parties to the conflict.

7. The fact that Baku from **the very outset** neglected fulfillment of the main demand of all Resolutions of UN Security Council couldn't have failed to tell on fulfillment of other demands, as well, including fulfillment of demands by the Armenian sides, and led to non-fulfillment of these Resolutions as a whole. Your drafts are mainly based on the fact that the Armenians (both of Armenia and of Nagorno Karabakh) **don't withdraw the occupational forces** insisting at once on the 'package' settlement. This is true. But it's equally true that Azerbaijan's leadership, in fact, **fulfilled none of the demands or appeals of the four Resolutions of UN Security Council**. Until now, it fails to fulfill a number of demands and appeals. Moreover, against them, Azerbaijan's leadership demands that Turkey should continue Armenia's blockade, regularly threatens to solve the conflict by force anew, for many times turned down confidence-building measures, supports the anti-Armenian hysteria in Azerbaijan but nothing is said about this in the drafts. At present Baku continues to 'surpass' Yerevan and Stepanakert on these negative displays and your drafts at the best limit themselves to appeals to the parties 'as equal'.

8. *Clause 8 of your Report claims that 8 regions of Azerbaijan beyond Nagorno Karabakh's borders are occupied. In reality, 7 regions are occupied (5 completely and 2 partially). The drafts touch upon **Azerbaijan's** occupied lands only, but there are also **Armenian** lands occupied by Azerbaijan (for instance, Artsvashen or Bashkend).*

9. The idea of the establishment of a PACE ad-hoc committee on Nagorno Karabakh gives rise to doubt. Of course, this is the business of the PACE but is it worth establishing structures parallel to the OSCE Minsk Group? The parties will constantly seek out the difference in the positions of two or more

structures in order to use this, at least, in the propaganda, which is at present doing harm 'both sides of the barricade,' hampers the settlement.

*The draft also contains a number of provisions not coinciding with the consideration of these issues in the negotiation process within the framework of the OSCE. I have many remarks on a number of other clauses of your documents as well, but I won't go into details. I am ready to announce them concretely by points if necessary.*

10. *The titles of your drafts contain a duplication, like a tautology. The formulation 'conflict, in which the OSCE Minsk conference is engaged' was aimed at liquidating the argument of the parties in connection with naming the conflict (one Party didn't want to call it 'Nagorno Karabakh Conflict', but only 'Armenian-Azeri one'). If the Rapporteur names the conflict 'Nagorno Karabakh' there is no need of this 'euphemism,' especially as there hasn't been a Minsk Conference yet.*

**Dear Mr. David Atkinson,**

This letter isn't at all aimed at laying the blame for non-resolution of the Karabakh conflict upon Baku. But because of the shift of your drafts in favor of one side I had to show that the matter isn't so definite but is more complicated, there are more those to blame for this deadlock.

I am sure that such an authoritative organization as the PACE could have displayed a more balanced approach to the problems of the settlement of the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh.

With best wishes

**Vladimir Kazimirov**

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## Nagorno Karabakh must participate in the negotiations

*By V. Kazimirov*

A lot of additional and, what is more important, artificial difficulties in the process of the settlement of the Karabakh conflict are established by Baku due to the fact that Nagorno Karabakh (NK) isn't recognized by it as a party to the conflict, and is estranged and moved away from the negotiations in every way.

NK, which is the kernel, **the heart** of the conflict, can't be its object only. The population of Nagorno Karabakh is **vitaly interested** in the settlement of the conflict, far more than the rest of residents of Azerbaijan and Armenia are. Whereas the main part of the latter ones is traumatized only with the fact that the conflict damaged their being, national pride, prestige, the sense of justice to some extent, for all the NKR residents (for present Armenian population and for its former Azerbaijan population) it is an issue of survival in its direct sense. **The status of the NKR is the main reason and main disputable problem of this conflict.**

NK is a knot of long-standing contradictions due to mixed settlement of different ethnoses. Still the League of Nations considered it as a disputable territory. It was considered as a disputable territory also by the Russian Soviet Federative Republic and Armenia (see the agreement between them signed in 1920). In the 1920s Azerbaijan's authorities performed a series of administrative manipulations (establishing and soon afterward abolishing 'Red Kurdistan'), thus re-formed the districts in the zone of Lachin, and moved the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region away from Armenia by 6 kilometers.

The isolation of NK's prevailing ethnoses from 'the kindred mainland' lasting 70 years and the continuous shifts of demographic proportions (not only by natural way, but also as a result of a definite demographic policy),

could turn Nagorno Karabakh into a resemblance of Nakhichevan or contemporary Kosovo.

The Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh, making 3/4 of NK's population in 1989, were immediately and en masse involved in the conflict, including the military operations are *proportionally much wider than the residents of Azerbaijan or the Armenians of Armenia*. They had their military units and really and effectively enough managed them. And it is the main point in this issue: **Nagorno Karabakh is, no doubt, a party to the conflict, it must be a subject, a participant of the negotiations.**

\* \* \*

And what do **the history of the conflict and the process of its settlement** say in this respect? Which was Baku's previous approach to the direct contacts with Stepanakert and to NK's participation in the negotiations? How was this issue reflected on the UN Security Council resolutions, the OSCE decisions and actions, in the negotiation process, as well as in the mediators' practice? Here are the facts.

— Not only Armenia and Azerbaijan but also the leadership of the Armenians of Karabakh attended the meeting of the parties to the conflict in Zheleznovodsk on September 23, 1991.

— In July 1992, the CSCE Minsk Group sent, upon the initiative of Russia, a challenge to the three conflicting sides, i.e. Baku, Yerevan and **Stepanakert** to cease the military operations during 30 days. Another appeal, to cease the military operations during 60 days, was sent in August. The answers were expected from the three sides.

— The first confidential contact between a plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan and a representative of the leadership of the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh was held on 12 September, 1992 (still under A. Elchibei and with his consent). The two sides wished to periodically continue the confidential contacts. Several private meetings were held with the support of Russia (for example, on 9-16 April, 1993).

— Direct contacts on telephone and fax emerged, and private meetings continued after H. Aliev's coming to power in summer 1993. They took place

upon the initiative of the Azeri side, usually as the conditions on the front became unfavorable for it. Baku's correspondence with the Armenians of Karabakh is preserved (directly or through the Russian mediator), as a rule, letters are on official blanks with concrete addresses ('the Ministry of Defense of Nagorno Karabakh'; 'To the leadership of Nagorno Karabakh'). Baku used the term 'party' towards the Armenians of Karabakh, and it not always insisted on Armenia's joining the signing of the documents. Naturally, it wasn't the recognition of 'the NKR', but it confirmed unambiguously that Baku considered Nagorno Karabakh as a confronting party.

— It were **Baku and Stepanakert**, i.e. **without Yerevan's participation**, that concluded all the first agreements on the restriction of military operations and cease-fire. A total of 10 such agreements were reached, generally, through the mediation of Russia. [*There were only three exclusions when NK wasn't presented during the signature of the documents: 1) political declaration Ter-Petrosian-Mamedov in Tehran on May 8, 1992 (it was defeated just by the **Karabakh** Armenians who captured Shushi); 2) the agreement of three Ministries of Foreign Affairs about cease-fire from September 1, 1992 signed in Alma-Ata; 3) an agreement on the halt of the military operations organized by P. Grachev (Sochi, September 19, 1992).*]

— The UN Security Council, without recognizing the NKR statehood, at the same time saw in it as a party to the conflict. The reading of the UN Security Council's four 1993 resolutions removes all the doubts about it. The Security Council mentioned the military operations of 'local Armenian forces' in the resolutions, calling on Armenia to have influence upon them, thus fixing NK's autonomous enough role in the conflict.

— Sometimes NK took its stand different from Armenia's (*L. Ter-Petrosian's visit to Goris and Stepanakert in June 1993 wasn't accidental*). There were cases, when Baku and Yerevan accepted the proposals of the Minsk Group, but it also needed **Stepanakert's consent**, and it continued pressure upon Stepanakert. It wouldn't be necessary if NK wasn't a conflicting side. *You see, there was Yerevan's consent anyway...*

— A number of **direct bilateral meetings, both open and private ones, of the representatives of Baku and Stepanakert** was held in 1993. **A. Jalilov and A.Ghoukassian** for the first time met officially in Moscow

on September 12-13 as representatives of the leaderships of Azerbaijan and NK (and even approved a joint communiqué). The top leaders of the parties, including **H. Aliev and R. Kocharian (privately)** met on September 25. *Later the Russian mediator eight (!) times arranged with H. Aliev about the continuation of Baku-Stepanakert secret direct contacts, but the latter found excuses to delay and eventually fail the fulfillment of his promise every time. Two last times H. Aliev returned to this issue upon his own initiative.*

The agreement on cease fire which has been observed for over ten years now since May 12, 1994 was reached through the mediation of Russia **between the three parties to the conflict, i.e. between those who really had armed forces and enacted them in this conflict.** In the document signed by the AR Minister of Defense with H. Aliev's approval in Baku on May 9, the posts of his two signing partners of the agreement – the Minister of Defense of Armenia and the Commander of the Nagorno Karabakh Army – were mentioned on the same level.

— The negotiations on the draft agreement on the cease of the armed conflict started through the mediation of Russia (Moscow, August 5-13, 1994) immediately in the format of the **three conflicting parties.**

— Negotiations of the leaders of the conflicting parties were held in Moscow on September 8-9, 1994 with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia: **bilateral** negotiations (H. Aliev – L. Ter-Petrosian; **H. Aliev – R. Kocharian**), **then trilateral talks with the participation of the NKR leaders** took place. *Whom the head of Azerbaijan had to do with this time in the person of the NKR leaders, but for a conflicting party?*

The OSCE Budapest summit (5–6 December 1994) approved the negotiation mechanism for the conclusion of the agreement on the stoppage of the armed conflict, instructing the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group to carry on negotiations **between the parties to the conflict.** This format differed from the one outlined by the Ministerial Council of CSCE in 1992 for the Minsk conference (**11 states and two parties concerned**). One cannot but see the difference between the decision of March 24, 1992, which was made before the height of the military operations in Karabakh (it lacked even the 'party to the conflict' notion) and the decision of the Budapest summit made after the end of the military operations. Budapest as if adopt-

ed the format of the Moscow negotiations and passed them under the aegis of the OSCE.

*The wording 'all the parties' (not the 'two parties') in the Budapest summit is not casual. The decision of the OSCE summit in Budapest was made with the personal participation of H. Aliyev and L. Ter-Petrosian.*

— During the sitting of the Senior Council of the OSCE (Prague, 31 March, 1995), in response to the attempts of Azerbaijan to contest after the Budapest summit the configuration of the conflict, the OSCE Chairman-in-office directly stated that the parties to the conflict are two states (Azerbaijan and Armenia) and **'the third party to conflict (Nagorno Karabakh)'**.

— In accordance with the decision of the OSCE Budapest summit, the negotiations were held by Co-Chairmen **between the three parties to the conflict**. *It was emphasized even through the rectangular distribution of the delegations at the hall. (Later, in response to the participation of the NKR delegation, the Azerbaijani delegation began to seat N. Bahmanov as if separately, imitating another delegation. The Co-Chairmen, of course, haven't ever recognized it, reckoning him within the Azerbaijani delegation. Respecting N. Bahmanov, at the same time it was impossible to consider him as a representative of the separate conflicting party).*

— During the meeting of the heads of the parliaments of Azerbaijan, Armenia, as well as the NK election structures **in Bishkek on May 4-5, 1994** the attempt to pose N. Bahmanov not as an ordinary MP, but as **yet another 'party'**, almost a parliamentary structure, was a real caricature. *In deed he wasn't even an elected municipal representative, as he worked briefly in Shushi in the body of executive power.*

— In 1997-98, the Co-Chairmen directed the three known suggestions to the **three addresses** and needed the answers of each of the three parties, including Stepanakert. Everyone who read the text of suggestions saw that the Co-Chairmen directly wrote about the **three parties to the conflict for many times and among them directly mentioned NK.**

The Co-Chairmen have had to deal with the **three** parties to the conflict till now. Arriving in the region they visit, as a rule, not only Baku and Yerevan, but also **Stepanakert**. *These actions were carried out by the mediators, including the Co-Chairmen, regardless of the insistent demands of Baku*

*not to visit Stepanakert, to have to do with the leaders of NK only on the same level with N. Bahmanov etc.* I remember how H. Aliev was trying to convince E. Primakov not to visit Stepanakert, but he failed. That's why E. Muhamedyarov's soothing statement that co-chairmen were visiting NK by authority of Baky was ambiguous. The problem is that Baku doesn't want to understand the difference between the normal situation in interstate relations and specific requirements of conflict regulation, when contacts with all parties is an axiom of mediation. Consent for mediation automatically means 'permission' for contacts with the adversarial party and other permissions are not needed.

Sometimes, taking into account apprehensibility of Baku, the mediators allowed themselves to meet Baku half-way. For example, they refrained from visiting Stepanakert, but it's all the same, held meetings with the NK leaders in Yerevan. *Only this fact shows that*, taking unrealistic position, Baku dooms itself to incomprehension, isolation, wittingly losing situation in this issue. At the same time it is one of the main obstacles in the way of the settlement, undoubtedly, the main one among the procedures.

\* \* \*

Baku has cut down sharply its direct contacts with Stepanakert since late 1993 and, becoming entangled in inconsequence, to the detriment of the consideration of the real problems of the settlement, began a long-term procedural fuss, refusing Nagorno Karabakh in the status of the conflicting party and in hindering its participation in the negotiations. This contradicts to international practice of settlement of the conflicts (*the Abkhazians, Transnistrians, South Ossetians are recognized the parties to the conflict, meetings of Shevarnadze with Ardzinba, Luchinsky and Voronin with Smirnov, Rarkhmonov with Nuri, Arafat with the leaders of Israel are known*).

H. Aliev hesitated in this issue. In his conversations with mediators he once used to say that 'NK is a conflicting party, not more', and the mediators agreed with him. The idea of recognition of NK as party to the conflict had among the leaders of Azerbaijan both supporters (speaker R. Guliev) and opponents (Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Hasanov). It is possible that the current toughness of Baku is partially explained by the home political discords in 1996 between H. Aliev and R. Guliev, who recognized NK as a party



to the conflict in his public statements.

Baku's persistence has no intelligible ground, it is more like a despotic caprice as regards those who are considered as fellow citizens there. It obviously discredits promises to give the NK population 'the widest autonomy.' Fears that the status of a party to the conflict will increase NK's chances for the recognition as a state or a subject of the international law are ungrounded: no state, including Armenia, has recognized 'the NKR'. The arguments advanced by Baku for the justification of its current position – at first the negotiations with Armenia, then after its 'going away' with NK are arbitrary and have no grounds in the OSCE system. *Other 'arguments' aren't also stronger: they say, the conflict is with Armenia, not with NK ('aggression of Armenia'); they say, Armenia and NK act jointly, they are a single whole; the Azeri community of NK has the same rights as the Armenian one. This latter is obviously not correct.* It is rather the Armenian 'community' than the Azeri one to which the autonomous status of NKAO was given. The term 'community' is also unfit to the main population of the autonomous region.

The position of Baku to some extent has a 'psychological' origin too. The deviation of NK from the negotiations is considered as the success of the political-diplomatic efforts, and it partially serves as moral compensation for military failure. But, in essence, it is 'Pyrrhic victory' as any agreement will need NK's consent.

\* \* \*

The dialogue of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1999-2001 and 2003-2004 was an **exclusive** format of negotiation, as RA President Robert Kocharian, due to his former role, as if **represented Nagorno Karabakh as well**. At the same time, it was his mistake, an overestimation of his abilities. After over 20 meetings of the two Presidents gave no result, the Co-Chairmen had to revive the negotiation process, and they naturally suggested that the negotiations should be resumed in the trilateral format.

In essence, the compromise concerning **the meetings of Deputy Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Prague was the Cochairmen's concession to Baku's whims**. The meetings at that level weren't able to bring to agreements on the essence of the conflict. In fact, with this **imita-**

**tion** of negotiations both presidents and the Cochairmen avoided the unpleasant admission of the fact that there was a deadlock or vacuum in the negotiation process. Calling this format a ‘negotiation mechanism’ was an obvious mistake made by the Cochairmen. This would rather be only a ‘**contact** mechanism’ as Azerbaijan and Armenia have no normal diplomatic relations yet. The failure of this format from the viewpoint of the negotiation process was quite predictable.

The **negotiation mechanism** was defined by the highest instance of the OSCE – the Budapest summit, heads of 52 OSCE-member states. The Cochairmen themselves are hardly ever competent to reshape it and all the more the parties. No other decisions on the mechanism of negotiations on Karabakh have been made at such a level since then. The former negotiations were only temporarily stopped in March 1997. That’s why the trilateral format should be taken into consideration while their resumption.

\* \* \*

The paradox is that hypertrophying the meaning of procedure issues evidently to the detriment of the essence of settlement problems, **Baku’s tactics** (no matter whatever its reason) in practice **helps the Armenian sides to temporize**. After all, all the same most of the issues of settlement **are to be worked out with participation of Nagorno Karabakh’s representatives** as the settlement just can’t be achieved without taking into consideration the interests of Nagorno Karabakh’s population.

Displaying inconsistency in this issue as well, Baku on its own sticks to its position, is persistent in it being unable to refute the fact that it maintained contacts with NK just as a party to the conflict. Even Turkey doesn’t dispute the Co-Chairmen’s position about three parties to this conflict.

However, it should be mentioned that **the Cochairmen themselves aren’t consistent enough**. Being constantly perplexed at the ‘rescuing’ of the negotiation process they consider it tactically inexpedient to aggravate the procedural disagreements with Baku, which in practice has already seriously complicated transition to effective negotiations, the process of negotiations on the whole.

## Who Sought a Force-Based Settlement in Karabakh?

*Vladimir Kazimirov*

In the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, which is distinguished by a special cruelty, many misfortunes happened through mutual fault because of burning mutual distrust and blind hatred, because of lack of experience and irresponsibility of rulers newly brought to light. This includes very gross violations of the international humanitarian law and civilized traditions, firings of populated areas, deportations or ethnic cleansings, hostage-takings, involvement of mercenaries, and other things.

There were no innocent parties in it, only proportions could differ.

Some differences among the parties, and even irrefutable superiority of one party over the other were also noticeable in some aspects. Whether it was for the welfare or for the harm, this is a different question. One of the examples of such asymmetry is the air bombardments of towns and villages, as two out of three parties just did not have a military aviation in the conflict zone.

But the basic issue is the most important, and it is time at last to clarify it: how did each party aim at solving the conflict: whether by force or in a peaceful way? Everyone assure that they sought a peaceful solution, allegedly, the war was thrust the enemy. And what way it was in reality? It was difficult to judge as mutual accusations were an everyday reality during the conflict.

I am using an inversion: paradoxical though it may seem, I am starting with conclusions to make it easier for the readers to check them in the subsequent statement of facts and arguments.

1) The Azeri leadership (under both A. Elchibey and H. Aliyev) mainly staked at solution by force and not at negotiations;

2) Baku was the first and repeated infringer of the four resolutions of the UN Security Council adopted in the very heat of military actions (April-

November 1993): it did not fully and in proper time fulfill any of its demands and appeals. Starting with the most important and key one: to immediately cease the fire, the military operations and hostile acts;

3) Azerbaijan was the main bearer of the force-based approach to the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

From what does this proceed? In those years, the international mediators were well informed about the steps of Baku, Yerevan, and Stepanakert (both in the direction of peace and into the heat of the war). The leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Nagorno Karabakh depriving themselves of chances to come to an agreement and to agree directly (the exceptions are few) kept in touch with one another through us, mediators. But I could not rely on impressions and estimations in the period of heading the mediation mission of Russia or the work in the OSCE Minsk Group (1992–96). Who is insured against being subjective? However, there is ‘material evidence’, documents, facts, logical arguments. Every one can check, estimate, even challenge them (not with rough epithets, but with weighty counter-arguments. And my opponents excelled in bad language, but bring forward very few arguments).

I am convinced that analysis of the period of war was necessary long ago. I understand how much one party does not like these conclusions, but perhaps it is useful for it to learn lessons so as not to repeat its mistakes. What happened cannot be denied. Concealment or omission of the truth about the period when blood was shed is only to everybody’s detriment.

Azerbaijan’s persistent appeal to the issue of how much it is important to fulfill the UN Security Council’s resolutions (certainly, only in the part of withdrawal of Armenian-Karabakh forces from the occupied territories) made me turn round, see how the fulfillment of these obligatory decisions proceeded. Especially in the vitally important issue of ceasing fire and stopping of the military operations, as the fulfillment of other requirements depended, among other on those. We have always criticized seizures, appearance of new occupation zones, but military operations in their essence are fraught with them. And withdrawal of occupying forces is almost impossible without stopping these actions.

The result of not a selective, but a really complex consideration of all requirements and appeals of the four resolutions of the UN Security Council

is distressing. The ceasefire of May 12, 1994 proved to be the only thing that may be named as a fulfilled requirement. All other requirements to the parties have not been fulfilled. And the truce established 11 year ago, is difficult to name a 'fulfillment' either. 1) 'immediately' did not mean deferment for a whole year (it is clear what was a year of such a war); 2) not all military actions, but only operations were stopped; 3) hostile acts (blockades and other acts) continue. Meanwhile this was the very first, initial requirement of not just one, but all four resolutions of the UN Security Council!

There were many omissions and destructive acts in 1993-94, which did not permit to stop the slaughter in time and made hundreds of thousands of people to experience excruciating sufferings. They are presented in the Appendix in the form of a 'calendar' (I am waiting for refutations or clarifications of my opponents). Certainly, there were episodes where it is impossible to establish who resumed the fights, the parties accuse one another and there were no neutral observers. Therefore, only irrefutable facts are taken as a basis.

This chronology shows that after the adoption of the resolutions of the UN Security Council Baku for many times escaped limitation and stopping of military operations, undermined agreements of ceasefire reached with Russia's mediation. With all four resolutions already adopted, Baku for four times did not agree to the ceasefire (December 1993, February and March 1994), at that, in December, with an obvious deceit. Just that winter, it held the biggest counter-attack, which needed mobilization of all its resources and resulted in more losses than success. That is, Azerbaijan currently appealing to the UN Security Council resolutions was the first to violate their main requirements and did not fulfill any other, practically none. It becomes a rhetoric to ask: is it important or not, could this have any consequences? By the way, an intolerable situation was formed for the Security Council: from November 1993 it stopped making decisions on Karabakh.

One can object: as the truce was achieved only a year after the first Resolution, it means that the Armenian parties are also to blame for this. However, they always agreed to stop the military operations. Instead of suspending them Stepanakert repeatedly insisted on their full stopping (it suggested to bring the timetable of the 'Minsk Nine' in line with the Resolution of the UN Security Council). Were Armenians more resourceful or more constructive?

They did not undermine the agreements, only twice violated cooperation with the mediators (July 1992, April 1994). Certainly, they obviously 'winded' withdrawal of the occupying forces. However, who gave them a bad example, 'taught' to it? Didn't that the party, which primordially violated the resolutions of the UN Security Council?

Now my opponents take refuge in the ceasefire: it has been achieved and is kept for 11th year now. But how can one show zeal to fulfill the Resolutions of the Security Council if he disregarded them for more than a year? The reasons of the truce are absolutely different: this was, on the one hand, the result of the military failures of Azerbaijan, and on the other hand, it was a means to avoid collapse of power. Therefore, this time Baku agreed to it without preliminary conditions. In spring 1994 other documents were already more effective than the Security Council Resolutions: the April 15 Statement of the Heads of States of CIS, which gave the highest priority to the ceasefire; 'The Bishkek Protocol' of heads of parliamentary structures of Azerbaijan, Armenia and NK calling for stopping the fire by May 9.

The above mentioned shows how hard the necessary, just inevitable passage to the peaceful settlement was delayed. At that, it was done deliberately, in search for success on the front, and not just mechanically. Under different pretexts the leaders turned down compromise initiatives of mediators, meetings and negotiations, escaped suggestions and agreements on ceasefire and stopping the military operations and even violated short truces, which undermined the ability of parties to come to an agreement, aggravated the mutual distrust, (which was deep as it was), at once led to a new coil of spiral of the military operations.

Due to a false patriotism, no one, no authoritative figure, no human right organization (even international one) has so far either in a direct or indirect form set the question about the responsibility of the leaders of that time (even if moral responsibility) for the grave destructive actions, which did not allow to stop the bloodshed in time. Sober deep analysis of the events of those years is not accessible, as before, for public conscience (and it is very important for the future as well). Some people up to the present time exploit credulity and oblivion of people and make a fool of them with a propaganda in the 'cold war' (information and sometimes even misinformation war), primitively forces hostility and up to hatred toward the other people.

All expenses and losses of the war were thrown over to the opposite side long ago, they are explained by the vile plans and actions of the enemy, though everything is not so unequivocal. The miscalculations of the own leadership, which regularly neglected the chances to stop the bloodshed are concealed. And these errors brought very grave consequences: continuation, prolongation, and even escalation of the war; new thousands of victims; seizure and destruction of territories, tearing of occupation; increase of flows of refugees and displaced persons. Pay attention how willingly they accentuate the occupation and the distress of these people, but say nothing about how all this happened and who is to blame for it.

I have already had occasion to write that occupation is the malignant tumor of the war, the product of its cruel logic. It cannot be either justified or pulled out from the general context, from cause-and-effect relations. Many people see in it the cause of the disasters and if we dig deeper, it is in fact the consequence. The original cause is the inability of the leadership to renounce the illusions of victory, to stop the war and to seriously sit at the negotiations table.

A number of Azeri journalists or those standing behind them got indignant with my articles. They reproach me with being not objective, even announce me the paid lawyer of Armenians (instead of serious discussions). They have a single scale of metering: anti-Armenian or pro-Armenian. And they rush to convince that these are the synonyms of the truth and lie. When I wrote in media that the 'package' is unachievable, that the formula 'territories for the status' is based on the use of force, that it is no use styling the occupied territories 'liberated', (this is criticism addressed to the Armenian side, ed.) they never thought that an Armenian agent is skillfully disguised this way.

One of the main causes of Azeri leadership's failures is they were maximalists in setting their targets (this mentality is peculiar to Armenians as well) and obviously overestimated their own military and political-diplomatic possibilities in spite of a number of obvious weak points. Baku used to stop fights only for gaining time, respite, rearranging the forces (once for the presidential elections of October 3, 1993). Staking at force cannot be justified, but there is some explanation in it: instability of the situation in a new state, to a significant extent also due to the conflict in Karabakh. The establishment

of statehood lacking previous traditions proceeded painfully, in convulsions, with intoxication in heads of those who came to power without political and ruling experience.

One more reason is radicalism, lack of experience of the Baku diplomacy, which fondly supposed that the positions of the parties on the front can be really moved with abrupt turns during the talks. Its reaction to the proposals was unreasoned, rarely constructive (e.g., blocking of convocation of the CSCE Minsk Conference, turning down meetings of Presidents and Foreign Ministers in Moscow and Paris, refusing to continue consultations in Geneva, and other actions). The fact that Baku did not respond or delayed answers to mediators' initiatives, dashingly turned them down, avoided ceasefire, even failed it, permitted Armenians to be in a better light on the international arena. Condemning expansion of the military operations and seizures by Armenians, the mediators at the same time recognized their comparative flexibility during the negotiations (Yerevan was more flexible than Stepanakert and especially than Baku).

This also has some explanations. The military operations at first were held with a changeable success, but Armenians managed to gain mostly to retain control over NK. The seizure of Shusha and Lachin and the repulse of the successful attack of Azeris in the summer of 1992 permitted Armenians to avoid defeat and to gradually shift the relative balance of forces.

Shusha and Lachin became deep psychological 'splinters' for Baku. The troops and diplomacy of Azerbaijan proved to be condemned to the role of constantly 'recouping' themselves. Shusha is not only the cradle of the century-old culture, but it is easy to fire at Stepanakert from there. And Lachin for seven centuries was a catch between Armenia and NKR. For the sake of Armenians' leaving Lachin and Shusha Elchibey's team improvidently prevented convention of the CSCE Minsk Conference. When it failed to have Armenians' leaving these territories as a preliminary condition for the conference, Baku did not agree to the ceasefire or only agreed to suspend the military operations. A possibility to return Kelbajar in a peaceful way appeared, Baku wished to achieve it with suspension and not stopping of military operations in order to resume fights for Lachin and Shusha later. However, the mediators and, most important, the peoples needed irreversibility of the peaceful process.



While Armenians at the negotiations still promised not to retain the seized territories and the schedule of withdrawal of their forces was outlined, Azeri Foreign Minister H. Hasanov at once sought inclusion of withdrawal from Lachin and Shusha as well. H. Aliyev was more realistic: he only wished to mark these problems for the future, but Hasanov persisted in maximalism compelling the Armenians to put forward the problem of Shahumian in return. (I remember the vainness of my attempts to make the Azeri leadership change its mind with the formula  $6+2<8$ : first to return six regions, and then to separately start negotiations on Lachin and Shusha in consideration of their specific character; it would be quicker and more productive than to demand eight regions at once).

Ten years have already passed, but, no region has been returned. Weren't the Azeris wrong by turning down that formula? For Armenians it was easier to show flexibility at that time than later. If that plan was fulfilled, the situation would not be worse than the current deadlock: the displaced would return, the tension would reduce, the situation would be gradually normalized. Even if negotiations on Lachin, Shusha and Shahumian, on NK's political status were not ended up to now, the situation for people and both states would be much more stable. This is how radical aims can put in a spot (everything or nothing, everything and at once!).

Returning to our days, I am as before convinced that multi-stage settlement and formula 'territories for security' are more realistic than the others. Baku will not be able to adopt 'in one package' the status of NK Armenians wish: it should be left until better times. And at the first stage liberation of regions beyond NK's boundaries in exchange for counter concessions should be started. However, a number of issues should be clarified before it.

The return of territories requires first of all ensuring impossibility to resume military operations (during the negotiations in the 90s a series of guarantees, in particular, deep demilitarization of liberated regions for the whole period until the determination and fulfillment of the NKR status was spoken about). If someone plans to make the returned territories a bridgehead for operations, it is one more naivety. Liberation will be held only under a system of guarantees with a wide international component.

Therefore, intimidations to solve the conflict in any way are counter-productive (it is just like a continuity of traditions through generations: as if

Baku is looking for new pitfalls for itself). There is a much shorter way towards the withdrawal of troops, just in the opposite direction! This way is: serious commitments of the parties to solve all disputable problems, including the NKR status, exclusively by peaceful means. It will not even need a 'security zone' then.

As for Nagorno Karabakh itself, it is a special issue. Troops may be withdrawn from Karabakh only with the indigenous population. The persistence of Ilham Aliyev in this is perceived only as purely a questioning position. If the sides seriously seek peaceful solution, then it is time for them to stop shouting about NK 'mine, mine' ('halva, halva! – is not sweet in the mouth'). They should soberly and calmly recognize Nagorno Karabakh both as a subject and an object of the argument. In essence, the whole world has recognized it for already a long time. Everybody recognizes it except the participants of the dispute! Much blood was shed because of this, the sides fight everywhere in the world, but, you see, they are unable to recognize it as an argument. And that would be the first step to the civilized solution, be it at the negotiation's table or through the will of nation, that would be the beginning of calming down of deliberately excited moods.

There is one more question, which is still imperceptible. They will start coordinating the withdrawal of troops, but to what line to take them? The former borders of the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region are unfit for military lines, and it is still necessary for 10-20 years. The line should be straightened out, a new one should be found, and to solve this without Stepanakert is impossible. To delay this means to delay the withdrawal of troops. It is time both for the sides and the mediators to end the argument on the circle of the negotiations' participants. Especially as no one has abolished the decision of the OSCE Budapest Summit (1994).

There are still so many problems to be agreed between the sides, so it is impossible to trumpet about the success of 2004. They are miserably few.

*Appendix*HOW THE CHANCES TO STOP THE WAR IN KARABAKH  
WERE MISSED

(a calendar of opportunities and errors)

**1991, September 23.** A meeting in Zheleznovodsk. A joint communiqué on the results of the mediation mission of B. N. Yeltsin and N. Nazarbayev was signed. It was proposed to establish ceasefire by January 1, 1992. The sides did not fulfill their responsibilities through the mutual fault.

**1992, March 24.** A decision was made to convene a CSCE Minsk conference on NK. Its convocation was planned to June 23, but on May 19 Azerbaijan put forward preliminary conditions: withdrawal of Armenians from Shushi and Lachin. As a result, a working mechanism, the so-called Minsk Group (Baku often criticizes it for inefficiency), was formed instead of the big international conference.

**1992, June 20.** Suggestions of Russia about de-escalation of military actions and stopping of offensive operations were introduced at the Minsk Group. In essence, both parties ignored them.

**1992, July 3.** On the initiative of Russia, the Minsk Group proposed the conflict parties to suspend the military actions for 30 days starting from July 9, 1992. Baku gave its consent. Yerevan and Stepanakert did not respond in time (as if they did not receive the Minsk Group recommendation).

**1992, August 5.** On the initiative of Russia, the Minsk Group again proposed to suspend the military actions – this time for 60 days. Yerevan and Stepanakert immediately agreed. It took months to get A. Elchibey's consent (though he had agreed for 30 day-suspension earlier).

**1992, August 7.** Moscow. The personal representatives of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, with the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, discussed the ways of normalization of the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border (before that the border enclave of the Republic of Armenia Artsvashen/Bashkend was occupied by the Azerbaijani troops).

**1992, September 17.** A proposal of Russia to stop the military actions for 60 days starting September 22 was given to the President of Azerbaijan. A. Elchi-

bey, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Gasimov, Speaker I. Gamarov avoided it.

**1992, September 19.** Sochi. With the assistance of the Minister of Defense of Russia P.S. Grachyov, Azerbaijan and Armenia agreed to stop the military actions for 60 days. On September 25 a protocol on the order of the fulfillment of the agreement was signed in Moscow. 60 Russian monitors were placed in the zone of the conflict. The sides did not cease the fire: each side blamed the other one. The monitors were called back.

**1992, December 7–9.** The Minsk ‘five’ met in Geneva. The representative of the Republic of Armenia proposed ceasing the fire. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan T. Gasimov did not accept the proposal.

**1993, January 5–8.** Moscow. The representatives of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, with the participation of the representatives of Russia, U.S. and Turkey (format ‘5+1’) prepared documents directed to ceasefire. Baku repudiated its representative, deputy prime minister, ambassador Kh. Haji-zade.

**1993, March 1.** The Foreign Ministers of Russia and Turkey agreed to visit the conflict region together with the goal of reaching an unconditioned ceasefire. After the visit to Baku, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey began to link this with the withdrawal of Armenians from Shusha and Lachin. The visit did not take place.

**1993, March–April.** The Armenians seized the Kelbajar region. On April 6, T. Gasimov left the consultations in Geneva and refused to take part in the Minsk process before the withdrawal of Armenians from Kelbajar.

**1993, April 8.** The President of Russia B.N. Yeltsin offered the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as the leadership of Nagorno Karabakh his mediation to the solution of the conflict, aimed first of all at the ceasefire. All the three parties agreed to the mediation of Russia.

**1993, April 8.** Sochi. The meeting of V. Sarkisian and P. Huseinov with the assistance of Defense Minister of Russia P.S. Grachyov (at the request of the Azerbaijani side). They agreed to cease the fire starting from April 9 and to

hold a meeting of the prime ministers in Moscow on April 13, who would prepare a summit meeting. Stepanakert was not informed about those agreements. There were no practical results.

**1993, April 10–16.** During private negotiations in Moscow, the personal representatives of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia with the participation of a representative of NK prepared a project of agreement on ceasefire allowing to return Kelbajar in a peaceful way. However, Baku again repudiated Kh. Haji-zade, though he had the written authorities of President A. Elchibey.

**1993, April 11.** In an effort to further expand B.N. Yeltsin's suggestion the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia A.V. Kozirev called the conflict sides to stop all the offensive operations starting April 13, for minimum a week until the negotiations in Moscow are over. Stepanakert and Yerevan gave their consent at once; Baku first asked a 24-hour delay, then avoided.

**1993, April 18.** Temporary ceasefire during the days of stay of the preparatory mission of CSCE in the region was established.

**1993, April 24.** The proposal of Russia, supported by U.S. and Turkey, to prolong the ceasefire until April 28 for the period of holding the meeting of Committee of Senior Officials of CSCE in Prague, was declined by a letter of Azerbaijani Prime Minister A. Masimov (Stepanakert and Yerevan gave their consents).

**1993, April 30.** The Resolution 822 of the UN Security Council demanded to stop all the military actions and hostile acts, as well as immediately withdraw all the occupying forces. A few hours before this, in Moscow the representatives of Russia, U.S. and Turkey (V. Kazimirov, J. Mareska, V. Vural) prepared 'a timetable of urgent measures' for passing it to the conflict sides. The representative of Russia immediately suggested U.S. and Turkey to work out a three-sided initiative in order to bring it into line with the resolution of the UN Security Council, but they avoided the proposal.

**1993, May 3.** A proposal of the President of Russia to conclude an agreement on complete and general ceasing the military actions was given to all parties.

**1993, June 17.** With the mediation of Russia, an agreement was reached to stop the shelling of the cities of Agdam and Stepanakert.

**1993, June 25.** In order to weaken the heating of fights in the regions of Agdam and Mardakert, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia suggested Baku and Stepanakert to return each other a number of inhabited settlements and heights in a balanced way. There were no responses. On June 26 the Armenians captured Mardakert.

**1993, June 27.** With the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, an agreement Baku-Stepanakert was formulated on stopping the offensive operations, rocket-artillery shelling and air bombarding in the regions of Agdam and Mardakert for a week (until July 4).

**1993, June 29.** A message of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia A.V. Kozirev was sent to the conflict parties with a proposal to prolong and expand this agreement.

**1993, July 2.** After a preliminary agreement with H. Aliyev, the Russian mediator made concrete the proposal on prolonging this agreement for a month and its spreading in the regions of Fizuli and Hadrut. Stepanakert agreed to almost all conditions. There was no response from Baku in spite of the reminders. The fights in the zone of Agdam restarted.

**1993, July 24.** A meeting of the representatives of Baku and Stepanakert was held near the borderline after the capture of Agdam. An agreement on the partial stopping of fights for three days was reached, later prolonged for a week.

**1993, July 29.** The resolution 853 of the UN Security Council adopted.

**1993, August 18.** With the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, the fights were partially stopped for 5 days, however, the agreement was violated by the Azerbaijani side. Armenians seized Fizuli and Jebrail.

**1993, August 31.** On the proposal of the Russian mediator, the ceasefire was renewed for 10 days. Moscow and Yerevan insisted on the withdrawal of Armenians of Karabakh from the regional center of Kubatli seized the day before. The latter withdrew from only several villages in the region.

**1993, September 10.** Before the meeting of the ‘representatives of leadership of Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh’ in Moscow, A. Jalilov and A. Ghukasian (on September 12–13) the ceasefire was prolonged for another three days, and at the meeting, until the October 5. Then, for a month – until November 5.

**1993, September 25.** Meetings of H. Aliyev – L. Ter-Petrosian and H. Aliyev – R. Kocharian (a private one) were held in Moscow. In the same evening, in the Foreign Ministry of Russia, it was agreed to jointly work out a project of agreement on stopping the military operations. D. Shahnazarian, R. Kocharian and V. Kazimirov were waiting for H. Hasanov until 2:30 a.m., but despite of the agreement, he did not come at all.

**1993, October 10–12.** An incident near the village Kuyjak (on the day of H. Aliyev’s taking the post of the President of the Azerbaijani Republic) was about to break the armistice.

**1993, October 14.** Resolution 874 of the UN Security Council adopted.

**1993, October 21.** A local break of the ceasefire by Azerbaijan in the region of Jebrail (the ceasefire lasted 50 days – from August 31) gave Armenians a pretext for a large-scale offensive and completion the seizure of the southwest of the country.

**1993, November 12.** Resolution 884 of the UN Security Council adopted.

**1993, December 16.** An agreement was reached with H. Aliyev and the leader of the Karabakh Armenians R. Kocharian to cease the fire starting from December 17. They both promised to give instructions to legalize it, but the document came in time only from Stepanakert. Baku was gaining time. Kocharian even agreed to cease the fire ‘on gentleman’s basis,’ without waiting for a text from Baku (because everything was agreed with the top official!). Efforts ‘to get out’ the signature from Baku continued for three days, there even were calls to Aliyev in Paris, where he was on an official visit. On December 19 evening, A. Jalilov and N. Sadikhov sent an absolutely useless message and everything was abolished. The development of the big winter counter-offensive of the Azerbaijani troops in these days was the real cause.

**1993, December 30.** Stepanakert gave its consent to the offer of the Russian mediator about the New Year's truce, and Baku even did not respond.

**1994, January 27.** Russia proposed the parties to cease the fire starting from February 1 minimum for 2-3 weeks and to hold a meeting of foreign ministers in Moscow. Baku avoided both proposals. Stepanakert and Yerevan agreed.

**1994, February 5 – March 6.** Olympic truce in accordance with the Resolution 48 of the Session of the UN General Assembly, adopted on the initiative of the International Olympic Committee. The President of Armenia reacted positively. Baku did not display its support.

**1994, February 18.** Moscow. The protocol of the working meeting of the Defense Ministers of AR and RA and the representative of Nagorno Karabakh with the mediation of the Defense Minister of Russia envisaged cease-fire starting from March 1 and withdrawal of troops from the contact line. Azerbaijan did not fulfill the assumed commitments, refusing to withdraw the troops and at the same time demanding the withdrawal of the Armenian forces from all the occupied territories. The ceasefire was broken.

**1994, March 22.** The Russian mediator suggested a scheme of 'balanced asymmetry' because of the refusal of Azerbaijan from the symmetric withdrawal of troops. Azerbaijan responded only on April 15, declining this proposal as well.

**1994, April 12.** In connection with the strained situation on the front, the Russian mediator called the parties to bring down the military activity at least for several days. Baku did not react.

**1994, April 15.** The statement of Council of Heads of CIS States with the most priority aim to cease the fire and the military actions was adopted.

**1994, April 26.** Baku gave its consent to the proposal of the Russian mediator on the restriction of military actions for 10 days starting from April 29. Stepanakert proposed to completely cease the fire, using all the measures, enshrined by the Protocol from February 18, 1994. The agreement was dropped away because of the contradictions emerged.



**1994, May 4–5.** The meeting of Heads of Parliaments of Azerbaijan, Armenia and of the parliamentary structure of Nagorno Karabakh adopted the ‘Bishkek protocol’ with an appeal to completely cease the fire early in the morning of May 9. The document was signed by all the participants of the meeting, except the Vice Speaker of the AR parliament A. Jalilov (H. Aliyev, before his visit to Brussels for signing the program ‘Partnership for Peace’, did not allow him to sign the document without his permission). The ‘Bishkek protocol’ was signed by the Speaker R. Guliev in Baku on May 8.

**1994, May 9.** The leadership of Azerbaijan itself asked for a ceasefire without preliminary conditions. It allowed the three conflicting sides to conclude a truce from May 12, 1994 with the mediation of Russia (by default it is open-ended).

**1994, May 16.** Moscow. During the meeting of Defense Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, with the participation of the representative of Nagorno Karabakh, a document on the deployment of mixed monitoring posts in the conflicting zone with the participation of Russia, was agreed. By a night call of H. Aliyev, the Defense Minister of Azerbaijan, without signing the document, urgently left for Baku ‘for receiving new instructions’ on May 17. The agreement failed.

\* \* \*

The above mentioned ‘calendar’ embraces all the main initiatives of Russia and Minsk Group, directly aimed at the ceasefire. The ‘timetables’ of the Minsk Group are not spoken about, where this main measure is not in the main place (besides, the sides in turn either accepted, or rejected the timetables). The list of the missed favorable chances could be continued after May 1994 as well, but it would not change the general picture.

The entire balance of the missed possibilities to end the war is ‘in favor’ of the leadership of Azerbaijan: a whole series of direct violations, which broke the ceasefire, avoiding the agreements on this and many other destructive steps. Only in the period of actions of the Resolution of the UN Security Council there were 4 derangements and the same number avoiding ceasefires.

\* \* \*

Another two attempts to cease the fire in Karabakh are known (until the adoption of the resolution of the UN Security Council). The initiative of Iran (May 1992) was broken with the seizure of Shusha by the Karabakh Armenians a few days before it was possible to establish ceasefire. The agreement on the initiative of Kazakhstan on the ceasefire starting from September 1, 1992, did not last even for several days because of the mutual fault of the parties. At the meetings, respectively in Tehran and Alma-Ata, Stepanakert did not take part; only Baku and Yerevan participated.

## **Open Letter to the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE Dimitrij Rupel**

Yerevan, March 29, 2005.

Dear Mr. Chairman-in-Office,

I would first of all like to welcome your trip to the turbulent land of southern ridges and foothills of the Caucasus, and your determination, as I see it, to give a new impulse to the settlement of the long-standing conflicts in this region, including the war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Finding myself in Yerevan right on the eve of your visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan, one of the first co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Vladimir N. Kazimirov (Russian ambassador retired) would like to express his concern with the current standstill in the Karabakh peace process, along with a number of ideas and considerations concerning the 'defusing' of this conflict.

1. The OSCE has been actively involved in this peace process for many years, yet neither of the two opposing nations has perceived much effect so far, apart from the lasting ceasefire since May 1994. Many were the resolutions adopted both by the UN Security Council and through the OSCE efforts; nevertheless, all of them have so far remained ink on paper. It was the failure to fulfill the UN Security Council resolutions and staking on settling the conflict by force that have led to the current anomalies in this region, as well as to deformation of the negotiation process and its stalling. One of the parties involved has blocked the convocation of the OSCE Minsk Conference. Both the parties to the conflict and the OSCE agencies have departed way too far from the provisions of the most exhaustive resolution on the Karabakh conflict adopted in 1994.

The summit in Budapest (in which the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia took part personally never revoked, nor even revised this resolution; it became the basis for the OSCE Minsk Group's chairmen's mandate. It

is common knowledge that they were the ones who were instructed to ensure prompt holding of negotiations between the parties to the conflict and there are three of them in reality.

Occasional meetings of the foreign ministers and even more infrequent meetings of the presidents of the two countries can hardly be described as negotiations. Both prolonged intervals and backsliding on the agreed patterns. Nowadays consultations are occasionally held with their goal being stated as search (all over again!) for basic common grounds. New intervals are to be expected due to the elections. In a word, the current imitation of a negotiation process, when it is barely pulling through, is not in line with the OSCE resolution adopted in Budapest, nor with the interests of the peace process in Karabakh and its importance for both nations and for the entire region, nor with the expectations of millions of people affected by this war.

2. It appears to me that the efforts of other international organisations pertaining to the Karabakh peace process should not concern the essence of the controversial matters which are subject to discussion upon the resumption of the regular negotiations in the OSCE framework, but should instead be aimed at the creation of more favourable conditions for them: encourage the conflicting side to seek civilised ways of resolution of controversial problems, even demand this from them; and support truly principles, etc.

I believe that the chairmen too could well avoid limiting their efforts to 'presiding' at rare bilateral meetings – what is important is to direct the discussion onto a realistic course of mutual compromises, dismissing the exorbitant demands of the parties and their claims that they have allegedly reached the limit of possible concessions on their part – for this is far from being so.

They could well suggest to the parties (whether publicly or not) to acknowledge that Nagorno-Karabakh and its status are the cause and the key controversial problem which is to be eliminated along with its grave consequences. Under no circumstances shall the attention be diverted from the core of the conflict to secondary matters. Acknowledging the essence of the dispute is a first step towards its civilised resolution.

3. A strange impression is left by the series of armed clashes which break out in Karabakh along the line of contact with remarkable regularity, and

particularly their zealous promotion in propaganda resources for the sake of contributing to the tension. This is all the more strange considering that on February 6, 1995 took effect the agreement on settlement of incidents which was introduced at the initiative of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen (Russia and Sweden at the time) and officially signed by the army commanders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh upon the instruction of the top leaders of all three sides. It stipulates the procedure for their cooperation with these purposes, including measures provided to prevent the savouring of various incidents by the propaganda forces. Sad as it is but it was plainly forgotten both by the conflicting sides and by the OSCE. Do the sides respect their own signatures? Why else should one seek any compromise between them? The OSCE equally maintains silence on this issue, even though this is the only agreement at its disposal that was signed by all of the sides.

4. The systematic belligerent campaign is hard to deny, direct threats of a coercive revanche are regularly voiced by top officials under the slogan of 'at any price'. Admittedly, they dare not name this 'price' to the face of their own people, a price in terms of new disasters, thousands of human lives, dozens and hundreds of thousands of more forced migrants. One may truly try to justify this with the demands of internal policy, or one may take comfort in the fact that all of this is sheer hogwash, and by no means tangible progress so far, the damage caused by this campaign is evident and demonstrates a multidimensional nature.

Are these innuendos in favour of a peaceful resolution not enough already – is it not high time more attention was given to it? The extent of menace to peace is indeed determined by the UN Security Council and not by the OSCE.

But are we to expect threats to be carried out? This, after all, goes contrary to the OSCE efforts under the peaceful resolution of the conflict, the expectations of the global community and the direct commitments of the pan-European organisation's member states not to resort to force or to **threats of force**.

During your first term as foreign minister, your country, Slovenia, was lucky to avoid being dragged into the flaring armed conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia. The parties to the Karabakh conflict urgently need to

realise that all excesses of reasonable peaceful resolution, – however inevitable indeed, however dismaying they may appear at first glance – pale in comparison with the grave excesses of war; moreover, they will be compensated with a vengeance by the appeasement of passions and a lasting peace and cooperation between the neighbouring nations.

Allow me to wish you, Mr. Chairman-in-Office, a successful and productive journey to these countries.

*Vladimir Kazimirov*

REGNUM News Agency, November 23, 2005

## **People's Diplomacy must get a New Lease on Life!** *Open address to Azeri and Armenian non-governmental organisations*

It has been over a decade since the massive bloodshed in Karabakh was stopped with Russia's assistance and mediation. The fierce conflict has come to be stuck in the unfortunate phase labelled as 'neither peace, nor war', which is nothing but detrimental to both nations, for it hinders the social, economic and democratic development of their countries. This is the most sensitive problem for all parties to the conflict. Occasional meetings between the political leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia have not so far brought any appreciable results or changes into the lives of ordinary people.

At long last, the passions and paroxysms with which the election period was attended and which were standing in the way of peaceful settlement in these countries are behind, but the principal obstacle – the overly inflexible positions of the parties – still remains. The 11 years that have past since the achievement of the ceasefire up to the present day were more than enough for purposeful, serious negotiations to be held. And people may well ask: where are the results?

The year 2006 is now to become the moment of truth! Both nations have not so far managed to overcome the haze of unrestrained pseudo-patriotic pretensions, even though the unresolved conflict is causing them more damage, than eventual mutual concessions would (and such are absolutely inevitable, for no settlement is possible without them). Still, of little use are declarations that the society is not ready for concessions. It would be far more sensible to sort out whether anybody's taking care of making it ready, and if so, then who and how? The ruling circles? They are only clinging to power. Political parties? Those are not infrequently only after favourable political prospects opting to be circumspect of the public opinion instead of seeking to shape it.

To put an end to the fighting in 1994, the conflicting sides needed 'parties of peace', now an acute need for parties of realism and flexibility has arisen. Members of non-governmental organisations, who are the actual agents of people's diplomacy, do not cling to their offices. They are true devotees of their cause, endowed with concern, foresight and enterprise. They are not just sitting there, waiting for changes for the better to come; instead they are working hard to bring about such changes. Reasonable progress in the positions of the sides is much harder to achieve without their pragmatic, beneficial role in the settlement.

They are the ones who are called to proclaim the simple truth: Armenians and Azeris will in any case have to live side by side for centuries to come, and once it is so, it would be far better to live in a climate of good neighbourliness than in that of hostility and strife. The NGOs' explanatory work will help the leaders gain more room for political manoeuvres and for balanced concessions. What with the rigid positions of the authorities and the severance of contacts, restoration of communication, mitigating the general situation, bringing up tricky issues is only possible with the aid of, and via, NGOs.

It is high time the fate of Nagorno-Karabakh was acknowledged as the ultimate cause of the conflict and the chief bone of contention. This is a matter of common knowledge and beyond contestation. Acknowledgement of this by all parties to the conflict would become not only a tribute to sheer realism, but also a first step towards search for mutual concessions and a civilised, peaceful solution of the problems. There are currently no other forces capable of proclaiming and reaffirming the strategic goal – a historical reconciliation of the two peoples. The leaders are so far showing themselves incapable of this, but ordinary people have no other prospects to hope for.

People's diplomacy by its very nature goes at odds with tensions, occupation, hostilities, arms races and military atavisms. Staking on military force in relations between nations is an inherently erroneous approach, and today it is evolving into an increasingly ill-conceived and dangerous strategy.

Today our global community has entered a century where new values reign: democracy, tolerance, productive intercourse, flexibility, compromise. The dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh simply must move on from the battlefield to the negotiating table or to transparent ballot-boxes. In times of war



the chief value is firmness, but what we need today is flexibility, and that is sadly in short supply for the time being. Compromise denotes a step towards civilised society, respect for lawful rights and interests, but by no means one's own rights and interests only.

The global community, the United Nations, the OSCE, the CIS, all people of common sense welcome the building and expansion of contacts between Azeris and Armenians, Any approach aside from this is simply doomed to fail. In defiance of all barriers, a widest possible variety of forms of communication between NGOs, including meetings abroad and, naturally, in Russia, and with the involvement of the Azeri and Armenian diasporas, all serve for the benefit of the cause.

The long time stalling of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process unambiguously demands a revival and an increasing role of people's diplomacy. And we must join our efforts to give it a new lease on life in 2006, to facilitate at last the conclusion of specific agreements and treaties.

Ambassador **Vladimir Kazimirov**,  
*(in 1992–96 head of Russia's mediation mission, plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian President for Nagorno-Karabakh, direct participant in the negotiations leading to the armistice of May 12, 1994; deputy chairman of Council of the Russian Diplomats' Association).*

REGNUM News Agency, November 23, 2005.

## **People's Diplomacy is to be kept on a Leash!**

The debates concerning the open letter of mine, which was circulated by REGNUM News Agency on November 23, 2005 and contained an appeal to Azeri and Armenian non-governmental organisations to ramp up their work by 2006, which was to become the moment of truth in the Karabakh conflict settlement. Moreover, whether advertently or not, this debate is being taken to a broader scale: and that is the role of the civil society in matter so vital for both Azeris and Armenians as achieving a breakthrough in the long time stalling of this conflict settlement.

That appeal seemingly did not concern the authorities or officials, not requiring a response on their part. However, the media in Baku have publicised a rather curious statement by Araz Azimov, Azerbaijan's deputy minister of foreign affairs, regarding the role of people's diplomacy. On December 17, 2005, their account of the press conference stated the following:

'Speaking about his attitude to the appeal of Vladimir Kazimirov, former co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group representing Russia, published under the title of 'People's Diplomacy must get a New Lease on Life!', Araz Azimov said that the said diplomat had been given ample opportunities to put forward his initiatives and suggestions in his time, advising the latter to now seek new scope for his activity. Nevertheless, the deputy minister emphasised the indisputable role of people's diplomacy in conflict settlement: 'But people's diplomacy may only play a supportive role. At a certain point it can be of use if applied in an appropriate format.'

Certain attacks require no response (even when one has a good deal to say). Mr Azimov can't have possibly forgotten our initiatives of 1992–96. Here are some convincing examples. The ceasefires achieved through Russia's mediation at the time have spared more than one life, but those ceasefires and arrangements had been broken time and time again by one of the sides (guss

which one it was). In May 1994 none of the sides rejected the armistice suggested by Moscow, and this armistice has been holding for more than 11 years now. Another example worth to be recalled is the February 6, 1995 agreement on the enhancement of the ceasefire regime through settlement of incidents occurring along the contact line which often result in deaths on both the Azeri and the Armenian side. So what stopped Mr Azimov for so many years on end from reminding the minister of defence that international agreements are there to be complied with? For the latter clearly seems to be unaware of this.

However, such attacks are better to be ignored for they constitute a mere trick for distracting attention from the essence of really important matters. Let us examine the crux of Araz Azimov's statements about people's diplomacy. Read his words carefully (italicised by me): 'But people's diplomacy may only play a supportive role. At a certain point it may be of use if applied in an appropriate format'. Well, well! So, on the one hand, this role is allegedly indisputable, yet almost every word of his (starting with 'but') precisely either challenges or restricts it!

So, is supporting and seconding the actions of the authorities the only thing that people's diplomacy is good for? Well, beneficial actions naturally deserve support. But is it a good idea to approve the position on incidents which will result in deaths of soldiers and civilians alike? And can people's diplomacy play a pro-active role? Or advice to the authorities how to amend their action, for that matter?

Mr Azimov's words about the authorities making use of people's diplomacy is none other than sheer bureaucratic zeal, sort of: we may make use of it, or we may not, and at that, at a certain point only – when the authorities see it fit and vouchsafe giving a relevant command. And only when applied in an appropriate format.

To put it in layman's terms, Mr Azimov denies people's diplomacy independence and freedom of activity in all and every respect.

The gross misunderstanding of the role that NGOs and the civil society on the whole play in modern social and political development is obvious. And Azimov is not the only one to display this. Many, far too many were raised and educated in the times when the administrative command system reigned, and have not overcome the vestiges of that in their own thinking and

in the society. This is obviously a firm policy of the current authorities, even in a matter so vital for their people, and despite their eager ambitions to become 'part of Europe'.

And still, Araz Azimov's statement represents a step forward, however clumsy and forced, on the part of the authorities following their panicky response, or rather, outcry in response to my appeal – 'Provocation!' With a mentality focused on the past, they deem anyone who is open to contacts with Armenians as traitors and enemies of the people, seeking to put people's diplomacy, the evolving civil society, on a leash (in case giving the 'Attack!' command might be required). That is how they are trying to keep the Azeri society in check.

Azeri and Armenian NGOs met my appeal with understanding. My reply to the few Armenian critics and skeptics was published in Russia, Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. The aptest response came from a member of one of the Azerbaijani NGOs: 'Even if the peace treaty is signed, in whatever form, this will not give us any certainty as to that we will now have a lasting peace... The political reality is such that without recourse to people's diplomacy the process is doomed to reach a deadlock. Time does not wait.'

So please take it that we are already in the year 2006. And it is already the third millennium!

REGNUM News Agency, December 28, 2005.

## Signing is Half of the Matter. Fulfill!

*Vladimir Kazimirov*

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2006 is full of hopes for progress if not a breakthrough in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict. Twelve-year experience of cease-fire, distressful and deformed negotiation process with a series of pauses, hardness of positions and even openly declared claims of the conflict parties provide grounds for caution: it is difficult, almost impossible to achieve decisive agreements during one year. Though I would be glad to prove to be wrong with my skepticism.

To what extent are the conflicting parties able to reach an agreement? Besides short-term, but quite well formulated agreements on ceasing military operations or fire, which were broken many times, **only three agreements were achieved during 18 years of conflict and confrontation:**

— Defense ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia with the mediation of their Russian counterpart signed an agreement on a 60-day ceasefire in Sochi on **September 19, 1992**. The agreement was broken in two weeks.

— Only the second one of the three agreements is generally maintained: the one on ceasefire signed on **May 12, 1994** without time limit (it was signed by Armenian and Azerbaijani defense ministers, as well as NKR Army Commander with the mediation of the Russian Foreign Ministry).

— Another agreement with no time limit either, was signed on **February 6, 1995** according to which the sides pledged to consolidate the ceasefire regime (it was signed by the same three people on the instruction of their top leaders with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen from

Russia and Sweden). This agreement acts only in formal terms, in reality it has not been kept for a long time now.

As one can see, there is nothing to boast about. The cease-fire and its maintenance have been the only real achievement. In spite of the many-year efforts of mediators, the parties didn't show any ability to meet each other halfway, seek solutions or agreements. Besides, signing the much desirable, almost unreachable agreements is only half of the job to be done: those agreements should be carried out duly with no breaks, which are full of new catastrophes. Meanwhile, there is an unusually high tendency to break or fail to fulfill even the demands of formulated documents. In this respect, the fate of the third agreement, that about settling incidents, was the most illustrative.

The mediators understood well how difficult it was to maintain ceasefire in Karabakh without some usual measures, for example, without separating the forces from the contact line and creating a wide separation zone (as sometimes the positions of the two sides were only a couples of hundred meters away from each other); without pullout of heavy weapons; without use of international observers or neutral forces of separation. Here incidents are almost inevitable, and it is indispensable to work out a clear mechanism of interaction in order to prevent them from escalation and quench them rapidly.

The document would strengthen the ceasefire regime by defining the order of actions to be taken by the sides in case of incidents, their operative contacts both with the other side and the mediators in order to localize the anomaly, prevent escalation and growth of mutual distrust, and, which was even more important, to prevent the dissemination of propaganda for inciting hatred.

Each party to the conflict pledged to inform in written form the other side immediately about the time, character and the aftermath of the incident. The other side should investigate the fact or version, and give an answer within 6 hours, informing about the measures it had taken to eliminate the difficulties and resume the status-quo-ante. Besides, the sides should send the copies of those documents to the mediators for them to be able to join the efforts immediately.

In order to make direct contacts easier, the sides exchanged the telephone numbers of special connection of their political and military leaderships with 24-hour duty present.

At the first glance, these issues were related to military-technical affairs, but in this case, the cease-fires acquired political significance. For this reason, all the provisions of the document were elaborated with the leaders of the three parties – **Heidar Aliyev, Levon Ter-Petrossyan and Robert Kocharian**. On February 3, 1995, they received the texts of the document (send by me in Russian and by **Anders Bjurner**, a Swede diplomat, in English). This came to fix that the military leaders put their signatures on the instruction of the top leaders. The commitments were signed on February 4 and took effect on February 6.

Life proved the great need to fulfill such an agreement. Quite a great number of soldiers and peaceful residents are killed on the contact line. Sometimes it is a series of incidents followed by a shower of mutual accusations, and the situation is getting dangerously tense. Representative of OSCE Chairman in Office, **Andzei Kasprzick**, who has been carrying out a monitoring twice a month on the contact line, said recently that the number of those killed and wounded increased during 2005. That is, the sides suffer many losses, but fail to fulfill their commitments. Incidents are sometimes even necessary to someone to support the tension and incite hatred.

This story has grown into a crime fiction now. **Ambassador Kasprzick** who had been carrying out a monitoring since 1997 was surprised to learn about the document from my short article ‘Mediators are not baby-sitters’, published in the Baku-based ‘Echo’ newspaper in summer 2003. He inquired me about it and got acquainted with its text for the first time. Then I deliberately recalled the agreement in the press of the conflict parties. The text was published. No reaction followed.

During the March 2005 parliamentary hearings in Yerevan with the participation Armenia’s Defense Minister **Serge Sargsian** (he was the one of those to sign the document) I stated that in spite of a lot of incidents the commitments are not fulfilled. **Sargsian** publicly answered that the Armenian side was ready to get back their fulfillment if the Azeri side does so. Baku

that was intently watching the hearings could not have missed the words of the Armenian minister. But Baku keeps silent.

As I heard that Nagorno Karabakh leadership (**Arkady Ghoukassian and Seyran Ohanyan**) had the same position, I wrote about it in the press in April. Both Yerevan and Stepanakert confirmed their commitment in late 2005. I again informed the media, including Azerbaijani press. Baku failed to hear this too.

I realize well that Azeri defense Minister **Safar Abiyev**, an old friend of mine, is not obliged to react to the publication of a former OSCE Minsk Group co-chairman, a retired ambassador, a private person now. But there is the statement of the Armenian defense minister. There is the Azeri community that has the right to know why the document approved by Azerbaijan's 'all-national leader' is being ignored. There are the wounded and the relatives of those killed because of the failure to fulfill the agreements. There is the Foreign Ministry, which is called to follow up the fulfillment of international documents. I believe that no nation, especially a nascent one, may be indifferent to its reputation.

The irresponsible approach to fulfillment of commitments is amazing. It seems as nobody cares for the people who die and the atmosphere that gets tenser. Moreover, Azerbaijan's moving its army positions ahead increases the number of incidents.

What is also typical, none of the parties withdrew its obligations and demanded amending the agreement. Nor did they accuse the other side of non-fulfillment! All the sides keep silence. Is it a deficit of political will? Or incomprehension of newly formed administrations of the importance of fulfilling the obligations? Or do they prefer to continue their propaganda war? Maybe, the document does not please Baku because of its ban on moving the positions? Or because it was also signed by the third party to the conflict – Nagorno Karabakh?

**The indifference of the OSCE**, which has been engaged in the conflict settlement for 14 years now, is even more mysterious. Especially as it has no other agreements and achievements on this conflict to its credit. On the occasion of the visit of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office **Dimitrij Rupel** to Yerevan and Baku (March 2005), I sent him an open letter, in which I stressed the



problem of incidents and the sides' disregard of their obligations. I wrote to him: 'The OSCE is also silent about this issue, even though it is the only agreement signed by all the parties thanks to its efforts.' Neither the Chairman-in-Office, nor the Secretary general or the OSCE Permanent Council took care about it. It was only at the London meeting in early 2005 that the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen slightly reminded the sides about their obligations.

Yet another point. I proposed to my Swedish partner, Ambassador **Anders Bjurner** that we, as two former co-chairmen, present jointly this problem to the OSCE structures and the parties. To be sure, I even sent copies of this message to Sweden through three independent routes in parallel. There was response from none of them. This also speaks about how much the representatives of the European Union and Western democracies value the interests of the two peoples and the Karabakh settlement. Signed and off one's hands!

All this story shows whether the high signatures under the documents are of value in this conflict. As for failures of other obligations, for example, the one on ceasefire, I have already written about them several times.

That is the whole story about the parties' ability to conclude and fulfill agreements, and that of the OSCE to achieve peace in Karabakh. Prior to the signing an agreement, it is worth asking each party's representative questions about who and how will fulfill the obligations assumed. And the mediators – about whether the OSCE will supervise it.

So the slogan of 2006 and the following years should be: 'Signing is half of the matter. The most important thing is fulfilling!'

REGNUM news agency on January 8, 2006.

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## **Too much ambiguity and deceit surrounding the Karabakh conflict**

The other day political analyst Vafa Guluzade, who was one of the closest ally of three of the Azeri presidents – Ayaz Mutaliev, Abulfaz Elchibey and Heydar Aliev during a number of years, made a rather imprudent statement concerning the political settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

He said in an interview to REGNUM news agency that there allegedly exist no documents generated in the framework of the negotiations related to the peaceful settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh. 'As a person who was directly involved in the negotiation process during a number of years I can declare with full responsibility: in the course of the entire negotiation process the conflicting sides had not created a single line of a document... None of the parties involved has the right to accuse the other of any undesirable or adverse actions'.

To put this allegoric statement into layman's terms: once the parties have not been able to reach an agreement, then they may not accuse each other of failure to comply with some obligations.

One cannot help but pity such a deplorable lapse of memory. Guluzade would have done better not to touch upon a matter as sensitive as this. Not only did he simply make a fool of himself personally, but he also the Azeri side on the whole with a hopelessly rotten reputation. Suffice it to read relevant documents, as well as recall facts that are known to me personally from reliable sources due to my mediatory work in 1992–96. It is high time the signatures of plenipotentiary representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan under a number of documents were made public. Among them were Safar Abiev, N. Sadykov, Mammadrafi Mamedov, Afiyaddin Dzhililov, Rasul Guliev, Heydar Aliev.

In 1993 these people's signatures could be more than once found under the commitment to hold a meeting between the top leaders of Azerbaijan and

Nagorno-Karabakh just 'one of these days,' but Baku was doing its best in order to postpone its fulfillment. It was reiterated in writing each time a new ceasefire was achieved. On September 12-13, 1993 representatives of the Azeri and Nagorno-Karabakh (Afiyaddin Dzhaliilov and the current Defence Minister Safar Abiev; and Arkady Ghukasyan) extended the ceasefire regime and adopted a joint communiqué. Due to his interest in suspension of the hostilities in the run-up to the presidential elections in Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliiev met with Robert Kocharyan in violation of all schedules and plans on September 25, 1993 only demanding to keep a low profile in respect of that meeting and promising continuation of the contacts.

The same persons had repeatedly undertaken to ensure a ceasefire on the part of Azerbaijan. Yet, despite their signatures, precisely that side had violated the ceasefire arrangements our times over in the hope of gaining the upper hand on the battlefield. Particularly memorable is the story of the disruption of ceasefire on December 16, 1993, right before the counter-offensive by the Azeri troops in different front sectors.

Guluzade can't have been in the dark about a whole series of such arrangements and their breakdowns. And if he allegedly meant something 'created' by parties themselves, without mediators' involvement, here are his own words about the document signed by the three sides in July 1994:

'The stipulation concerning cessation of fire 'until a peace agreement is signed' was achieved over the phone, bypassing Moscow; via Paris, thanks to the constructive and cooperative attitude of Zhirair Liparitian, ex-advisor to the Armenian ex-president Levon Ter-Petrosyan, who was my actual counterpart in negotiations. This stipulation was among the factors which had undoubtedly contributed to giving the ceasefire arrangements a fixed and lasting status. A peace process really took off, and people were dying no longer' (Zerkalo, 26.12.1998).

Why would one, after all, so openly contradict oneself, and 'with full responsibility' on top of it? So did the conflicting sides generate the magic formula themselves or didn't they create a 'single document line', after all?

On February 6, 1995 an agreement between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh concerning the enhancement of the ceasefire regime

determining the procedure for settling incidents breaking out along the contact line, was signed by Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh

With this objective in view, the three parties exchanged reliable telephone numbers for direct contacts between political and military leaders.

Almost every blessed day Azerbaijan makes public accusations against the Armenian side concerning alleged violations of the ceasefire arrangements along the 'front line' (as it is known there), yet itself equally fails to comply with the terms of those arrangements. Yerevan declared back in March 2005 that it is ready to resume the fulfillment of those commitments on its part. In May this year Stepanakert called upon Baku and Yerevan to follow those arrangements. Baku, however, maintained a stubborn silence. If this document needs further revision, Baku could have well proposed to introduce amendments or carry out some sort of fine-tuning. People continue to die there, Baku is wailing and moaning in its propaganda, yet refuses to fulfill the one and only agreement reached under the OSCE aegis.

Obligations to follow for both sides originated not only in the framework of negotiations, but equally resulted from outcome documents of international organisations and forums.

Thus, the OSCE summit held in Budapest decided on the basis of consensus to carry on negotiations between the parties to the conflict. No objections were voiced on the part of Heydar Aliev. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office declared expressly that Nagorno-Karabakh is a full-fledged party to this conflict. And yet, despite all this, Azerbaijan has been doing its utmost to cut Nagorno-Karabakh out of the negotiations.

Special case – the obligation of the UN member states to comply with the resolutions of the UN Security Council. After the fall of Kelbajar the UN Security Council adopted (upon an initiative coming from Azerbaijan's side) Resolution 822, but Baku shirked from complying with it, ignoring its fundamental demand – to cease military operations – for over a year.

This demand was reiterated in Resolutions 853, 874 and 884.

The Azeri troops continued their attempts to conduct active combat operations for half a year after the resolution was adopted. Baku only accepted a ceasefire when faced with a probability of a total collapse and by no means by way of some belated implementation of the UN Security Council

resolutions. It has incidentally failed to comply with all the other requirements contained in its resolutions.

A question arises: why is it that after November 1993 the UN Security Council ceased to adopt resolutions on Karabakh, even though opportunities and occasions for this were plenty? The answer is: precisely because one of the sides to the conflict ailed to comply with the fundamental requirement contained in them. Azerbaijan was the first and the most active side as far as disregard of the fundamental demand contained in the UN Security Council resolutions – putting an end to the bloodshed – was concerned.

With its persistence in demanding compliance with the resolutions solely as far as liberation of the occupied territories goes, Baku apparently counts on that the history of developments in that war has long been forgotten and no one would spot phoniness on the part of such zealous defenders of the UN Security Council's resolution.

The main goal of the Azeri tactic at the moment is to present a heinous scene of occupation, yet completely obscure the reasons leading to it and the reasons why it is still there. Tellingly, objective analysis of all the mistakes and downsides of the military campaign is practically under taboo there. Beyond all doubt, occupation of territories is a shameful anomaly for our modern world, but it all the same cannot be taken out of the dynamic of hostilities, or – consider it in isolation from a whole series of refusals on the part of Baku to cease the above-mentioned hostilities. All due to apprehensions and fears that once control over the presently occupied territories is regained, the agreements will once again be broken in order to be able to make another attack on Nagorno-Karabakh, this time from more advantageous positions.

There are equally commitments of a different nature – those that Azerbaijan upon its accession to the international organisations. Thus, OSCE members subscribe to all of the ten principles of equal worth governing international relations, however, Baku keeps insisting on a supposed priority of the principle of territorial integrity. Upon their accession to the Council of Europe, both Azerbaijan and Armenia have pledged to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by peaceful means and by peaceful means alone, yet rarely a day passes without some or other of its officials voicing threats to resort to

force. No one in Baku seems to dare to recall Article 9 of its own constitution, the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which stipulates the rejection of war as an instrument of settlement of international conflicts.

There have been cases of radical revision by Azerbaijan of its own positions (in May 1994 it went as far as to accept the signing of the 'minor agreement' proposed by Jan Eliasson, only to repudiate it shortly afterwards). Statements by the country's officials are ripe with contradictions (ranging from 'our patience has its limits' to 'time is on Azerbaijan's side'; now it is declared that nothing has been agreed in Paris and in Bukhara, now it turns out that only 2 items out of the 8 or 9 featuring on the agenda remain awaiting confirmation). Tactical shifts have become somewhat expected, even customary, on the part of Baku – appeals to international organisations with issues related to the Karabakh conflict, all in pursuit of outscoring the adversary in the field of propaganda, which does nothing other than hinder their examination and resolution on their merits in the OSCE framework. Thesealogisms and hesitations cannot be written down as mere lack of professionalism – there is something far more significant behind them.

Let us face it: there is too much mist and deceit insofar as the political tackling of the Karabakh problem is concerned. Could a bellicose campaign led by top officials be considered by their own people as anything other than mockery? Little wonder it is that the developments in the situation are often met with suspicion or distrust there. Hackneyed propaganda tricks (the proverbial 20% of the occupied territories, over a million refugees, etc etc) could not possibly have produced any different effect.

That is naturally not to say that the Armenian side never stooped to different tricks. In early September 1993 the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership made a public statement promising to abandon the town of Qubately which was seized the day before, yet defaulted on its promise. Not infrequently the Armenian side objected to the predetermination of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh prior to the opening of the OSCE Conference in Minsk, however, they were inconsistent in their demands to settle the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh's status in the same package in the first place. Yet, for all their ingenuity, in terms of non-observance of understandings reached and trickery they were far behind their opponents.

I deeply sympathise with the current co-chairing members of the OSCE Minsk Group who are locked in the painful and demanding process of conflict resolution constantly lacking reliable instruments to ensure the positions of the sides. Do they realise while working so hard on the elaboration of such 'principles' (and subsequently, of agreements) that they are doomed to have fidelity or infidelity to what they would sign hanging like a kind of sword of Damocles above them?

Naturally, anyone who ventures to voice the above-said will have to once again undergo criticism (it's no sweat). But these deplorable facts cannot be gainsaid and critics are not able to argue soundly against them.

Little secret it is that the key obstacle on the path to the peaceful settlement of this conflict is the deep mutual distrust of the conflicting sides. It is precisely that which compels them to seek primarily the fulfillment of their own demands. It is the legacy of the age-long strife between Armenians and Azeris and a deep scar left by the recent war, the result of the zealous efforts of ardent sowers of discord and one of the effects of the vicious cycle of endless negotiations that have been carried on for many years. Disrespect of promises, default on obligations assumed, all clearly highlight the tendency to engage in trickery and deceit, which only result in the distrust growing deeper and deeper. The leadership of any state, especially a young one, when faced with complicated challenges of winning their place on the international arena, should be keenly interested in earning a reputation of a serious partner, as far as negotiations and fulfillment of assumed obligations are concerned, or so it would seem. It is supposed to be anxious to avoid the burden of failures in fulfillment of obligations; it is supposed to avoid recurrences which could broken its image and reputation.

Still, there are no rules without exceptions. Sadly, even the pursuit of Europe, so popular in our times, does not always rid one of using standards that are far from being European in the spirit.

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## Two Helsinki Principles and an ‘Atlas of Conflicts’

Participants of armed ethno-political conflicts – simmering, or frozen but unresolved – tend to invoke principles of international law that best serve their interests. Some uphold the territorial integrity of nation states, while others defend the self-determination of peoples. Although this is a delicate matter, there is a pressing need to harmonize these provisions of the Helsinki Final Act.

### INTERNAL VS. EXTERNAL

Both of the abovementioned principles, like all 10 Helsinki principles, have equal value, and each one should be treated in conjunction with the others. However, some believe them to be mutually exclusive; others are inclined to interpret the first postulate as stipulating protection of state interests and privileges, and the second as positing the defense of individual or communal rights. In other words, the priority of the rights of a state over human rights is being called into question.

In some instances, attempts are made to eliminate the contradictions by separating the spheres of their application. Thus, the principle of territorial integrity is regarded as external (as a guarantee against encroachment by other states), while self-determination of peoples as internal. But oftentimes states attempt to use the first principle to fight internal movements for self-determination.

If the people agree to autonomy status, which leaves national borders unaffected, the collision between the two principles is minimized. But what happens when there are attempts to secede, to break away from a ‘union’ state? No Constitution (except the former Constitution of the Soviet Union) grants such a right. However, consider how many instances of secession there have been – sometimes peaceful, but more often bloody. In some instances, the first prin-



ciple prevails, but then the second wins over, and vice versa. Conflicts with a combination of factors are especially complex: movements for self-determination often rely on active support from the outside (cf. Kosovo and Albania, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, and South and North Ossetia).

Typically, the first reaction to a perceived clash of the two principles is the natural, conservative defense of territorial integrity and the inviolability of state borders. Only as it becomes clear that it is impossible to preserve the status quo in one state are the rights of those advocating self-determination recognized – at least, these forces are recognized as a party to the conflict.

Ironically, national movement leaders, as a rule, stand firm on the self-determination of peoples. However, once they have come to power, they change allegiances to the principle of territorial integrity of states.

This brings up the first question: How applicable is this principle in a conflict situation? And the second, how viable and effective is each of them in a specific historical/geographic situation? It is essential to discover the logic, the internal springs, and their connections with other rules and norms. This would help mitigate the intensity of conflicts and prevent the parties involved from blindly relying on a principle that they believe better suits their interests.

There is a need for a concept to gauge the effectiveness of both provisions with a clear-cut set of criteria, as well as a comprehensive, systemic approach, not merely an approach based on precedent (precedent is convenient on the tactical level, but the issue at hand requires a more thorough, in-depth study).

#### HERE AND NOW

The idea of a ‘Kosovo precedent’ provoked strong objections from the West. It would rather see special emphasis being placed on the specific, even unique characteristics of each particular conflict. But the concept of precedent does not presuppose a comprehensive or complete analogy. In the case with Kosovo, it is reduced to a narrow but fundamental question: Can a breakaway state acquire independence without the consent of the state from which it wants to secede? From this question we can see that the entire campaign against the ‘Kosovo precedent’ is off the mark.

Yet it is more important to set the record straight on the two principles as such.

First, a principle (especially in interrelation with other principles) is not a dogma. If any of the Helsinki principles can be assigned an 'absolute status,' these should rather be two other principles, which are also more applicable to conflict situations – namely, refraining from the threat or use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Second, a principle is an abstraction: it does not work outside specific circumstances. They predetermine the viability and effectiveness of both principles, which is relative and comparable. But a standard yardstick is needed to gauge their effectiveness. Their application in conjunction with 'counterforce' principles is a demand of modern civilization: in the 21st century, the international community should raise the bar on these standards.

Third, historicism is an essential element in analyzing specific processes and events. After all, the array of Final Act principles is a product of a specific historical period, predetermined by the outcome of World War II in Europe. This comprised the existence of two systems and two opposing camps, as well as nuclear weapons. It serves as a kind of a truce, a ceasefire – between antagonists in an effort to avoid World War III. The 10 Helsinki principles provided a legal framework to the balance of interests between the two centers of power, serving as the 'rules of the game' for relations between states during that era. But that era is over.

Both principles are inviolable, but today the emphasis should be shifted to their applicability and especially their viability and effectiveness. No international processes or events occur outside specific circumstances. So it is not enough to accurately cite a principle: each side should also substantiate its applicability and effectiveness.

What were the main characteristics of the 1990s? It was an era marked by the disintegration of states and formation of new ones in Eurasia and elsewhere. During that tectonic, force majeure period, the principle of territorial integrity proved to be not as fail-proof as it had been before. If this proposition is absolute and incontestable as some say it is, why then did it not save the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia or Ethiopia? The principle of self-determination granted sovereignty to 23 Union republics (15 in the Soviet Union, six in the SFRY, and two in Czechoslovakia), as well as to Eritrea.

Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transdnestria, and Nagorno-Karabakh are both actors and products of objective circumstances – demographic and political changes, disintegration of states, wars, etc. It is essential to understand the logic of change to take reality into account. Kosovo may become yet another argument, but only an additional one, for one or the other approach.

#### SOME CRITERIA

*There is a large number of factors in the applicability and viability of principles in each specific conflict – primarily the factors of ‘civilization’. Following are some of these requirements: the period of time that a specific entity has been part of a ‘union state’; the ethnic makeup of a territory that has become a subject of dispute, and its evolution and dynamics over at least the past 100 years; is this a popular movement or a struggle between some mafia clans; what kinds of methods are being used – peaceful or terrorist; how long has a seceding entity been in control of its territory; have there been any clashes; if so, how long, frequent and intensive have they been?*

Needless to say, both **the course and specifics of an armed conflict** are critical. Are all parties committed to the idea that there is no alternative to a peace settlement? Who advocates a peaceful solution and who is inclined to favor the use of force? Which of the parties involved is ready to back up its commitment to peace by signing a ceasefire agreement? Who is for dialog, direct contacts and confidence building measures, and who is against? Are there any displaced persons and refugees? How many are there on each side? Are there conditions for their repatriation or what impediments are there? Who is observing the agreements that have been signed? Have the norms of international humanitarian law been violated (obviously, their gross and massive violations seriously affect the viability of any of the two principles under consideration)? Have any attempts been made to find a peaceful solution – for example, through a referendum? If so, how was it organized? Or how can it be organized? Does the entity in question have trappings of statehood, self-governance, etc.? How representative and democratic is its system, especially compared to the ‘opposite’ system? What are its chances for survival?

It is extremely important to differentiate between the causes and effects of a conflict: each has its own pre-history and legal specifics. Other essential

factors include the form of secession, the extent of succession with respect to a 'union' state, and the validity of these succession rights from the perspective of international law.

The recognition of a state's borders by the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, etc. is oftentimes cited as an argument here. This is important, of course, but has no legal force since, in admitting new members, international organizations do not approve their socio-economic or political systems, their borders or prevailing religion. Any recognition of a state is a political act: its legal effects rarely go beyond the framework of relations between two particular entities.

There have been some rather amusing developments along these lines. The Soviet Union's administrative borders, for example, were sometimes rather arbitrary (remember Karabakh and the transfer of the Crimea to Ukraine). Today, by a quirk, Westerners, who reject all things Soviet, uphold the administrative borders that existed during the Soviet Union. Is such a precedent good or bad? It is good if it can prevent new conflicts. But what if bloodshed has already occurred in such regions? Should we pretend that nothing happened?

In short, a well defined, graduated, and formalized scale of criteria is needed. A broad discussion with the participation of all parties concerned – including experts on international law, political scientists, journalists, and diplomats – would be extremely helpful in this situation.

This 'political atlas' of confrontation – i.e., a sum total of characteristic features of an era, region, conflict specifics, etc. – will help establish a kind of a viability and effectiveness coefficient for each of the two principles under consideration. This would help cool some hot heads and provide valuable guidelines to the international community in its entire diversity.

But conflicts should be ultimately resolved at the negotiating table or through popular referendums. This rules out the use of 'random' principles, ignoring essential characteristics and circumstances of a specific conflict.

#### AN 'ATLAS OF CONFLICTS'

The international community is, without a doubt, interested in a peaceful settlement of disputes between states or parties to a conflict with full respect

for the norms of international humanitarian law. With regard to conflicts, any of the two aforementioned principles must definitely be linked with the requirement for peace settlement.

International organizations would be well advised to be more consistent and persevering in this regard. All Helsinki principles are elements of civilization as compared to war.

Therefore the scale of criteria should be built on principles of civilization, with special priority being given to the aforementioned requirements of the international community for all parties to a conflict. There must be no incentives to a party that continues to threaten the use of force, refuses to pursue a peaceful solution, arouses hatred and hostility or destabilizes the overall situation.

The development of a 'political atlas' of any conflict comprises three main stages:

- elaboration of a general scale of criteria or characteristics of conflicts;
- determination of the share value of each criterion depending on how useful it is for a peaceful solution;
- application of these guidelines to a specific conflict, taking into account historical, geographic, regional, and other characteristics of a conflict. Needless to say, this is not about producing some numerical indices but only general guidelines and proportions.

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## Is There A Way Out of the Karabakh Deadlock?

*Vladimir Kazimirov*

The political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is entering a phase of stagnancy, which is unavoidable in the run-up to the presidential elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan. This makes it possible to examine the problem in more detail and to look for ways out of the long stalemate.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was the first armed conflict in the post-Soviet space and the biggest in terms of the scale of military action. It also has a very specific configuration and dimensions.

**First**, it began back in 1988, when the territory was still part of the Soviet Union, and reached its peak in the period between 1992–1994, when military operations involved an already independent Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh proper that enjoyed strong support from Armenia. That is why the Nagorno-Karabakh problem is further complicated by internal and external contentions.

**Second**, the conflict involves two military camps – the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis, but three political forces, since the governments in Nagorno-Karabakh's capital Stepanakert and in Yerevan have similar, but not identical interests.

**Third**, Baku was unpleasantly surprised by its military failures, as well as by a full loss of control over five districts around Nagorno-Karabakh and a partial loss of control over another two districts.

The long history of the conflict adds to its acuteness. The clashes of 1905 and 1918, the expulsion of ethnic Armenians from the Nakhichevan area and the squeezing-out of Azerbaijanis from Armenia, the tragic and bloody events in times of peace (in the cities of Sumgait and Baku) and during military operations (Hojali and Maraga) fertilized the mutual animosity fanned

by radical nationalists and pseudo-patriots. Mutual mistrust is still slowing down the entire process of a peace settlement.

Finally, there is no other conflict in the former Soviet Union where there is such an overt desire for revenge. In this light, the position and arguments of the Azerbaijani side require close attention.

#### THE STATUS OF DISCORD

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict stems from and spins around the problem of the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Yerevan is seeking to legitimize the region's withdrawal from Azerbaijan, but Baku has ruled out any prospects for this. The positions of both sides have remained practically unchanged during the 13-year armistice – they remain widely different and mutually exclusive. Azerbaijan continues to postpone decisions on Nagorno-Karabakh's status and confines itself to pledging the broadest possible autonomy for Nagorno-Karabakh.

It is clear that no one will be able to determine Nagorno-Karabakh's status without the region's own participation in the process, and yet an attempt to use a resource as democratic as a plebiscite has also caused sharp discord. Azerbaijan's 1995 Constitution only allows the holding of nationwide referendums (the young state has an inclination for unitarianism due to its patchy ethnic make-up). The Constitution slashes the mechanism of direct democracy in Azerbaijan for the exact purpose of denying the Nagorno-Karabakh population's right to independently decide its future. (Yet it is well known that far from all Canadians voted in a referendum on the status of Quebec; far from all Spaniards on the status of Catalonia; far from all Ethiopians on the status of Eritrea; and obviously far from all the British will vote in a possible referendum on the status of Scotland.) References to the inviolability of the Azerbaijani Constitution do not hold water, as any changes in Nagorno-Karabakh's status (including the cultural autonomy proposed by Armenia-phobes) will require constitutional amendments.

In the meantime, Baku is unwilling to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh even as a party to the conflict, although it signed ten various agreements with Stepanakert during the war, and none of those documents involved Yerevan. No one can explain in Azerbaijan now what capacity Nagorno-Karabakh was

perceived in when it was a warring side. Alas, there are many such logical controversies. Persecutions of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh and a refusal to have any contact with them stand in discrepancy with the promises of recognizing their status as fellow-citizen and granting them a most advanced autonomy. This lack of realistic thinking and the logic of 'total' struggle block any positive acts, even measures to build trust.

#### THE ROOT-CAUSES OF OCCUPATION

Officials in Baku realize only too well that Nagorno-Karabakh's status is the main problem, and yet they are reluctant to recognize it and do their best to emphasize the importance of eliminating the unfavorable aftermath of military action – the occupation by Armenians of seven districts in Nagorno-Karabakh – as the top priority. Azerbaijan claims that the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh is also occupied. Ethnic Armenians, who constitute three-fourths of Nagorno-Karabakh's indigenous population, control most parts of the region with the assistance of neighboring Armenia, and Baku interprets this fact as occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenia, all the more so that Azerbaijanis have fled those places.

Occupation is a product of incursions and combat operations. This should have turned into an anomalism with the arrival of the twenty-first century, but zones of occupation still exist in other parts of the world. Take Afghanistan, Iraq, or the territories around Israel for example. It is equally important to clarify the situation with the seizure of lands in Karabakh, to trace down the logic that the parties to the conflict espoused in the 1990s, and to analyze the aftermath of their actions at the time. No claims about occupation would have been made if military action had been avoided, and the repercussions would not have been so perilous had it been curbed quickly. Military action would have stopped somewhat earlier then, and the towns of Susa and Lacin would not have fallen to the Armenians. Consequently, there would have been no seizure of Kelbajar, Agdam, Fizuli or southwest Azerbaijan.

Mediators called constantly for an immediate end to the fighting, but the chances for a truce were ignored for more than two years. Four ceasefire agreements and other peacemaking initiatives were disrupted. Although the intermediaries condemned seizures of territory and the expansion of the



conflict, the overwhelming spirit of the struggle pushed the sides toward giving increasingly more attention to military, not political, strategies. It was the dragging out of the hostilities – and not ‘Armenian appetites’ at all – that led to the seizure of Azerbaijani lands and the occupation.

As an intermediary, I remember perfectly well who would evade the cessation of hostilities then – it was the side that would eventually sustain the most telling blow. Azerbaijan bet on a quick, forceful resolution to the conflict for too long (and there are still relapses of such thinking). It was Baku that abolished the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region in 1990, yet it accuses the Armenians of failing to stay within its borders during the military conflict. The side that for more than a year (from 1993 to 1994) ignored a UN Security Council Resolution demanding that military operations be stopped and continued to pile on preconditions should realize its immediate responsibility for the consequences – for the loss of ever more territories and for the swelling waves of migrants and refugees.

The events also had a purely military underpinning. In addition to superior numbers, Azerbaijan found itself with many more weapons than Armenia did after the breakup of the Soviet Union and this predestined the tactics of the sides to some degree. Baku attempted and launched offensives, set up a blockade around Nagorno-Karabakh, and frequently subjected its territory to shelling and bombing. The imbalances of manpower and armaments, the lack of military aircraft, rugged terrain and irregular supplies forced the Armenians to adopt more flexible tactics. They had to concentrate their forces on the most decisive sections of the front line and to organize raids and seizures to push the enemy away from the region, to interfere with the bombing and shelling, and to make the front narrower to adjust for the shortage of forces. The Armenians were helped greatly by an ability to mobilize quickly and the motivation for survival (which is stronger than considerations of prestige or anything else). Disorganization and feuding in enemy ranks also proved helpful.

This is a brief outline of the beginning of Karabakh’s occupation that eventually had repercussions. Had Baku held back from furnishing the Armenians with the above-mentioned chances, they would not have seized so much land. On their part, the Armenians cut all corners skillfully – they

would not reject or disrupt ceasefire proposals and would sometimes accept unfavorable recommendations from mediators, doing so in the hope that the enemy would act as predicted and would frustrate ceasefire agreements anyway. The May 12, 1994 armistice agreement fixed the quo status at the time – Armenian control over Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts of Azerbaijan proper, as well as Azerbaijani control over some areas that had had a mostly Armenian population.

In pushing Armenian occupation into the spotlight in every way, official Baku hushes up (mostly from its own citizens) how it came about and what role betting on the use of force and regular disruptions of the ceasefire played in it. The incumbent authorities look incapable of analyzing the past. They only rebuke the Popular Front of Azerbaijan and former president Abulfaz Elcibey, and misrepresent the occupation for the sake of beefing up the image of Heydar Aliyev (incidentally, his rule was marked by far more rejections and disruptions of the ceasefire, as well as by the loss of five out of seven districts). There are numerous instances where the situation regarding Karabakh was hushed up. For example, each side accused the other of ethnic cleansing, while refusing to admit that its own actions can scarcely be described otherwise.

Azerbaijan, by citing its own sovereignty and the hardships of refugees, is seeking a virtually unconditional withdrawal of Armenians from the lands they have occupied. In order to gain more time, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has shifted the focus to what he calls ‘the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenia’ and is demanding a pullout of troops from there. This provides him with a reliable guarantee against an agreement that would be much more dangerous for him now than it was for his father.

#### LANDS IN EXCHANGE – FOR WHAT?

By ‘staying behind’ in the occupied territories, the Armenians said at first that they did not have claims on the territories, except for the Lacin corridor that ensures land communications between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. A mistrust of Baku’s amicability compelled the governments in Stepanakert and in Yerevan to reinforce the line of contact as much as possible, as Armenia had deployed its military there. The Armenians

started asserting later that the occupied territories were their historical lands which they had ostensibly liberated and which were not subject to return. Officially, Yerevan was more cautious in this respect, pledging its readiness to pull out of the territories gradually and holding back Kelbajar and Lacin for the time being until a referendum on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh was held. Diehards in both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are sharply critical of the withdrawal concept and are quite able to fight against its implementation.

The sides have been impeding the settlement process for years by making inordinate demands and using versatile gimmicks. The Armenians, under the slogan 'territories for status,' pressed Azerbaijan to give them Nagorno-Karabakh in exchange for the Armenian withdrawal from the occupied lands. On his part, Heydar Aliyev put all the blame on the Popular Front in the hope that public opinion would accept the deal if, by way of compensation, control was ensured over a road linking Megri and Nakhichevan (i.e. Azerbaijan proper and its enclave via Armenia). However, the idea failed to take hold in both Baku and Yerevan.

The 'territories for status' formula is imbalanced and looks like an arbitrariness of the victor, since it is based on 'the last test of forces.' On the other hand, Baku's eagerness to offset it by calls for revenge looks highly unpromising, too. While the Azerbaijani calls refer to a future war, the Armenian formula refers to a past war. This is a quagmire, since no one will resurrect the victims of the past, and revenge would mean numerous new victims and unclear results. A more modest equation suggesting 'territories for security' would look much better, as it would reflect the balance of interests of people living in Nagorno-Karabakh and in neighboring parts of Azerbaijan. It also implies much more justice. Compared with the current situation, all the sides involved would be winners then, and each in its own way. The key here lies in the degree of reliability of general security and in the sides' commitment to their obligations.

#### HOW TO BEGIN WITHDRAWAL FROM FOREIGN LANDS

From the very start, the Karabakh talks recognized that finding a solution to the status of Nagorno-Karabakh would take time and would be for-

mulated after the consequences of the military conflict were eliminated. At the same time, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh insisted on a package resolution to all problems.

The argument over whether to adopt a gradual or a package method lost its significance over time as the mediators and parties to the conflict opted for a mixed version, incorporating both gradual and package elements. Now the package focuses not on the region's final status but on the procedure for determining it by the free will of the Nagorno-Karabakh people. The Armenians have agreed to an initial withdrawal from five districts around Nagorno-Karabakh before its final status is determined. All the sides have agreed to a stage-by-stage implementation of any agreements that they may reach.

An agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh's provisional status might defuse tensions during the transition period during which talks will continue and the sides will effectuate coordinated steps. However, unlike Azerbaijani political analysts, the government in Baku does not see any sense in such an agreement, even though Nagorno-Karabakh's provisional status is inescapable and already exists – *de facto* without being endorsed *de jure*.

What is needed then to pull the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement problem out of its long deadlock and to begin a gradual cession of the occupied – mostly Azerbaijani – lands?

In the first place, it is essential to pull the problem out of the previous military context and to put it into the domain of politics, law and morals, given the importance of the quickest possible – and unconditionally voluntary – return of displaced persons and refugees to their former homes.

This is where psychological and emotional factors trouble the Armenians, who claim that these territories form a security belt around Nagorno-Karabakh, especially since so many lives were lost fighting for these lands. Radical nationalists insist that the population be moved there as a kind of compensation for the fact that scarcely none of the 350,000 to 400,000 Armenian refugees will want to live under the authority of Azerbaijan again (although the Azerbaijanis may also demand a return to Armenia of their fellow-countrymen expelled in 1988). Or the other party may issue counter-claims for the expulsion of Armenians from Nakhichevan. These appeals to the past might roll on endlessly.

## THE MAIN OBSTACLE

The biggest obstacle to freeing the territories, however, is posed by regular threats on the part of the Azerbaijani leaders to resort to the use of force. These threats contain an element of bravado that aims to support domestic politics, but Baku's eagerness to intimidate Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia has forced them to consider the problem in the previous military key and to hang on to the well-reinforced line of contact. Besides, this is the best present to those who condemn a pullout from the occupied lands. Will anyone reduce their line of defense, especially given the current degree of mistrust and incessant threats from official quarters? Yerevan and Stepanakert believe that it could only be possible to pull out of any of the occupied districts (and thus destroy the 'Maginot Line') if there is total confidence that hostilities will not resume.

Political scientist Fikret Sadykhov characterized Baku's mood this way: 'For the past ten years Azerbaijan has been placed on the same bench with a country that occupied the territories belonging to us. We are forced into talks with it and it is demanding that we find a peaceful solution, although the occupation of our lands was carried out militarily. Naturally, this state of affairs rests on elemental injustice.' Could it be that Dr Sadykhov is unaware of what happened and how? His line of logic looks somewhat strange.

The interests of a peaceful resolution and an end to the occupation demand that all the parties strictly abide by the principles of the OSCE that call for a peaceful settlement of disputes and refraining from the threat or use of force. These principles were laid out in the Helsinki Accords as a basis for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

## WHY REVENGE IS DANGEROUS FOR THOSE WHO SEEK IT

A resumption of hostilities, should it become a reality, might have far worse an impact and inflict far greater losses and devastation than the military action of 1992-1994. This time, well-equipped armies would replace the then semi-guerilla groupings. Still, none of the sides will be capable of a blitzkrieg of this sort in the next four or five years, given the current proportion of forces. Moreover, protracted military operations play havoc primarily on those who launch them. The fact per se requires a conscientious approach on the part of top leaders.

A war would be equally dangerous for the international community. The South Caucasus is not the region where one should stand by and watch indifferently as things unfold. It would not be easy to justify a new slaughter by references to the Armenian occupation, since everyone sees that both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are insisting unequivocally on a compromise peaceful solution. Amid this background, Baku is threatening them with a war if they do not capitulate, which means a demand for an unconditional retreat from everywhere, including Nagorno-Karabakh itself. A new use of force in this region would be viewed as a still greater anomaly than the detestable heritage of the past war – the occupation of foreign territories.

The side which violates the armistice will come under fire as an encroacher on OSCE principles and on its obligations to the Council of Europe. It will be condemned by member-states of the OSCE's Minsk Group and by its powerful co-chairmen. High-ranking officials from a number of countries and influential international organizations have spoken out openly against armed action. Many may recall that war is against Azerbaijan's Constitution, in which Article 9 denounces hostilities as an instrument for resolving international conflicts. Bellicose threats from Azerbaijani leaders are already undermining respect for the country's basic law. They keep citing the Constitution on the issue of a Nagorno-Karabakh referendum, but never say a word about Article 9.

New hostilities will also give others an opportunity to remember the buildup of the arms race in the region and a sharp increase in Azerbaijan's defense spending. The disregard with which Baku treated the February 4, 1995 agreement with Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia on stopping incidents at the line of contact (signed at Heydar Aliyev's instruction) will also contribute to this. Barely a day goes by without a report by the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry on violations of the armistice by the Armenians and on victims of Armenian gunfire. Here we come across another flaw in logic. If Baku wants to see an end to these armed incidents, why does it not think about meeting the provisions of a document officially signed under the auspices of the OSCE?

Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh have on many occasions issued statements that they are ready to observe the agreement if Azerbaijan shows its readiness to do the same, but Baku has kept silent on this issue for more than

ten years. If Baku finds the agreement imperfect, it would only be logical to adjust it, amend it or sign a new one. Yet it looks like victims are more preferable as a pretext for fanning tensions and conducting vociferous propaganda.

So for the time being forceful revenge seems to be an unprofitable adventure at least, but it might entail very grave consequences. As the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried indicated, a war would ruin Azerbaijan's future.

### A COURSE TOWARD HISTORIC RECONCILIATION

Hawkish blinders are not letting Azerbaijan see that it will benefit from renouncing an armed solution to the conflict. Not only will this renunciation help funnel more money to the development and improvement of people's lives, but it will also strip Armenians of the arguments in favor of 'the Nagorno-Karabakh security zone.' The return of many districts without a single shot being fired would mean an important success for the Azerbaijani authorities and would find broad international support. This will not solve the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh's status, but it would radically improve the atmosphere and open up ways to find a compromise at further negotiations.

The sides have so far ignored the apparent benefits of a productive approach toward a peace settlement. None of the sides is ready to declare a long-term course toward a historic reconciliation between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians that would be the only correct solution in this situation, and none is ready to offer to the opposing side that this be done together. In the meantime, an evasion or rejection of this offer is fraught with dire costs in the international arena. The international community would actively support even a unilateral declaration of this kind of course and would thus put the other conflicting side into an unprofitable position. And yet Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh underestimate this resource, while Azerbaijan fans negativism and is pushing itself deeper and deeper into a blind alley where it will be still harder to turn toward a constructive solution, which might simply resemble a capitulation against today's background. A change of leaders will give the Armenians more room to maneuver, since it will be easier for new people to take steps toward a settlement. In contrast, an Azerbaijani president seeking re-election is much more shackled by the policies he conducted during this term of office.

The only way to a political breakthrough in Karabakh and to the earliest possible withdrawal from the occupied lands is to completely abandon the chimera of a forceful resolution to the conflict. The sides should ensure comprehensive conditions for the non-resumption of hostilities under the mediation of the international community. This is not an area where one can exclusively rely on oneself or on external patronage. Neither way is reliable if taken alone and there need to be a combination of efforts.

It is widely known that the sides have pledged to resolve the conflict peacefully. So what is stopping them from formalizing those pledges in an agreement on the non-resumption of military actions, considering that the case in hand is a confirmation of previous obligations, not the assuming of new ones? There is no doubt that these pledges were given to international organizations, not to the opposite sides in the conflict, but this does not change the whole situation. The parties should create grounds for attaining the first plausible shifts in the settlement process and eradicate the calls for war that one could hear over recent years.

The sides could sign an agreement declaring that there is no alternative to a peaceful solution. A divergence of this kind would be difficult for the Azerbaijanis, but Baku cannot blame anyone for this. Guarantees from the UN Security Council or, at least from the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group, are needed to ensure that the document does not boil down to a sheer declaration and to prevent the sides from renouncing or disrupting the commitments it specifies.

It looks rather strange that high-ranking officials at the OSCE have not yet proposed an agreement like that, since their mission is to promulgate an exclusively peaceful resolution to the conflict. They do not have the right to offer feeble reactions to serial threats coming from officials, to incidents at the line of contact, or to the acceleration of the arms race. Mediators are not referees, and yet they are obliged to defend the peace mission that the parties to the conflict undersigned a long time ago. The OSCE is first of all an organization for security, and cooperation in Europe comes second.

A practical question unavoidably arises then: Where should the Armenian-Karabakh troops retreat to until the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh is defined? Both the central Azerbaijani government and the Nagorno-Kara-



bakh government eliminated the borders of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region long ago. In addition, those borders had an overly indented contour that is totally unsuitable for placing forces along their perimeter even during a transition period. In order to begin an earliest possible withdrawal from these occupied territories, the parties need direct talks on straightening the border and making it serve as a conventional border between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. However, Yerevan will hardly take upon itself the organization of such talks. And will the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities allow it to do this?

It would be highly desirable to launch talks between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh as early as possible, even prior to an agreement on the exclusively peaceful resolution of the conflict, in order to avoid intentional delays in the pullout of troops. As Baku brushes Nagorno-Karabakh aside at the negotiations with Yerevan, it only impedes the start of direct talks with the much-troubled region, all the more so that 'contacts between the two communities in Nagorno-Karabakh' are a poor replacement for negotiating.

#### COERCION TO PEACE

Considering the heavy burden of past conflicts between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians, there have been many specific demands issued to the international peacekeeping operation in Nagorno-Karabakh. It must be flexible in form and tough in essence, short in deadlines (just two to three years) due to its huge cost and reliable in what concerns final results.

It will require a two-stage mandate, including the right to use force at any time against those who violate the agreement. Control over demilitarized territories in the first phase will require that military observers be deployed along the line of contact and the line of disengagement (especially in the spots where communication routes cross the two lines). A mobile strike force will also need to be deployed. Once a signal is received from the observers, the force should be able to advance quickly to the place where the violation occurred (or, possibly, to two places at once) to block or even repel the enemy. Moreover, measures against violators, ostensibly coming from the civilian population, should also be considered.

The mandate for the second phase should from the very start predestine the transformation of peacekeeping efforts into the enforcement of peace. The countries taking part in it will be expected to offer firm guarantees for resuming it in this very form. A changeover from peacekeeping to peace enforcement, if need be, would rule out or considerably limit the possibility that one of the sides would be tempted to return to forceful methods after the first phase is completed.

Such toughness of the international operation in Karabakh is justified by the fact that, unlike in Abkhazia, South Ossetia or the Dniester region, much more is at stake here than the settlement of this particular conflict. The case in hand deals with the importance of fully eliminating bloody clashes between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the long term, as such misadventures have regularly plagued life in the entire Caucasian region in the past and can aggravate the international situation on the whole in the present.

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## **An Important Document or Just a Regular?**

Debates around the Nagorno-Karabakh Declaration signed in Moscow on November 2, 2008 by the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia have already started between its supporters and critics.

It is to be generally noted that the Karabakh conflict is marked for a few documents signed by the parties. There hasn't been a single document signed on the level of leaders of the two conflicting states ever since the ceasefire was achieved with Moscow's mediation in May 1994. In May 1992 the presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran signed a joint declaration in Tehran, yet literally a couple of days later a new outbreak of hostilities around Shusha and Lachin clearly devalued it. In February 1995, with the assistance of the OSCE Minsk Group's chairing members – Russia and Sweden, the ministers of all three conflicting sides signed, upon document supported instructions of their respective leaders, an agreement on enhancement of the ceasefire regime, but have long departed from observing it, in spite of numerous incidents along the contact line and repeated reminders on the part of the mediators.

There is no gainsaying that this is more of a political document than a legal one, but if the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia realise the true worth of their own signatures, this document is to a great extent obliging. But the significance of the Moscow declaration with its five items lies not only in the level at which it was signed.

It is its essence that matters. The declaration is riddled with phrases tuned to facilitate peaceful settlement of the conflict by political means. This notably restrains the itch of certain hotheads to spark new hostilities, their irresponsible bellicose statements and calls, which barely contribute to the growing tensions in the region. The presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia declared their resolution to do their best to achieve an improvement in the

situation in the South Caucasus and work for stability and security, which is of fundamental importance in this region.

The aftertaste of the recent treacherous acts of the Georgian regime, which resulted in tragic consequences for its own people as well, confers special emphasis to the Moscow declaration of the presidents of the three Trans-Caucasian states.

Equally pertinent are their statements confirming the importance of the mediatory efforts by the co-chairing members of the Minsk Group (Russia, USA and France), of the proposals concerning the fundamental principles of conflict resolution passed on to the two sides in Madrid a year ago, and after relevant discussions with their participation. This is an effective instrument for tackling the rather airy sensational speculations concerning possible search for new forms and patterns of conflict resolution in Karabakh.

The presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia agreed to continue with the negotiations, including topical negotiations, and instructed their respective foreign ministers to ramp up their preparatory efforts. Equally important is the resolution to create conditions for the implementation of confidence-building measures, even though the interests of conflict settlement have been long and unambiguously demanding their direct application and not merely creation of conditions necessary for this.

Bringing to the agenda of the question of legally binding international guarantees in respect of all aspects and stages of peaceful settlement in principle is a step in the right direction, however, so far it greatly anticipates the prospect of signing primarily of legally binding agreements parties to which will be all of the conflicting sides, who are precisely the ones to demand external guarantees. For example, for all its importance, the proclamation of resolution to settle the conflict by political means is not yet of equal weight as, say, a legally binding agreement on non-use of force in the framework of its settlement. We can all remember what President Saakashvili's evasion, under a variety of pretexts and excuses, of entering into similar agreements in respect of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

On the whole, despite its declarative nature, the new document marked an important step forward insofar as the settlement in Karabakh is con-

cerned, and what is needed now is demonstration of a political will on the part of the two leaders for its implementation and affirmation in action. A new summit meeting seems to be looming on the horizon as soon as the ministers are ready with necessary preparations for it.

Certain figures, political analysts and journalists from both sides of the conflict – though perhaps to a different extent – hastened to downplay the significance of the Moscow Declaration claiming that it contained nothing new, was lacking in specifics, and was of a purely formal nature. They obviously failed to fathom the novelty of the situation in the region and on the international arena on the whole, which was, on the other hand, fully taken into account by the heads of the three countries in question. Even earlier made statements now assumed a far more distinct, demonstrative contents.

*Vremya Novostey, December 9, 2008.*

## **High-level Signature, Albeit a ‘Double-bottomed’ One** *Who is in reality ready to sacrifice the prospect of a peaceful settlement in Karabakh?*

At the meeting of foreign ministers of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe member states that closed on December 5 in Helsinki, the co-chairing members of the OSCE Minsk Group – Russia, the US and France – called upon the sides to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to reaffirm their commitment to its peaceful resolution. One might reasonably wonder: why reiterate? After all, on November 2 the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia had already signed the Moscow declaration through the whole of which ran an emphatic aim to work for the improvement of the situation, stability and security in South Caucasus, to achieve a peaceful settlement in Karabakh. There can be no signature more authoritative than that of presidents. So what may have prompted the ministers to reiterate the appeal which had been seemingly already accepted by the state leaders?

The events of August in the Caucasus made those who quite often voiced threats to resort to force in solving this long-standing conflict. Their signature under the Moscow declaration prevented Baku from resuming its bellicose rhetoric. But not for long. In late November the Azeri President Ilham Aliiev began to argue in his interview with the Italian television that this declaration ‘does not bar Baku from attempting to employ certain elements of military solution to this conflict. No one will be able to trace any commitments in the body of this declaration that would deter Azerbaijan from pursuing the military scenario of conflict settlement’.

This is most certainly a rather curious interpretation of an international document and one’s own signature under it! In other words, it appears that one is ready to declare one thing but practically do something quite different. Does peaceful settlement mean absolute rejection of military measures? Can

one really hope that such an 'interpretation' and conduct would facilitate the improvement of the situation, promote the stability and security in the region, encourage mutual trust and effective cooperation? This is how the true worth of every signature is revealed.

Especially considering that the arguments offered by Baku to support its cause in this conflict are far from being uncontested. The fact that Nagorno-Karabakh has long become the subject and the object of is hardly possible to conceal. It is not that easy to portray it all merely as 'Armenian aggression' at the end of the last century because the origins and the dynamic of the conflict are far more deep-rooted and complicated. It is quite clear that Baku cannot accept the occupation of the 7 Azeri regions, while concealing their own role in bringing it about: occupation would have never been the case, had it not been for Azerbaijan's stubborn persistence in carrying on its military operations in 1992–1994 in the vain hope of scoring a victory by armed force.

The right to self-defence is interpreted by them far too loosely. It is precisely the threats voiced by Baku and its reluctance to work for peace and security in Nagorno-Karabakh that provides the Armenian side with a pretext for postponing the withdrawal of its troops from the occupied territories.

What both Azeris and Armenians need is to put an end to the age-old confrontation and

standoff, instead of a new, even more dramatic bloodshed. The Moscow declaration paves the way to the eventual elimination of wars between them, yet requires a more thorough, detailed approach (instead of 'double-bottomed signatures'). Its very essence lies in the factual absence of any alternatives to the political settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

*Vremya Novostey, December 9, 2008.*

## **Russia, OSCE and the Karabakh Conflict** *(15th anniversary of the ceasefire in Karabakh)*

The tendency shown by the Western CSCE members to use this organisation in their manipulations with the sole purpose of working against interests of Russia first manifested itself in 1992, with the Karabakh conflict becoming the first milestone in the long chain of efforts aimed at gradually ousting it from the Transcaucasus region. Russia began its mediatory work in Karabakh in September 1991, six months before the CSCE did in March 1992. Objectively speaking, Moscow had more chances to succeed than the CSCE, which had neither experience in that line, nor knowledge about the region. The Western partners were only setting up their first embassies in the three newly emerged South Caucasus states, establishing contacts with their governments at the time.

**Russia's success in that domain could potentially strengthen its influence in the Trans-Caucasian region, something that the US and other Western countries most emphatically resisted.** The CSCE served as a cover-up for their geopolitical plans, making the latter look like concern with collective peacemaking efforts. They took further advantage of Andrei Kozyrev's naïve reckoning to involve the CSCE into the Karabakh peacemaking efforts in order to enable Russia to operate there under its flag and with its funding.

In 1992–94 Russia and the CSCE were working **hand in hand**, which helped them to achieve efficiency in cooperation, yet the Western powers deemed it more important to spend their efforts on putting obstacles for Moscow. We proceeded from the utility of **complementarity** of efforts. This is what the earliest documents adopted by the CSCE with regard to Karabakh.

Russia was active both in its own mediatory work and as a member of the OSCE Minsk Group (MG) which was formed in June 1992. It was on the basis of our proposals that the MG pivotal work on achieving a cessation of military operations was organised. Even despite our criticism of the MG, its fail-



ures and lack of consistency which we voiced at its sessions, we nevertheless supported its proposals, kept the sides to the conflict in the dark regarding our differences with its other members and naturally demanded from the MG leaders to refrain from indisposing the conflicting sides against Russia's proposals. In word, the US concurred, but in deed stood against the implementation of the 'Russian plan'. In this connection President Boris Yeltsin had to address a special message to President Clinton on February 8, 1994.

The Western partners opposing to Russia dismissed our proposal to draw up a mandate for the MG, because such a mandate would have limited MG abilities to interfere in any matter. The Minsk Group may be the only agency within the OSCE that has neither a resolution on its establishment, nor a mandate. Nonetheless, it is a de facto established agency which we now have to deal with.

**1. The ceasefire in Karabakh achieved with Russia's mediation, which took effect on May 12, 1994,** has been holding for 15 years already. The format of negotiations between the three sides to the conflict (Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia) was developed by Moscow, as was the draft agreement on cessation of the armed conflict under which negotiations were then resumed under the OSCE aegis. On our initiative Nagorno-Karabakh was recognised by the Minsk Group as a legitimate side to the conflict. All this had forced the Western partners to seek compromise with Russia at the CSCE Budapest summit making it a co-chairing member of the OSCE Minsk Group. Currently Russia is active mainly in co-chairmanship with the United States and France on the basis of the co-chairing members' mandate that we have developed. Unfortunately, Russia's independent efforts in the Karabakh process were subsequently almost completely curtailed. This had its positive and negative sides alike. A fortunate exception is the Moscow Declaration of November 2, 2008 which highlighted Russia's role in the Caucasus.

Meeting the armistice achieved under Russia's auspices with an attitude that might be described as jealousy, the Western partners first attempted to ignore it (a week later, on May 19, 1994, the Permanent Committee of CSCE did not even spare any time or attention for it), and then to present it as a common success achieved by the CSCE.

It was most likely at the suggestion of the US that Sweden made a somewhat amusing attempt to steal it from Russia in order to give the credit for it to the CSCE. And with the same purpose in mind the US diplomats later suggested to 'formalise' the agreement on behalf of the CSCE Minsk Group.

In the end the option to acknowledge, albeit somewhat grudgingly, Russia's contribution (it was mentioned thrice in the Budapest summit resolution), in order to be able to belittle it later, prevailed. Thus, the **OSCE yearbooks** of the first years of the new millennium published in the English and Russian languages claimed that the ceasefire agreement was ostensibly an **unofficial** one, and the latest edition makes no mention of it at all.

The peculiarities of this unique agreement were mainly due to the following:

1) the urgent need to achieve a ceasefire taking advantage of the readiness of the parties to accept it because of the 'fatigue' and the existing fragile balance of powers; 2) the reluctance of the Azeri leadership to meet and sign the document together with representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh, and Armenia's refusal to sign it without Nagorno-Karabakh's signature.

We were therefore compelled to resort to arranging it to be signed without actual meeting of the parties' representatives in person – by fax (like we had done earlier when signing brief ceasefire agreements in 1993). Putting an end to the mass bloodshed was far more important for us than trying to achieve their gathering in one place and on one day. Any change in the situation at the front could easily change the mood of the parties.

The sides were unable to exchange direct messages containing statements of commitment to cease fire at the agreed point in time. That is why we used the previously tested format of messages addressed by each of the sides to Russia as a mediator (to Russia's Ministers of Defence and of Foreign Affairs, the Russian President's envoy for the Karabakh conflict). All three copies of the text were identical. Two amendments were introduced by Serzh Sargsyan, yet the mediator promptly managed to coordinate them with the other parties.

In Baku that document was signed in my presence on May 9, 1994, in Yerevan – on May 10, in Stepanakert – on May 11. Upon receiving both fax messages from the Armenian side, the mediator notified the sides of the identity of the messages from all three sides and declared that the agreement

has taken effect. In actual fact this agreement consists of three sheets with a signature of the representative of the relevant side on each of them.

That is precisely the reason why traditional attributes of legal rigmarole are lacking here: there is no single date or place of signing, no single original copy of document bearing the three pivotal signatures, no bright seals or a solemn document case, no formal depositary, etc, etc. But are all of these truly what determines the nature of the agreement, i.e. whether it is an official or an unofficial one? No, that is determined by far more substantial aspects:

The chief military commanders – ministers of defence of Azerbaijan and Armenia Mammadrafi Mamedov and Serzh Sargsyan and the commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh army Samvel Babayan – signed these messages. They did so at the direct instruction of their superiors – the Presidents Heydar Aliiev and Levon Ter-Petrosyan, and the leader of the Karabakh Armenians Robert Kocharyan. Unlike similar short-term ceasefire agreements, this agreement was deliberately signed as an open-ended one by default. Later we suggested that the parties re-sign the agreement in accordance with the adopted standards and forms, but the Azeri side decline to do so.

At Russia's suggestion, on July 27, 1994, Mammadrafi Mamedov, Serzh Sargsyan and Samvel Babayan signed a statement in which they undertook to respect this agreement until an agreement on cessation of the military conflict is signed. Similar statements were repeatedly made by the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the chief commander of Nagorno-Karabakh. All of this is far more important than purely formal legal niceties.

The agreement did not require approval by the parliaments but was unambiguously approved by the people. And there are, therefore, absolutely no reasons to consider it unofficial, **dangerously conniving with those (whether deliberately or not), who are again calling for the resolution of this protracted conflict by force.**

In September 2003 in a letter dedicated to this problem I requested from the OSCE Secretary General Ján Kubiš to ensure that the word 'unofficial' does not make it into the new editions of the handbooks (they were published by the Secretariat of this pan-European organisation), and from the Russia's envoys to the OSCE to see to that this is indeed done.

In the 2007 edition this word was finally removed. But now it does not contain any mention of ceasefire in Karabakh at all. The MG efforts have received a rather brief coverage to the advantage of a detailed description of various trifles, and **the only real achievement in the whole of the Karabakh peace process was not vouchsafed a single word of mention!** Even though the OSCE is supposed to be keenly concerned with whether the Minsk Group co-chairing members are working in the situation of war or armistice. And the only reason for this being that the ceasefire was achieved with the assistance of Russia, and not of the OSCE.

Hence one of the conclusions: we are not particularly successful as far as ensuring **consistency and continuity** in pursuing our line are concerned, we do not care sufficiently to highlight Russia's achievements and prevent our Western partners from beating and overtaking us in every manner possible.

2) There is one more, rather exotic example of carelessness of this pan-European organisation's administration, – and that is the fate of another, quite official **agreement on enhancement of the ceasefire regime** that was signed by all three parties on February 4, 1995, this time under the OSCE aegis (but again upon Russia's initiative and again it was open-ended by default).

One of the characteristic features of the May 1994 ceasefire in Karabakh was Baku's refusal to allow deployment of international observers or peace-keeping forcers, or even the usual withdrawal of the conflicting sides' forces from the line of contact along with a withdrawal of heavy armaments.

The said technico-military measures are alphabetic for ensuring a lasting ceasefire and the parties' respect for it. The basic symmetrical scenario of withdrawal of forces was rejected by the Azeri Minister of Defence Mammadrafi Mamedov. Bearing the concerns of the Azeri side, the mediator had deliberately chosen an asymmetrical scenario of separation of forces, which was, however, rejected by the Azeris ('Armenians are on our territory and they are the ones who should retreat, not us!'). All arguments to the effect that this was the very initial stage of settlement, where only technico-military and not yet politico-military criteria were chiefly taken into account, were of little help in convincing Mr. Mamedov. The field positions of the sides in 1994 were a little distance away from each other, which contributed to the danger

of incidents occurring, and then the Azeri forces even brought their positions closer to the Armenian positions (still under the same pretext of 'this is our land'). And so the parties assumed the responsibility for observing the ceasefire regime, which they sometimes proudly reaffirm, yet without displaying appropriate reserve and responsibility.

In the absence of separation of troops the co-chairing members of the OSCE Minsk Group (Russia and Sweden) suggested to the conflicting parties in the early 1995 to sign an agreement on enhancement of the ceasefire regime, stipulating the procedure for the containment and settlement of possible incidents, maintaining direct contacts between all sides at the levels of political and military leadership, as well as between army commanders at the local level. The sides undertook to contact immediately their adversary, as well as to inform the mediators, in the event of incidents there, indicating the exact time and place, the nature and consequences of the incident, and suggesting measures of restraint to be taken in respect of the aggressors along with measures for the restoration of status quo ante. The opposing side shall be obliged to investigate the incident and provide a reply within 6 hours reporting on the measures taken by it. Measures were also envisaged to prevent exaggeration of the significance of certain incidents for propaganda purposes, exacerbation of mutual distrust and hostility.

The text of the agreement had been written by me in advance together with Heydar Aliyev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan, and signed by the Defence Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, and by the Nagorno-Karabakh army commander. To facilitate the maintenance of contacts, the parties had officially exchanged, via the mediators, the phone numbers of the political and military leaders. The text of the agreement was published long time ago (see Appendix, Document 12).

**This is the only agreement concerning the conflict in Karabakh achieved by OSCE** and it took effect on February 6, 1995. Nevertheless, **the parties to the conflict have long given up on complying with it.** In this context the limp attitude of the pan-European organisation to the agreement that it had initiated with the purpose of improving the situation in the conflict region. The OSCE shows little concern with its fulfillment. I know nothing of the OSCE hierarchs (the Chairman-in-Office, the Troika, the Permanent

Council in Vienna) having confronted the parties with that question. At times, though not too often, the Minsk Group's co-chairing members do bring this up.

There was another incident, clearly more bitter than it was amusing: the personal representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk, who has been monitoring the situation along the contact line since 1997, learnt about this agreement only in 2003 after reading a newspaper article of mine and requested a copy of this agreement. The frequent incidents had compelled me, as one of the authors of that agreement, to bring up the issue of failure to comply with it in my articles and public speeches, as well as in my addresses to the OSCE agencies.

(But it was the **Russian co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group** who were supposed to know about it and to insist on the fulfillment of the agreement. Here is yet another example of 'sliding down' of important matters at the moment of replacement of our diplomats.)

At the parliamentary hearings in Yerevan, in March 2005, the Armenian Defence Minister Serzh Sargsyan gave me a public response to the effect that the Armenian side was ready to revert to observance of this agreement, should the Azeri side do the same. Similar stance was taken by Stepanakert who offered to Baku and Yerevan to negotiate the fulfillment of the agreement. But to date, many years past, Baku has not vouchsafed us any reply to this.

Let us suppose that the Azeri side is not satisfied with the essence of the agreement (because of Nagorno-Karabakh being a party thereto or because of the obligation to maintain contacts with the opposing side). But in that case they could well propose to amend the agreement, or to supplement it; or to sign a new agreement, as a last resort. Reports about numerous violations of the ceasefire regime by the Armenian side, and sometimes about casualties among civilians or servicemen, arrive from Baku literally every day. It would therefore seem barely logical for the sides not only to voice their concern with the incidents and casualties, but to take practical steps to remedy the situation. Yet, no suggestions regarding improvement of the situations are made.

One is only left to assume that **these incidents are rather advantageous** to someone: someone who cares for tensions, hostility and hatred towards the opposing side to thrive and even grow.

After the major incident on March 4, 2008 – the largest in the recent years – the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested to the conflicting sides on March 5 that they avail of all possibilities provided for in this agreement. On March 7 this suggestion finally received the support of all of the OSCE Minsk Group's co-chairing members (even though they mistakenly addressed 'both sides', whereas the agreement had been signed by three). But no further steps were taken, and this will be the case until another more or less significant incident occurs.

The current mediators and the personal representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office are called to facilitate the enhancement of the ceasefire regime, yet their capabilities to register and check on individual incidents are limited. Regular monitoring inspections carried out by Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and his aides along the line of contact by no means rule out the possibility of incidents occurring – it all rather depends on how the conflicting sides choose to behave.

3) Neglecting their officially assumed obligations is not a good idea for newly emerged states seeking to achieve **respected and recognised sovereignty**. There is also a more serious matter arising here: will that agreement on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict be fulfilled together with the 'fundamental principles' of it which are currently being developed or is it doomed to suffer the same fate within the OSCE system?

On the other hand, **the efficiency of the OSCE itself** comes into question as it clearly lacks fidelity to its mission of ensuring a peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict, as well as firmness in defending this peaceful policy.

Once it had undertaken to settle the conflict, the OSCE must resolutely speak against all that gets in the way of peaceful settlement. And since the parties to the conflict had themselves undertaken those obligations, the OSCE must demand from them to do the same. Its resolutions are adopted on the basis of consensus, i.e. without taking objections from its members who are directly involved in the conflict.

4) Truly inexplicable is the amazing tolerance on the part of the OSCE in respect of a number of quite negative events surrounding the Karabakh conflict. Here are some examples:

- A) launch of a **bellicose campaign** by the Azerbaijani leadership;
- B) its tendency to inflate military budgets and whip up the **arms race**, which is especially felt in a region so sensitive and so dangerously explosive;
- C) regular series of **incidents occurring along the contact line**.

These three phenomena only contribute to the fomenting tension and the growing mutual distrust which paralyses the peace process.

When faced with the need to pronounce on these matters, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing members choose a far too soft, even too timid, line. This could possibly be explained by the matters of hierarchy – they are mere ambassadors after all. But where are the **OSCE top officials**? It does not look like they were busy calling the attention of the leaders of the warring parties to the unacceptability of such actions and statements, not even privately.

Faced with the need to save the negotiations, to keep the peace process afloat at all costs, the OSCE often makes unjustified concessions to the sides of the conflict, demonstrates conformism. No doubt, this process is extremely important, even if for the sake of achieving an armistice alone, but it can by no means be turned into an end in itself. The true goal is to resolve the conflict through negotiations, i.e. by peaceful means.

Each of the parties demands from the OSCE to bring pressure on their adversary. The mediators have so far been reluctant to press, and this is good. But the OSCE has invested so much effort in seeking a peaceful resolution of this conflict and it should not let the parties treat those efforts without due respect and consideration. This should by no means be seen as pressure on the conflicting sides, but barely **understandable striving to protect the plan of peaceful settlement** – the line that has been advocated both by the parties to the conflict, and by the OSCE, along with the entire global community.

5) **The OSCE lacks consistency and fidelity to its own resolutions and documents that were adopted earlier** and, what is important, by agreement with the conflicting sides. With its principles and resolutions adopted taken as a basis, it may well be able to exert due influence on the conflicting sides, instead of dragging behind them, yielding to ungrounded demands. Many are the examples of OSCE resolutions in which it has departed far from what had



been resolved earlier and acts counter to it. That said, none of its agencies have either revoked or amended earlier resolutions. Here are some examples for you:

- the Budapest summit instructed the co-chairing members to conduct negotiations between the **conflicting parties** and not only between the recognised states. The co-chairing members' mandate also mentions solely the **parties to the conflict and not sovereign states**.

The notorious 'Prague process' had no basis in the form of a relevant OSCE resolution whatsoever.

- The status of Nagorno-Karabakh as a third side to this conflict was emphatically affirmed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office László Kovács on March 31, 1995. He also emphasised the participation of all three parties in the **entire course of negotiations**, including the Minsk Conference. The OSCE Minsk Group's co-chairmen proceeded from the trilateral configuration of the conflict in their proposals to the parties made in 1997–98. Their present stance on that matter is not all too clear. Instead of complying with the adopted resolutions, the OSCE has slipped into a position of, 'you never know what might happen!' It seems to have resigned to the decision to carry out negotiations for negotiation's sake.
- In 1992 the CSCE took into consideration the elections in Nagorno-Karabakh (both 'the legitimately elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh' were invited). But in the recent years the OSCE and its agencies, and even the co-chairing states as well, have been speaking against holding elections in Nagorno-Karabakh. The reason is that local population elects authorities for themselves only and on a temporal and not fully legitimate basis acknowledged by everybody. Is the rule of authoritarian personalities or the military clique a better option after all? Which is a more beneficial figure for the peace process – an usurper of power, an impostor, in fact, or a person who has received a mandate of confidence from the population of this region, albeit perhaps not a universally recognised one?

Far be it from me to intend this criticism as an incentive for searching for new mediators to replace the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen or to work

alongside them. It is utterly naïve to believe that changing the mediators would have done the trick. Many simply found themselves unable to cope with the burden of mediation in the Karabakh conflict. For Italy, for example, it took 17 months to 'get tired' of its task, Sweden did the same after 16 months, Finland first 'begged' for release after 11 months in that capacity and barely held out for 20.

Azerbaijan regularly makes attempts to modify, or 'democratise' the mediatory efforts, to shuffle up the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen, to embroil other Minsk Group members, which all run counter to the resolution of the OSCE Budapest summit, that had entrusted negotiations between parties to the conflict not to the OSCE Minsk Group but to its co-chairmen.

Prior to the summit in Budapest the entire mediatory experience of the Minsk Group in 1992–94 (9 mediators, including the highly biased Turkey!) had clearly outlived itself. In 1997 the number of co-chairing members was expanded to three co-chairmen, when Russia was joined by France taking Finland's place, and later by the United States.

The crux of the problem lies in the attitudes of the parties and the opportunistic attitude of the OSCE. We must demand from the pan-European organisation greater efficiency and consistency in its operations, an uncompromising stance towards even suggestions or assumptions regarding admissibility of use of force in conflict settlement, as well as perseverance and fidelity in putting adopted resolutions into practice.

6) The course of the Karabakh war was attended by quite a few revolting phenomena (deportations, bombings and shelling of towns and villages, killings of captives, etc). **Occupation** of the adversary's territories is among them. A lot has been said about it, it was even equated with military **aggression**, even though that is something quite different. The confrontation had originated as an internal conflict (and not as military aggression) back in the Soviet times, and flared up after the collapse of the Soviet Union. And Moscow was the only side to persistently remind to Yerevan that Armenia was a direct participant in the conflict. The West had shown itself pretty tolerant of Armenia's involvement in the hostilities (there is not a single word about it to be found in the Security Council's four resolutions). This was obviously due

to the inertia of support to the Karabakh movement for the sake of weakening the Soviet Union.

The **cause and effect relation** is being deliberately papered over: the causes of occupation and the current status quo. Baku does not like to go into how it happened and why. The conflict broke out not because of **occupation, which is a result of military operations** that had lasted for almost two and a half years. We condemned every seizure, but when hostilities are at their height, the logic of military force does not tend to subject well to political, legal, let alone, moral logic. Faced with Azerbaijan's potential superiority, the Armenian forces strove to straighten and shorten the frontline and continued to seize more and more territories. Yet Baku had become a 'co-author' of the Armenian occupation: it stubbornly sought to settle the conflict by force, evading peace initiatives, disrupting ceasefire arrangements. **The political leadership in Baku is just as much to blame for the occupation as other sides.** It is not enough to lament the consequences of one's own bellicosity – it is far more helpful to acknowledge one's responsibility for what has happened and learn a lesson for the future.

The occupation of the districts surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh is naturally nothing other than an **anomaly**, and it needs to be eliminated as soon as possible. After the fall of Agdam, this was even an **unconditional** demand of the UN Security Council, but after a series of disruptions of peacemaking efforts, in 1993–94 it became the subject of negotiations: the UN Security Council would not have been able to reward the side which had for over a year failed to fulfill the main demand found in all of its four resolutions – **to put an immediate end** to military operations. The Azeri side failed to comply with this demand for a whole year (and we all know far too well what a year of armed hostilities means). They launched their counteroffensive in the winter of 1993/94 when all of the four UN Security Council resolutions had already been adopted. The result of their non-fulfillment was that it altogether gave up on adopting resolutions related to the situation on Nagorno-Karabakh.

7) The mutual distrust of the parties has given rise to an argument as to whether a package or a step-by-step settlement is preferable. Which shall be eliminated in the first place – the causes or the aftermath of the armed conflict? What with the existing deep mistrust towards the adversary, each side

in he first place seeks the fulfillment of its own demands. The global community, the OSCE, need to view **blocking of all possibilities of resumption of hostilities as a top priority.**

Package settlement automatically implies guarantees of a peaceful resolution eliminating possible return to hostilities as a means of resolving controversial issues, yet it is hardly feasible in the foreseeable future. Even though the Armenian side no longer include into its basis the determination of the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh, but now only the mode of its determination – through the will of its population.

A step-by-step settlement, which is so eagerly sought by the Azeri side with a view to achieve an immediate liberation of occupied territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and the return of forced migrants, is also fraught with certain complications. The very logic of peaceful resolution dictates that a step-by-step settlement is impossible without an **explicit renunciation of the use of force by the parties and its reliable securing.** One should not count on being able to take advantage of the first steps in the conflict settlement, only in order to resume military operations later, once the situation and the positions become more advantageous. The adversary will never ever accept such step-by-step strategy. That is why decision not to use force becomes a kind of the ‘foundation’ for a step-by-step approach, which is essential for further building on it, for construction of a ground-floor, i.e. proceeding to the first stage of actual settlement.

The liberation of the occupied territories is mainly hindered precisely by the desire to cling onto the delusion of a military overtake. Who, after all, would surrender advantageous, well-entrenched positions when the threat of an outbreak of hostilities has not been ruled out completely? And, on the contrary, **elimination of the military threat will deprive Armenians of a valid pretext for maintaining the occupation of Azeri districts,** even if the status of Nagorno-Karabakh remains without definitive settlement. This would become a true victory of common sense, of reason, a victory of law over force. So long as this has not been achieved, the sides are incapable of mutual concessions for the sake of compromise: one of the sides is still keeping up hopes for military revenge, whereas the opposing side continues to strengthen a defence line most advantageous for it precisely for fear of this.

That is why priority now should be given not so much to the principles of peaceful settlement, but rather to **elimination of all possible military threats**, which would pave the way to the first practical steps in the settlement. Rejecting this is equivalent to rejection of a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the conflict. This is supposed to meet with an unambiguously negative response on the part of OSCE, the Minsk Group co-chairing members and ordinary members, as well as other states and international organisations.

The focus of the **Moscow declaration** of the presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan was precisely the elimination of military threats, the inevitability of a peaceful settlement in Karabakh. Ultimately, provided the leaders of the conflicting sides demonstrate a conscientious approach, it can open the way to a historical reconciliation between the Armenian and the Azeri people. This will, unfortunately, require a test of time. It is already obvious that not all of the signatories were quite so sincere in signing it.

But whatever motives lie behind anyone's actions, the global community must strive for ensuring **peace enforcement in Karabakh in advance**, yet with **political and diplomatic instruments**. There is a number of reasons why Russia has more concern in this than other countries.

Numerous official statements in favour of peaceful resolution of the conflict and inevitability of a peaceful settlement made by the co-chairing members of the Minsk Group, their countries, top leaders of other countries and international organisations, or even the Moscow Declaration, are simply not enough. Efforts in this line must be stepped up to proposing to sign an **agreement on non-use of force in the framework of the Karabakh conflict resolution**. It is most unlikely that Baku will accept this, yet the very presentation of the problem will serve as a restraining factor in its statements and actions (especially, with the consequences of Saakashvili's gamble being obvious to all now).

On the other hand, in keeping with the currently adopted linear programme (first the principles, then the text of the agreement, then the problems attending its signing and – most importantly – its fulfillment), the mediators could well highlight **2–3 practical issues** which have a rather independent significance and do not require their inclusion into the principles, in order to carry out separate negotiations on them with a view to signing separate 'minor agreements'.

Considering the general situation of a deadlock, success even in minor issues would have mattered inasmuch as a confirmation of the possibility to overcome mutual distrust.

8) And there is one other, seemingly petty matter. The work of the co-chairing members continues to depart from the use of Russian as the working language, with the increasing tendency to use English instead. This leads to frequent distortions of facts in the media of the South Caucasus countries resulting from translation from one language to another. In Baku and Yerevan the professional elite has a pretty good command of the English language, but as for the masses and for Stepanakert, Russian is still the *lingua franca* for them. In the previous years, the Minsk process was bilingual, and translation was more often required from Russian to English rather than vice versa. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the OSCE Minsk Group member states selected staff based on the ability in the Russian language (the American ambassador Bryza and the French ambassador Fassier are both also fluent in it).

One may argue here that the language is not the point, which is rather achieving progress in negotiations. That is true, but with no notable progress being achieved so far, the language factor is perhaps not to be neglected at least.



# APPENDIXES

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**THE PRINCIPAL INTERNATIONAL  
DOCUMENTS CONCERNED WITH  
THE SETTLEMENT OF THE  
NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT**

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE OUTCOME  
OF THE INTERMEDIARY MISSION OF  
PRESIDENTS  
B. YELTSIN AND N. NAZARBYAEV**

*September 23, 1991*

It is the fourth year that the bitterest conflict in the region of Nagorno Karabakh, which claimed the lives of many people of different nationalities, won't cease. Civilians and military personnel of the army and internal forces are dying. The Central Bodies of the USSR proved incapable of developing and realizing effective measures for the normalisation of the situation in the region. Serious blunders which entailed [...] of the conflicting sides and the growth of distrust in the Union bodies were committed.

In the current situation there emerged a need for intermediary efforts aimed at creating conditions for the start of the negotiating process, step by step paving the way for the normalisation of the situation in the region. According to the concordance with the Azeri and Armenian sides the leaders of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan assumed the role of mediators.

On September 20-23, 1991, the intermediary mission headed by President B. Yeltsin of the Russian Federation and President N. Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan was in Baku, Gyanja, Stepanakert and Yerevan. In the resolution of the conflict the sides are guided by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states and strict observation of human rights of all citizens irrespective of their nationality in accordance with the norms of international law. In the course of the intermediary efforts some issues of stage-by-stage settlement of the conflict were discussed. The basic outcomes of the discussion consist in the following:

1. The sides deem that the necessary and compulsory conditions for the settlement of the conflict by January 1, 1992 are: ceasefire, disaffirma-

tion of all unconstitutional acts of Azerbaijan and Armenia on the NKAR, recognition of the plenary powers of legitimate government bodies, pullback from the zone of the conflict of all armed units except the units of internal forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Defence of the USSR. At the end of this term the presence of all armed units and their actions are considered by the sides as illegal and will be stopped by the internal forces of the USSR.

Ministry of Internal Affairs and the participants of armed units are subjected to the statute-instituted responsibility.

A working group of observers is to be charged with the development of measures for ceasefire, neutralisation of all armed units defined by it as illegal, creation of security guarantees for all citizens living in the conflict zone.

2. With a view to realize coordinated actions on the normalization of the situation in the conflict zone, a temporary working group of observers including plenipotentiaries of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan is formed. The working group starts its activities beginning on October 1.
3. The Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia ensure a stage-by-stage return of the deported population starting from empty villages. The sides guarantee the population's security in places of permanent residence. Negotiations on this issue are to be started from October 1, 1991.
4. The sides involved in the conflict immediately start to release hostages. This process should be completed within a fortnight at the end of which the persons involved in holding hostages will be called to responsibility according to the law. The plenipotentiaries of the sides-mediators perform the supervision of the implementation of this clause.
5. Together with the Union bodies the sides ensure the normal functioning of railway transport, air transport and communication systems within a fortnight. With the participation of the mediators the sides get down to talks on ensuring free and mutually beneficial functioning of motorways.
6. During the discussion the sides came to the unanimous opinion about the necessity of ensuring the objectivity of information coming from the conflict zone. It was decided to set up an information group consisting of representatives of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan,

authorized to perform the preparation of official information about events in conflict zone.

7. The superior bodies of state power of Azerbaijan and Armenia approve plenipotentiary delegations that will immediately get down to a bilateral negotiating process on a permanent basis.
8. The sides deem that the preparation and conclusion of bilateral agreements between the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Armenia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Armenia in the immediate future will promote the beginning negotiating process.
9. The working group of observers must periodically inform the top officials of the four republics about the course of the implementation of measures stipulated by this Communiqué.

The clauses in this Communiqué cannot be considered as the mediators' right of interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states – the Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia.

## HELSINKI ADDITIONAL MEETING OF THE CSCE COUNCIL 24 MARCH 1992

### Summary of Conclusions

#### I.

1. The Council of the CSCE held its First Additional Meeting in Helsinki on 24 March 1992.
2. The Ministers welcomed Croatia, Georgia and Slovenia as participating States, following receipt of letters accepting CSCE commitments and responsibilities from each of them (Annexes 1-3). The Ministers do not consider that the admission of Croatia and Slovenia affects in any way the Conference on Yugoslavia nor prejudices the results of this Conference. The Ministers support the efforts of the Brussels Conference on Yugoslavia in search of an overall political settlement of the Yugoslav crisis.

#### II.

3. The Ministers expressed their deep concern about the continuing escalation of the armed conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and the resulting increased suffering and loss of life of the inhabitants. They held an extensive discussion of ways and means to end the conflict, bearing in mind the implications for regional and international security which could result from its continuation and further extension. They called upon all parties to exercise restraint.
4. The Ministers reiterated in the strongest terms the call for an immediate and effective ceasefire including an active commitment by responsible local commanders to its implementation. They issued an appeal for the re-establishment of conditions for confidence and constructive dialogue, including the cessation of measures of economic and political constraint.
5. The Ministers reviewed the ongoing action within the CSCE framework and endorsed in their entirety the decisions taken by the Committee of Senior Officials. They expressed their appreciation for the

activities of the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE undertaken in this connection and stressed their willingness to extend all possible assistance to him whenever it is needed.

6. The Ministers welcomed the complementary efforts made by the European Community and its member States, by the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States, by the members of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council, and, in particular, the efforts made by the United Nations Secretary-General.

They requested the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE to keep in close contact with the United Nations in this respect and to arrange for regular exchanges of information. The Ministers agreed that the CSCE must play a major role in promoting a peace process relating to the conflict. They agreed that the situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh requires further CSCE action.

7. The Ministers mandated the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE Council of Ministers, Mr. Jiří Dienstbier, to visit the region shortly in order to contribute, in particular, to the establishment and maintenance of an effective cease-fire as well as to the establishment of a framework for an overall peaceful settlement.
8. The Ministers expressed their firm conviction that a conference on Nagorno-Karabakh under the auspices of the CSCE would provide an ongoing forum for negotiations towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis on the basis of the principles, commitments and provisions of the CSCE. The Ministers therefore requested the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE Council of Ministers to convene such a conference as soon as possible.
9. The Ministers furthermore agreed that this Conference, which will take place in Minsk, will have as participants Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey and United States of America. Elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh will be invited to the Conference as interested parties by the Chairman of the Conference after consultation with the States participating at the Conference. The Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE Council will appoint the Chairman of the Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh under the auspices of the CSCE.
10. The Ministers urged all CSCE participating States and all concerned parties to take all necessary steps to ensure that humanitarian assis-

tance is provided to all those in need through rapid and effective means including safe corridors under international control.

11. The Ministers noted the commitment of Armenia and Azerbaijan to fully support the mission of the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE Council to the region as well as other actions on which the CSCE Council has agreed and appeal to these two countries to pursue actively this commitment to reach a lasting, peaceful solution.

III.

12. The Ministers agreed that the Stockholm Council Meeting will be held on 14-15 December 1992.

## JOINT STATEMENT OF THE HEADS OF STATE IN TEHRAN

Upon the invitation of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mr. Yakub Mamedov, Acting President of the Azerbaijan Republic, and Mr. Levon Ter-Petrosyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, arrived in Tehran to hold bilateral negotiations and discuss regional problems. Using this opportunity, upon the initiative and at the suggestion of the Iranian side, within the framework of diplomatic efforts on the normalization of the situation in Nagorno Karabakh and at the Azerbaijani-Armenian border and bringing the viewpoints closer together with the purpose of relieving tensions in the region, the leaders of the two states met and conducted negotiations on May 7, 1992.

The sides started with expressing their gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Iran, international and regional organizations as well as other countries for their efforts directed at a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the region and expressed hope that peaceful wishes and goodwill would promote peace and stability.

With a view to develop bilateral relations and provide security in the region, the sides agreed to organise meetings of representatives of the both countries at a top level and periodically of the leaders of regions and responsible military representatives.

The sides expressed a desire for solving all issues connected with the normalisation of bilateral relations at different levels by peaceful means on the basis of principles of the CSCE and international law.

Taking international legal norms and the UN Charter as a basis, the sides emphasised the necessity of ensuring peace and stability on the borders, in Nagorno Karabakh, pointing out that it is advantageous both for the two states and for the region.

Respecting human rights and the rights of minorities, the sides drew each other's attention to the questions of solving problems of Armenian and Azeri refugees.

The sides agreed that within a week after the arrival of the special representative of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. M. Vaezi in the region (Baku, Yerevan, Nagorno Karabakh), after conducting negotiations with the concerned sides and with the support of the heads of state of Azer-



baijan and Armenia, ceasefire is established and simultaneously all communication roads are open with the purpose of meeting all economic needs.

In case of consent for the implementation of the reached agreement, besides the observers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, observers of the CSCE and others will be involved.

Positively assessing the work of the summit in Tehran, the sides agreed that all questions connected with bilateral relations should be solved by means of meetings and consultations of responsible persons at different levels and through negotiations.

The leaders of the two states, highly appreciating the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, expressed hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran would continue its efforts until the ultimate peace and stability were established in the region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran  
Akbar HASHEMI RAFSANJANI

The Azerbaijan Republic  
Ya. MAMEDOV

The Republic of Armenia  
L. TER-PETROSYAN

**RESOLUTION 822 (1993)**  
**OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**  
**April 1993**

The Security Council.

Recalling the statements of the President of the Security Council of 29 January 1993 (S/25199) and of 6 April 1993 (S/25539) concerning the Nagorny- Karabakh conflict,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General dated 14 April 1993 (S/25600).

Expressing its serious concern at the deterioration of the relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan,

Noting with alarm the escalation in armed hostilities and, in particular, the latest invasion of the Kelbadjar district of the Republic of Azerbaijan by local Armenian forces,

Concerned that this situation endangers peace and security in the region,

Expressing grave concern at the displacement of a large number of civilians and the humanitarian emergency in the region, in particular in the Kelbadjar district,

Reaffirming the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in the region,

Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory,

Expressing its support for the peace process being pursued within the framework of the

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and deeply concerned at the disruptive effect that the escalation in armed hostilities can have on that process,

1. Demands the immediate cessation of all hostilities and hostile acts with a view to establishing a durable cease- fire, as well as immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from the Kelbadjar district and other recently occupied areas of Azerbaijan;
2. Urges the parties concerned immediately to resume negotiations for the resolution of the conflict within the framework of the peace

- process of the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and refrain from any action that will obstruct a peaceful solution of the problem;
3. Calls for unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in the region, in particular in all areas affected by the conflict in order to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population and reaffirms that all parties are bound to comply with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law;
  4. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Chairman-in-Office of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as the Chairman of the Minsk Group of the Conference to assess the situation in the region, in particular in the Kelbadjar district of Azerbaijan, and to submit a further report to the Council;
  5. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

Adopted unanimously by the Security Council at its 3205<sup>th</sup> meeting

**RESOLUTION 853 (1993)**  
**OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**  
**29 July 1993**

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolution 822 (1993) of April 1993,

Having considered the report issued on 27 July 1993 by the Chairman of the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (S/26184),

Expressing its serious concern at the deterioration of relations between the Republic of

Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic and at the tensions between them,

Welcoming acceptance by the parties concerned of the timetable of urgent steps to implement its resolution 822 (1993),

Noting with alarm the escalation in armed hostilities and, in particular, the seizure of the district of Agdam in the Azerbaijani Republic,

Concerned that this situation continues to endanger peace and security in the region,

Expressing once again its grave concern at the displacement of large numbers of civilians in the Azerbaijani Republic and at the serious humanitarian emergency in the region,

Reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic and of all other States in the region,

Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory,

1. Condemns the seizure of the district of Agdam and of all other recently occupied areas of the Azerbaijani Republic;
2. Further condemns all hostile actions in the region, in particular attacks on civilians and bombardments of inhabited areas;
3. Demands the immediate cessation of all hostilities and the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces involved from the district of Agdam and all other recently occupied areas of the Azerbaijani Republic;

4. Calls on the parties concerned to reach and maintain durable cease-fire arrangements;
5. Reiterates in the context of paragraphs 3 and 4 above its earlier calls for the restoration of economic, transport and energy links in the region;
6. Endorses the continuing efforts by the Minsk Group of the CSCE to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict, including efforts to implement resolution 822 (1993), and expresses its grave concern at the disruptive effect that the escalation of armed hostilities has had on these efforts;
7. Welcomes the preparations for a CSCE monitor mission with a timetable for its deployment, as well as consideration within the CSCE of the proposal for a CSCE presence in the region;
8. Urges the parties concerned to refrain from any action that will obstruct a peaceful solution to the conflict, and to pursue negotiations within the Minsk Group of the CSCE, as well as through direct contacts between them, towards a final settlement;
9. Urges the Government of the Republic of Armenia to continue to exert its influence to achieve compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic with its resolution 822 (1993) and the present resolution, and the acceptance by this party of the proposals of the Minsk Group of the CSCE;
10. Urges States to refrain from the supply of any weapons and munitions which might lead to an intensification of the conflict or the continued occupation of territory;
11. Calls once again for unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in the region, in particular in all areas affected by the conflict, in order to alleviate the increased suffering of the civilian population and reaffirms that all parties are bound to comply with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law;
12. Requests the Secretary-General and relevant international agencies to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population and to assist displaced persons to return to their homes;
13. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE as well as the Chairman of the Minsk Group, to continue to report to the Council on the situation;
14. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

Adopted unanimously by the Security Council at its 3259<sup>th</sup> meeting

**RESOLUTION 874 (1993)**  
**OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**  
**14 October 1993**

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 822 (1993) of 30 April 1993 and 853 (1993) of 29 July 1993,

and recalling the statement read by the President of the Council, on behalf of the Council, on 18 August 1993 (S/26326),

Having considered the letter dated 1 October 1993 from the Chairman of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Minsk Conference on Nagorny Karabakh addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/26522),

Expressing its serious concern that a continuation of the conflict in and around the Nagorny

Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic, and of the tensions between the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic, would endanger peace and security in the region, Taking note of the high-level meetings which took place in Moscow on 8 October 1993 and expressing the hope that they will contribute to the improvement of the situation and the peaceful settlement of the conflict,

Reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic and of all other States in the region,

Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory,

Expressing once again its grave concern at the human suffering the conflict has caused and at the serious humanitarian emergency in the region and expressing in particular its grave concern at the displacement of large numbers of civilians in the Azerbaijani Republic,

1. Calls upon the parties concerned to make effective and permanent the cease-fire established as a result of the direct contacts undertaken with the assistance of the Government of the Russian Federation in support of the CSCE Minsk Group;
2. Reiterates again its full support for the peace process being pursued within the framework of the CSCE, and for the tireless efforts of the CSCE Minsk Group;

3. Welcomes and commends to the parties the 'Adjusted timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993)' set out on 28 September 1993 at the meeting of the CSCE Minsk Group and submitted to the parties concerned by the Chairman of the Group with the full support of nine other members of the Group, and calls on the parties to accept it;
4. Expresses the conviction that all other pending questions arising from the conflict and not directly addressed in the 'Adjusted timetable' should be settled expeditiously through peaceful negotiations in the context of the CSCE Minsk process;
5. Calls for the immediate implementation of the reciprocal and urgent steps provided for in the CSCE Minsk Group's 'Adjusted timetable', including the withdrawal of forces from recently occupied territories and the removal of all obstacles to communications and transportation;
6. Calls also for an early convening of the CSCE Minsk Conference for the purpose of arriving at a negotiated settlement to the conflict as provided for in the timetable, in conformity with the 24 March 1992 mandate of the CSCE Council of Ministers;
7. Requests the Secretary-General to respond favourably to an invitation to send a representative to attend the CSCE Minsk Conference and to provide all possible assistance for the substantive negotiations that will follow the opening of the Conference;
8. Supports the monitoring mission developed by the CSCE;
9. Calls on all parties to refrain from all violations of international humanitarian law and renews its call in resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993) for unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in all areas affected by the conflict;
10. Urges all States in the region to refrain from any hostile acts and from any interference or intervention which would lead to the widening of the conflict and undermine peace and security in the region;
11. Requests the Secretary-General and relevant international agencies to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population and to assist refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes in security and dignity;
12. Requests also the Secretary-General, the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE and the Chairman of the CSCE Minsk Conference to continue to report to the Council on the progress of the Minsk process and on all aspects of the situation on the ground, and on

present and future cooperation between the CSCE and the United Nations in this regard;

13. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

Adopted unanimously by the Security Council at its 3292nd meeting



**RESOLUTION 884 (1993)**  
**OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**  
**12 November 1993**

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 822 (1993) of 30 April 1993, 853 (1993) of 29 July 1993 and 874 (1993) of 14 October 1993,

Reaffirming its full support for the peace process being pursued within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and for the tireless efforts of the CSCE Minsk Group,

Taking note of the letter dated 9 November 1993 from the Chairman-in-Office of the Minsk Conference on Nagorny Karabakh addressed to the President of the Security Council and its enclosures (S/26718, annex),

Expressing its serious concern that a continuation of the conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic, and of the tensions between the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic, would endanger peace and security in the region, Noting with alarm the escalation in armed hostilities as consequence of the violations of the cease-fire and excesses in the use of force in response to those violations, in particular the occupation of the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz in the Azerbaijani Republic,

Reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic and of all other States in the region,

Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory,

Expressing grave concern at the latest displacement of a large number of civilians and the humanitarian emergency in the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz and on Azerbaijan's southern frontier,

1. Condemns the recent violations of the cease-fire established between the parties, which resulted in a resumption of hostilities, and particularly condemns the occupation of the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz, attacks on civilians and bombardments of the territory of the Azerbaijani Republic;
2. Calls upon the Government of Armenia to use its influence to achieve compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorny Karabakh

- region of the Azerbaijani Republic with resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993) and 874 (1993), and to ensure that the forces involved are not provided with the means to extend their military campaign further;
3. Welcomes the Declaration of 4 November 1993 of the nine members of the CSCE Minsk Group (S/26718) and commends the proposals contained therein for unilateral cease-fire declarations;
  4. Demands from the parties concerned the immediate cessation of armed hostilities and hostile acts, the unilateral withdrawal of occupying forces from the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz, and the withdrawal of occupying forces from other recently occupied areas of the Azerbaijani Republic in accordance with the 'Adjusted timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993)' (S/26522, appendix) as amended by the CSCE Minsk Group meeting in Vienna of 2 to 8 November 1993;
  5. Strongly urges the parties concerned to resume promptly and to make effective and permanent the cease-fire established as a result of the direct contacts undertaken with the assistance of the Government of the Russian Federation in support of the CSCE Minsk Group, and to continue to seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict within the context of the CSCE Minsk process and the 'Adjusted timetable' as amended by the CSCE Minsk Group meeting in Vienna of 2 to 8 November 1993;
  6. Urges again all States in the region to refrain from any hostile acts and from any interference or intervention, which would lead to the widening of the conflict and undermine peace and security in the region;
  7. Requests the Secretary-General and relevant international agencies to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population, including that in the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz and on Azerbaijan's southern frontier, and to assist refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes in security and dignity;
  8. Reiterates its request that the Secretary-General, the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE and the Chairman of the CSCE Minsk Conference continue to report to the Council on the progress of the Minsk process and on all aspects of the situation on the ground, in particular on the implementation of its relevant resolutions, and on present and future cooperation between the CSCE and the United Nations in this regard;
  9. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

Adopted unanimously by the Security Council at its 3313<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**THE STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CIS  
HEADS OF STATE ON THE CONFLICT IN  
NAGORNO KARABAKH AND AROUND IT**  
**April 15, 1994**

Taking into consideration the statements of the leaders of the Azerbaijani Republic and the Republic of Armenia about their taking measures to halt military operations, the Council of the CIS Heads of State states that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict causes irreparable damage to the Azeri and Armenian peoples, the economy and ecology of the vast region in the Transcaucasus, affects the substantial interests of other CIS members and the Commonwealth as a whole.

The Council of CIS Heads of State supports the efforts of CIS-member states directed at the durable political settlement of the conflict, including persistent peacemaking initiatives of the Russian Federation, welcomes the troubleshooting mission of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

The Council of the CIS Heads of State confirms its aspiration for encouraging the search of the only possible – compromise solution in every possible way. The main priority, the imperative of settlement is the immediate ceasefire, halt of all military operations and then its firm consolidation. Without it, it is impossible to pass on to the elimination of the consequences of the tragic confrontation.

The Council of the CIS Heads of State appeals to the international community, the CSCE and the UN to support the measures taken by the CIS in the interest of settling the conflict.

## THE BISHKEK PROTOCOL

The participants of the meeting held upon the initiative of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan, the Federal Assembly and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Bishkek on May 4-5, 1994

- expressed determination to encourage in every possible way the stopping of the armed conflict in Nagorno Karabakh and around it which not only causes irreparable damage to the Azeri and Armenian people but also substantially infringes on the interests of other countries of the region and seriously complicates the international situation;
- supporting the Statement of the Council of CIS Heads of State of April 15, 1994, expressed the readiness to give a full support to the efforts of the heads and representatives of the executive power on stopping the armed conflict and eliminating its consequences by way of concluding an appropriate agreement as soon as possible;
- pronounced in favour of the natural active role of the Commonwealth and the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in stopping the conflict and realisation of the principles, goals and concrete decisions of the UN and the CSCE connected with it (first of all resolutions 822, 853, 874, 884 of the UN Security Council);
- urged all the parties to the conflict to listen to the voice of sense: to cease fire at midnight from 8 to 9 May of this year guided by the Protocol of February 18, 1994 (including the part of the deployment of monitors) and by the most intensive work in the shortest possible time to consolidate it by way of signing a reliable legally binding agreement envisaging a mechanism of ensuring non-resumption of military and hostile operations, withdrawal of troops from the occupied territories and resumption of the functioning of communications, return of refugees, continuation of the negotiating process;
- agreed to propose to the parliaments of the CIS member states to discuss the initiative of the Chairman of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly V. F. Shumeyko and the Head of the peace-making group of the Assembly on Nagorno Karabakh M. Sh.

Sherimkulov about the establishment of peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth;

- think it expedient to continue such meetings for the sake of finding a peaceful solution to the armed conflict;
- expressed gratitude to the people and the leadership of Kyrgyzstan for creating excellent conditions for work, cordiality and hospitality.

On behalf of the delegations:

(A. JALILOV) R. GULIEV      B. ARARKTSYAN, K. BABURYAN  
 V. SHUMEYKO  
 M. SHERIMKULOV  
 V. KAZIMIROV  
 M. KROTOV

Plenipotentiary of the President of the Russian Federation, the Head of the intermediary mission of Russia	The Head of the Secretariat of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of CIS-member states
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Bishkek, May 5, 1994

*Note:* On May 8, 1994 in Baku, during the signing of the Bishkek protocol by R. Guliev the following record was included in that copy: ‘It is signed on terms that in paragraph 5 of this text in the third line from the top before the word “monitors” the word “international” will be added and in the sixth line from the top of the same paragraph the word ‘occupied’ will be replaced with “seized”. Above, in the original text, the words to which these amendments relate are marked. Besides, an attempt was made to supplement that copy of the document with the signature of N. Bakhmanov (leader of the Azeri community of Nagorno Karabakh), but on that day he was not found in Baku.

**TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION P. S. GRACHOV,  
TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRES  
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION A. V. KOZYREV,  
TO V. N. KAZIMIROV**

Responding to the ceasefire appeal stated in the Bishkek Protocol of May 5, 1994 and guided by the Protocol from February 18, 1994, the conflicting Parties agreed about the following:

1. To ensure a complete ceasefire and halt of military operations beginning at 00:01 on May 12, 1994.

Corresponding orders about ceasefire will be issued and brought to the notice of commanding officers of military units responsible for their performance not later than May 11, 1994.

On May 12, before 23:00, the Parties will exchange the texts of their orders about ceasefire with the purpose of their possible mutual supplementation and unification of basic provisions of similar documents in future.

2. To ask the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation about the convocation in Moscow not later than May 12 of this year of an urgent meeting of the Ministers of Defence of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the commander of the army of Nagorno Karabakh with the purpose of agreeing about the liners of separation of the troops, other urgent military-technical issues and preparation of deployment of an advanced group of international monitors.

3. This agreement will be used for the completion of negotiations in the next 10 days and the conclusion of the Agreement about the stopping of the armed conflict not later than on May 22 of this year.

4. This agreement will come into force immediately after the Mediator notifies that he has received from the conflicting sides completely identical documents signed by authorized representatives.

Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan	Minister of Defence of Armenia	The Commander of the Army of Nagorno Karabakh
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«                    » May 1994.

*Note:* The text is signed respectively by M. I. Mamedov in Baku on May 9, by S. A. Sarkisyan in Yerevan on May 10, by S. Babayan in Stepanakert on May 11, 1994.

**FROM THE DOCUMENT OF THE CSCE  
BUDAPEST SUMMIT  
6 December, 1994**

II  
REGIONAL ISSUES

Intensification of CSCE action in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

1. Deploring the continuation of the conflict and the human tragedy involved, the participating States welcomed the confirmation by the parties to the conflict of the cease-fire agreed on 12 May 1994 through the mediation of the Russian Federation in co-operation with the CSCE Minsk Group. They confirmed their commitment to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and welcomed the political support given by the Security Council to the CSCE's efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. To this end they called on the parties to the conflict to enter into intensified substantive talks, including direct contacts. In this context, they pledged to redouble the efforts and assistance by the CSCE. They strongly endorsed the mediation efforts of the CSCE Minsk Group and expressed appreciation for the crucial contribution of the Russian Federation and the efforts by other individual members of the Minsk Group. They agreed to harmonize these into a single co-ordinated effort within the framework of the CSCE.

2. To this end, they have directed the Chairman-in-Office, in consultation with the participating States and acting as soon as possible, to name co-chairmen of the Minsk Conference to ensure a common and agreed basis for negotiations and to realize full co-ordination in all mediation and negotiation activities. The co-chairmen, guided in all of their negotiating efforts by CSCE principles and an agreed mandate, will jointly chair meetings of the Minsk Group and jointly report to the Chairman-in-Office. They will regularly brief the Permanent Council on the progress of their work.

3. As a first step in this effort, they directed the co-chairmen of the Minsk Conference to take immediate steps to promote, with the support and co-operation of the Russian Federation and other individual members of the Minsk Group, the continuation of the existing cease-fire and, drawing upon the progress already achieved in previous mediation activities, to conduct

speedy negotiations for the conclusion of a political agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, the implementation of which will eliminate major consequences of the conflict for all parties and permit the convening of the Minsk Conference. They further requested the co-chairmen of the Minsk Conference to continue working with the parties towards further implementation of confidence-building measures, particularly in the humanitarian field. They underlined the need for participating States to take action, both individually and within relevant international organizations, to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of the region with special emphasis on alleviating the plight of refugees.

4. They agreed that, in line with the view of the parties to the conflict, the conclusion of the agreement mentioned above would also make it possible to deploy multinational peacekeeping forces as an essential element for the implementation of the agreement itself. They declared their political will to provide, with an appropriate resolution from the United Nations Security Council, a multinational CSCE peacekeeping force following agreement among the parties for cessation of the armed conflict. They requested the Chairman-in-Office to develop as soon as possible a plan for the establishment, composition and operations of such a force, organized on the basis of Chapter III of the Helsinki Document 1992 and in a manner fully consistent with the Charter of the United Nations. To this end the Chairman-in-Office will be assisted by the co-chairmen of the Minsk Conference and by the Minsk Group, and be supported by the Secretary General; after appropriate consultations he will also establish a high-level planning group in Vienna to make recommendations on, inter alia, the size and characteristics of the force, command and control, logistics, allocation of units and resources, rules of engagement and arrangements with contributing States. He will seek the support of the United Nations on the basis of the stated United Nations readiness to provide technical advice and expertise. He will also seek continuing political support from the United Nations Security Council for the possible deployment of a CSCE peacekeeping force.

5. On the basis of such preparatory work and the relevant provisions of Chapter III of the Helsinki Document 1992, and following agreement and a formal request by the parties to the Chairman-in-Office through the co-chairmen of the Minsk Conference, the Permanent Council will take a decision on the establishment of the CSCE peacekeeping operation.



**TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE AZERBAIJAN  
REPUBLIC Mr. HEYDAR ALIYEV**

**Dear Heydar Aliyevich,**

According to the exchange of views on the issues of strengthening the ceasefire regime, which took place in Baku, I am sending to you, as it was agreed, the proposals of the Minsk Conference co-chairmen.

**The proposals of the mediator on strengthening the ceasefire  
in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict**

On behalf of the Co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Conference (hereinafter – the Mediator), with the purpose of strengthening the ceasefire regime established in the conflict region since May 12, 1994 and creating more favourable conditions for the progress of the peace process, we jointly suggest that the conflicting sides (hereinafter – the Sides) should assume the following obligations:

1. In the event of incidents threatening the ceasefire, to immediately inform the other Side (and in a copy – the Mediator) in written form by facsimile or by the PM line with an exact specification of the place, time and character of the incident and its consequences.

The other Side is informed that measures are being taken for non-admission of reciprocal actions which could lead to the aggravation of the incident. Accordingly, the other Side is expected to take appropriate measures immediately. If possible, proposals about taking urgent measures to overcome this incident as quickly as possible and restore the status quo ante are also reported.

2. Upon receiving such a notification from the other Side, to immediately check the facts and give a written response not later than within 6 hours (in a copy – to the Mediator).

3. The Sides agree that official sources will inform the mass media about the incident only after receiving the response from the other Side and if this response is delayed then not earlier than 7 hours after the transference of the initial address on a given issue to the other Side. At the same time, the Sides will objectively reflect the response of the other Side in the report for the press as well as notify that contacts on a given issue are continuing.

4. With a view to establish a reliable direct urgent communication each Side allocates two PM devices and ensures 24-hour duty of responsible offi-

cials at both devices. The corresponding numbers of the PM devices must be reported via the Mediator not later than February 6, 1995.

If it is impossible to use fax for sending urgent reports by the Sides to each other or to the Mediator corresponding texts are dictated by the PM communication line.

5. The Sides agree that the Mediator will take into consideration only those addresses of the Sides in which it is proved that a given issue has already been raised before the other Side.

6. In special cases the Sides may ask the Mediator to hold an urgent meeting with their representatives with a view to examine the incident and the formed situation.

7. If necessary, by the petition of one of the Sides and with the consent of the other Side a mixed group of inspectors including, if the Sides asks about it, representatives of the Mediator may be dispatched to investigate the situation on the spot.

8. Without waiting for the completion of the investigation of the incident the Sides are obliged to take measures to prevent the escalation with the purpose of restoring the status quo ante, at the same time maximally taking into consideration the possible recommendations of the Mediator.

9. Depending on the severity of the situation, it may be submitted by the Mediator for investigation at a meeting of the OSCE Minsk Group or at the OSCE Permanent Council.

10. The Sides are obliged to refrain from public statements that can lead to the escalation of the conflict.

We ask to confirm officially the readiness to assume the aforementioned obligations in full measure at the level of the top military leadership no later than on February 4, 1995 in order to consider, after receiving an appropriate response from the Sides, these obligations as effective beginning on February 6, 1995.

*Vladimir KAZIMIROV* on behalf of the Co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Conference 3 February, 1995/

*Attached:* The proposal on the text of the response.

The Co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Conference

To Ambassador *V. N. Kazimirov*

To Ambassador *A. Burner*

I confirm the readiness of Azerbaijan to assume the obligations stated by you in your proposal of February 3, 1995 in full measure.

In case of receiving your confirmation about the general consent to these obligations, we will consider this agreement as effective beginning on February 6, 1995.

*M. MAMEDOV*  
Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan  
4 February, 1995

*Note:* On the same day, February 3, 1995, similar letters were sent to President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan and leader of Nagorno Karabakh Robert Kocharyan. On February 4, 1995, the same day when the letter of Mamedov was received, reply letters were received (identical with the one cited above) from Armenia's Minister of Defence Serge Sargsyan and Commander of the Army of Nagorno Karabakh Samvel Babayan.

**MANDATE**  
**of the Co-Chairmen of the Conference on Nagorno**  
**Karabakh under the auspices of the OSCE**  
**(‘Minsk Conference’) 01.03.1995**

The Co-Chairmen are appointed by the Chairman-in-Office;

The Co-Chairmen will be guided in their activities by the principles and norms of the OSCE, the United Nations Charter, decisions of the OSCE fora, including the decisions by the Council of Ministers on 24 March 1992 and particularly the Budapest Summit Decision, and as applicable resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

The Co-Chairmen will in their work be guided by the objectives of the Minsk Conference, i. e. promoting a resolution of the conflict without the use of force and in particular facilitating negotiations for a peaceful and comprehensive settlement, according to the rules of procedure as these are stated in the decisions of the 10th meeting of the CSO of the CSCE.

The Co-Chairmen will realize full co-ordination in all mediating and negotiating activities, harmonizing them into a single coordinated effort within the framework of the OSCE;

The Co-Chairmen will, jointly and in full parity, on the basis of impartiality:

1. Make joint efforts in order to strengthen the cease-fire;
2. Develop a common basis for negotiations with the parties to the conflict;
3. Conduct negotiations with the parties to the conflict for the conclusion of a political agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, drawing upon the progress achieved in previous mediating activities;
4. Promote direct contacts, as appropriate, including substantial talks, among the parties to the conflict;
5. Continue working with the parties to the conflict on confidence-building measures, particularly in the humanitarian field, synchronizing them with the political process;
6. Assist the Chairman-in-Office in developing a plan for the establishment, composition and operation of a multinational OSCE peace-keeping force;

7. Forward to the Chairman-in-Office the received approvals and formal requests by the parties to the conflict concerning the OSCE peace-keeping operation;

8. Report to the Chairman-in-Office on the process of negotiations with the parties to the conflict on a draft mandate, Memoranda of Understanding and provisions of guaranties for the safety at all times of personnel involved;

**The Co-Chairmen will:**

9. Jointly chair the regular consultations of the Minsk Group, dispatch jointly to the Minsk Group members, documents, information and proposals, including proposals on the dates and venues of the Minsk Group meetings and the set of issues to be discussed;

10. Jointly and continuously inform and consult with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and jointly inform, on a regular basis, the Permanent Council of the OSCE on the progress of their work;

11. After consultations with the CiO, jointly inform, the President of the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations Secretary-General on the progress of the Minsk process and on all aspects of the situation on the ground, on the implementation of its relevant resolutions as well as on the present and future co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations in this regard; when necessary, and after appropriate consultation with the CiO, present to the United Nations considerations and proposals concerning new resolutions that might be adopted by the United Nations Security Council in the interests of the peaceful settlement of the conflict;

12. Visit jointly, or when appropriate separately, on an agreed basis, the region of conflict to maintain contacts with parties to the conflict concerning the above-mentioned and other related issues;

13. Upon consultation with the CiO, maintain necessary contacts with the ICRC, the UNHCR and other relevant international and regional organizations and institutions.

14. Jointly chair the Minsk Conference and the preparatory meetings leading to it.

15. The Co-Chairmen will co-operate with the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in- Office in accordance with provisions, contained in the Mandate of the Personal Representative.

## OSCE SENIOR COUNCIL PRAGUE

1-SC/Journal No. 2

31 March 1995

Annex

### Chairman's Summary

The first meeting of the Senior Council was opened by the Chairman-in-Office, Mr. László Kovács. (The statement of the Chairman-in-Office was distributed as REF.SC/3/95/Rev.) In his remarks on the situation in the OSCE area the Chairman-in-Office noted that OSCE participating States continue to confront challenges to OSCE principles, including the preservation of territorial integrity and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In the discussion that followed delegations discussed these challenges as they apply in specific areas. Particular attention was paid to the situation in Chechnya and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Delegations expressed their concern over continuing warfare and widespread violation of human rights in Chechnya. There was a shared sense of urgency for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, increased efforts aimed at a lasting negotiated political settlement, and increased and unimpeded humanitarian assistance to all in need.

Such a settlement should be based on OSCE principles and with respect for the constitution of the Russian Federation and Russia's territorial integrity. Delegations welcomed the readiness of the Russian Federation to agree to the establishment by mid-April of an OSCE Assistance Group, enjoying all possible freedom of movement in the region, with the following tasks:

- promote respect for human rights;
- foster the development of democratic institutions;
- assist in the preparation of new constitutional agreements and in the holding of elections;
- facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid;
- promote dialogue and negotiations aimed at the establishment of a lasting ceasefire and a political settlement of the crisis.

Delegations expressed their expectation that the Permanent Council would take the necessary decision at its next meeting.

Delegations were concerned about the situation of 'neither war nor peace' in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and underlined the importance of strengthening the ceasefire. Delegations were disappointed by the lack of progress in negotiations on the conflict. The Chairman-in-Office confirms previous OSCE decisions on the status of the parties, i.e. the participation of the two State parties to the conflict and of the other conflicting party (Nagorno-Karabakh) in the whole negotiation process, including in the Minsk Conference. In addition, interested parties may be invited to the Minsk Conference and its preparatory work for consultations. Delegations urged the parties to re-engage in political negotiation without preconditions and to agree without further delay to an OSCE presence in the region.

Parties were strongly urged to respond to appeals for the release of prisoners of war and hostages. Many delegations expressed concern that the momentum generated by the Budapest decision would be lost if this was not done immediately. Simultaneously, preparation for a peacekeeping operation should be intensified to enable the OSCE to take key decisions. The Chairman-in-Office called upon the participating States to make concrete commitments of personnel and financial resources and to ascertain the financing of the operation.

**Annex To the Declaration of the OSCE Lisbon Summit**

**3 December, 1996**

**STATEMENT  
OF THE OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE**

You all know that no progress has been achieved in the last two years to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the issue of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. I regret that the efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference to reconcile the views of the parties on the principles for a settlement have been unsuccessful.

Three principles which should form part of the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were recommended by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group. These principles are supported by all member States of the Minsk Group. They are:

- territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic;
- legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh defined in an agreement based on self-determination which confers on Nagorno-Karabakh the highest degree of self-rule within Azerbaijan;
- guaranteed security for Nagorno-Karabakh and its whole population, including mutual obligations to ensure compliance by all the Parties with the provisions of the settlement.

I regret that one participating State could not accept this. These principles have the support of all other participating States.

This statement will be included in the Lisbon Summit documents

**STATEMENT  
OF THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

With regard to the statement by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, the Delegation of Armenia wishes to express its concern over the following issues:

1. The statement does not reflect either the spirit or the letter of the Minsk Group's mandate as established by the Budapest Summit 1994, which proposed negotiations with a view to reaching a political agreement.



The problem of status has been a subject of discussion in direct negotiations which have yet to be concluded.

2. The statement predetermines the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, contradicting the decision of the OSCE Ministerial Council of 1992, which referred this issue to the competence of the OSCE Minsk Conference, to be convened after the conclusion of a political agreement.

3. The Armenian side is convinced that a solution of the problem can be found on the basis of international law and the principles laid down in the Helsinki Final Act, above all on the basis of the principle of self-determination.

4. In the interests of reaching a compromise solution, the Armenian side is prepared to continue with the most intensive negotiations, both within the Minsk Group and on the basis of direct contacts co-ordinated by the Co-Chairmen of that Group.

I request that this statement be annexed to the Lisbon Summit Declaration.

## **JOINT STATEMENT ON THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT**

by U.S. President Clinton, French President Chirac and Russian President Yeltsin at the Denver Summit of the Eight, June 20, 1997.

On the occasion of our meeting in Denver, we, the Presidents of France, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, as leaders of the countries that co-chair the OSCE Minsk Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh, express our deep concern over the continuing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It has seriously undermined economic and social development and prosperity throughout the Caucasus region. It has created thousands of victims. Over a million people are still displaced from their homes.

We are encouraged by the continued observance of the cease-fire. However, the cease-fire by itself is insufficient. Without progress toward a durable settlement, the cease-fire could break down. The international community thus has repeatedly called for a settlement; we believe there should be no delay in establishing a stable and lasting peace in the region.

To that end we have committed our countries to work closely together to assist the efforts of the parties to negotiate a resolution to the conflict. The French, Russian and U.S. Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Conference have presented a new proposal for a comprehensive settlement, taking into consideration the legitimate interest and concerns of all parties. It represents an appropriate basis for achieving a mutual agreement. The primary responsibility, however, rests with the parties and their leaders. We call upon them to take a positive approach, to build upon this proposal and to negotiate an early settlement.

Released by U.S. President Clinton, French President Chirac and Russian President Yeltsin at the Denver Summit of the Eight, June 20, 1997.

**OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRMANSHIP**  
**Comprehensive Agreement to Resolve**  
**the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict**

**Preamble**

The Parties, well aware of the benefits of peace and cooperation in the region to the prosperity and well-being of their peoples, are determined to bring about a peaceful resolution to the long-standing conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The settlement set out below will establish the basis for cooperative economic development of the Caucasus, allowing the people of the region to live normal, productive lives under democratic institutions, with a rising standard of living and a promising future. Cooperation under this agreement will lead to normal trade, transportation and communications links throughout the region, allow people to reconstruct their home towns and villages with the assistance of international institutions, produce the stability necessary for a major increase in external investment in the region, and open the way for mutually beneficial trade leading to the realization, for all of the people, of the natural prosperity inherent in the Caucasus region. Reconciliation and interaction among the peoples will unleash their enormous potential for the good of their neighbors and for the people of the world.

Thus, the Parties, being committed to the provisions of the UN Charter, to the basic principles and decisions of the OSCE and the universally accepted norms of international law, and to the full implementation of Resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 of the UN Security Council, agree hereby to take the steps outlined in Agreement I to cease the armed conflict and to reestablish normal relations, and to reach agreements on Nagorno-Karabakh's final status outlined in Agreement II.

**Agreement I — CESSATION OF ARMED CONFLICT**

The Parties undertake to:

- I. Renounce the use of armed force to settle disputes among them, including, for the implementation of this Agreement.
- II. Withdraw all armed forces in two stages:

In the First Stage, forces along the current line of contact to the east and south of Nagorno-Karabakh will be withdrawn several kilometres to lines delineated in Annex 1, with due consideration for the recommendations of the OSCE High Level Planning Group ('HPLG'), to facilitate initial deployment of the vanguard of an OSCE multinational force in a militarily sound transitional buffer zone, to separate the Parties along that line and to provide security during the second stage of withdrawals.

In the Second Stage, forces will withdraw in accordance with the schedule set forth in Annex 1 as follows:

- A. The forces of Armenia to within the boundaries of the Republic of Armenia.
  - B. The forces of Nagorno-Karabakh to within the 1988 boundaries of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast' (with exceptions listed below, paragraphs VIII and IX).
  - C. The forces of Azerbaijan to lines set forth in Annex 1 based on the recommendations of the High Level Planning Group.
  - D. Heavy armaments shall be withdrawn farther, to positions specified in Annex 1, on the basis of the recommendations of the High Level Planning Group, with requirements for transparency and reporting as set forth in that Annex.
- III. Respect the resultant zone as a Zone of Separation in which OSCE Peace-keeping forces together with the Permanent Mixed Commission shall be responsible for security. The forces of no side shall be permitted to enter the Zone of Separation except under the auspices of the OSCE peace-keeping force and Permanent Mixed Commission as outlined in Annex II. It will envisage formation of mutually agreed units for border service, mine clearing and civilian police. The Parties agree to cease all military flights in the Zone of Separation and in the Buffer Zone.
- IV. Facilitate the deployment of an OSCE multi-national peace-keeping force in a Buffer Zone to guarantee security jointly with the Permanent Mixed Commission. The OSCE PKF may be constituted by the OSCE and mandated by Resolution of the UN Security Council, with mandate renewable upon recommendation of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.
- V. Implement a return of displaced persons to their former places of permanent residence within the Zone of Separation. The security of the returning population shall be under the monitored by the OSCE peace-keeping force, which shall ensure the Party that the demilitarized status of the Zone is kept.

- VI. Simultaneously with the withdrawal, work through the Permanent Mixed Commission to open roads, railroads, power, communications, trade and other links, including other work necessary to accomplish this. The parties shall guarantee use of these links to all, including ethnic minorities, guaranteeing the latter access to their co-ethnics elsewhere in the region. Each Party commits itself to lift all blockades and facilitate delivery of humanitarian and other assistance to all the other parties without hindrance. Armenia and Azerbaijan shall guarantee free rail communication to each other, in particular on the route Baku-Horadiz-Mehri-Ordubad-Nakhchivan-Yerevan.
- VII. Cooperate with the ICRC, UNHCR and other international humanitarian organizations to ensure the return of all persons detained in connection with the conflict, investigation of the fate of those missing in action and the repatriation of all remains.
- VIII. The following arrangement for the Lachin Corridor:
- A. Azerbaijan shall lease the Corridor to the OSCE, which shall contract for the Corridor's exclusive use by the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities (with exceptions for transit noted below, point E).
  - B. The OSCE shall oversee security in cooperation with the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities.
  - C. The boundaries of the Lachin Corridor shall be as drawn in Annex II, with recommendations of the Permanent Mixed Commission duly taken into account.
  - D. The OSCE shall oversee the building of a road bypassing the town of Lachin. Once the road is complete, the town of Lachin shall be excluded from the Lachin corridor. It shall return to Azerbaijani administration (as part of the Zone of Separation) and its previous residents may return.
  - E. No permanent settlement or military forces other than the authorized security contingent shall be permitted in the Corridor. OSCE officials, monitors and peace-keepers have the right to transit in any direction upon prior notification, as do Azeri residents of the region transiting in the direction between Lachin and Qubatzly regions or vice versa. Areas of the Lachin region outside the Corridor shall be part of the Zone of Separation.
- IX. The following arrangement for the town of Shusha and Shaumyan District: A. The Parties shall withdraw military units from the two areas with the exception of anti-aircraft units with limited support personnel.

- B. Local administrations will assist in the deployment of ODIHR observers.
- C. Displaced persons may return to their former places of permanent residence. Their security shall be guaranteed by respective local authorities.
- D. Returning residents shall enjoy full civil rights, including the right to form political parties. They shall be represented in the Parliaments in Baku and Stepanakert, respectively, and in elected councils, police and security forces in these localities in accordance with their percentage of the population in the localities.
- E. The Permanent Mixed Commission shall coordinate international assistance to reconstruct in these localities equitably and to the benefit of both populations.
- F. Residents of the town of Shusha and Shaumyan district shall have guaranteed road access, telecommunication and other links to the rest of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, respectively.
- X. Establish a Permanent Mixed Commission (PMC) to supervise implementation of the provisions of this Agreement with regard to issues affecting Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The PMC shall have three Co-Chairs: one Azerbaijani, one from Nagorno-Karabakh and a Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The primary responsibility of the Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh Co-Chairs shall be implementation of the Agreement; the primary responsibility of the OSCE Co-Chair shall be to mediate and arbitrate cases of disagreement. The PMC shall have the following Subcommissions: the Military Subcommission, the Economic Subcommission and the Human Rights and Cultural Subcommission. The duties of the PMC and the subcommissions are outlined in Annex II.
- XI. Establish full diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic.
- XII. Create an Armenian-Azerbaijani Binational Commission (AABC), with one Co-Chair from the Republic of Armenia and one from the Azerbaijan Republic. The OSCE CiO shall be represented on the Commission. The AABC shall have the responsibility of preventing border incidents, conduct liaison between border troops and other relevant security forces of both countries; and monitors arrangements for opening roads, railroads, trade, communications, pipelines and other links.

- XIII. The UN Security Council shall serve as guarantor to the present agreement.
- XIV. This agreement shall be in effect until a comprehensive settlement agreement is signed at the OSCE Minsk Conference, which is to establish, in particular, permanent mechanisms of security and peacekeeping to replace those envisaged by this Agreement.

#### Annex I

Implementation of troop withdrawal and return of the displaced persons, geographic parameters, schedules and security issues.

#### Annex II

Intermediate security measures: the mandate of the Commissions, parameters of monitoring and of the security regime.

### AGREEMENT II: STATUS

#### Preamble:

The status of Nagorno-Karabakh is of interest to the international community, including the Republic of Armenia, and may not be determined by unilateral action either of the Azerbaijan Republic or of the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh. The status shall be determined by the following parameters:

- I. Recognition by all the Parties to the conflict of the territorial integrity and inviolability of borders of Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- II. Nagorno-Karabakh is a statal and territorial formation, within the borders of Azerbaijan, whose self-determination shall include the rights and privileges listed below, as formalized in an agreement between the two, ratified by the Minsk Conference and incorporated into the constitutions of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.
- III. Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhchivan shall have the right to free and unhindered transport and communications access to both Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- IV. The administrative borders of Nagorno-Karabakh are established as the borders of the former NKAO.
- V. Nagorno-Karabakh shall have its own constitution, adopted by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in a referendum. This constitution shall incorporate the formal agreement between the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities and Azerbaijan on the form of self-determination on the basis of this document. Azerbaijan will likewise amend its constitution to incorporate these agreements. Nagorno-Karabakh shall have its own flag, seal and anthem.

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- VI. The constitution and laws of Nagorno-Karabakh shall be in effect on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. The laws, regulations and executive decisions of Azerbaijan shall be in effect on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh if they do not contradict the constitution and laws of the latter.
  - VII. Nagorno-Karabakh shall autonomously form its legislative, executive and judicial authorities.
  - VIII. The population of Nagorno-Karabakh shall elect representatives to the Parliament of Azerbaijan, and shall participate in the election of the president of Azerbaijan.
  - IX. Nagorno-Karabakh will have the right to establish direct external contacts in the areas of economics, science, culture, sports and humanitarian affairs with foreign states and international organizations with appropriate representation abroad. Political parties within Nagorno-Karabakh shall have the right to establish links with political parties in other countries.
  - X. Citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh shall bear Azerbaijani passports with the special notation, Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>1</sup> Citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh shall not be considered foreigners under Armenian law<sup>1</sup>, may emigrate at any time to Armenia and may take up Armenian citizenship upon permanent emigration to the Republic of Armenia<sup>2</sup>.
  - XI. Nagorno-Karabakh shall be a free economic zone with free circulation of currencies.
  - XII. Nagorno-Karabakh shall possess National Guard and Police forces. Citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh have the right to fulfill their service obligations on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.
  - XIII. The army, security and police forces of Azerbaijan will not have the right to enter the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh except with the permission of the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities.
  - XIV. The budget of Nagorno-Karabakh shall consist of receipts derived from its own resources. The Nagorno-Karabakh Government shall encourage and guarantee investment by Azerbaijani and foreign persons and companies.
  - XV. Nagorno-Karabakh is multi-ethnic; each citizen has the right to use his or her native language in all official and non-official contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> cf. UK Ireland Act (1949)

<sup>2</sup> cf/ Israeli law of Return



XV. The UN Security Council shall serve as guarantor to the present agreement.

**CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES  
FOR THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT**

As a demonstration of the parties' respective commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, they could implement any or all of the following CSBMs in advance of any other agreement:

- Azerbaijan and Armenia could commit themselves to immediate reactivation of the cease-fire regime along their border in the Ijevan-Qazax sector. The regime, which was applied in 1992, involved a telephone hotline and joint border patrols.
- The Parties could concur in an increase in the size of the CiO's monitoring mission for additional Nagorno-Karabakh-related monitoring, for example along the Armenian- Azerbaijani border in the Ijevan-Qazax sector.
- Dialogue through UNHCR/ICRC for a humanitarian needs assessment (both for Azerbaijani IDPs and within Nagorno-Karabakh). This could proceed following concurrence of either the UNHCR or ICRC.
- Opening daily or weekly markets in the Nagorno-Karabakh region with access for both Armenians and Azeris. This would require establishing a crossing point, opening and demining a roadway to the market site, and agreeing on modalities of transit regimes and merchant/product guidelines.

July 1997

19 September 1997

## **OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRMANSHIP Agreement on the Cessation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armed Conflict**

### **Preamble**

The Parties, determined to bring about a peaceful resolution to the long-standing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, transforming the existing cease-fire into a lasting peace; recognizing the benefits of peace and cooperation in the region to the prosperity and well-being of their peoples; desiring to establish the basis for cooperative economic development of the Caucasus, allowing the people of the region to live normal, productive lives under democratic institutions, with a rising standard of living and a promising future; understanding that cooperation under this Agreement will lead to normal trade, transportation and communications links throughout the region, allow people to reconstruct their home towns and villages with the assistance of international institutions, produce the stability necessary for a major increase in external investment in the region, and open the way for mutually beneficial trade leading to the realization, for all of the people, of the natural prosperity inherent in the Caucasus region, and that reconciliation and interaction among the peoples will unleash their enormous potential for the good of their neighbors and for the people of the world; committed to the provisions of the UN Charter, to the basic principles and decisions of the OSCE and the universally accepted norms of international law, and to the full implementation of Resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 of the UN Security Council; recalling the pledge of the participating States of the OSCE, at their 1994 Summit in Budapest, to redouble the efforts and assistance of the OSCE towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict; their direction to the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference to conduct speedy negotiations; and the declaration of their political will to provide, with an appropriate resolution from the UN Security Council, a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force following an agreement among the parties for cessation of the armed conflict; and determined to continue the peace process in good faith to reach without delay a comprehensive settlement which shall resolve the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh; commit themselves to the actions outlined below.

I. The Parties shall refrain from the threat or use of force to settle disputes among them. They shall settle all such disputes, including any that may arise in connection with the implementation of the present Agreement, by peaceful means.

II. The Parties shall withdraw their armed forces in accordance with the following provisions and as set forth in detail in Annex 1:

A. In the First Stage, forces along the current line of contact to the east and south of Nagorno-Karabakh shall withdraw to lines delineated in Annex 1, and in accordance with the schedule therein, with due consideration for the recommendations of the High Level Planning Group ('HLPG'), to allow initial deployment of the vanguard of an OSCE multinational force in a militarily sound transitional buffer zone, to separate the Parties along that line and to provide security during the second stage of withdrawals.

B. In the Second Stage, forces shall withdraw in accordance with the schedule set forth in Annex 1 as follows:

(1) Any forces of Armenia located outside the frontiers of the Republic of Armenia shall withdraw behind those frontiers.

(2) The forces of Nagorno-Karabakh shall withdraw behind the 1988 boundaries of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast ('NKAO') with the exception of the Lachin District.

(3) The forces of Azerbaijan shall withdraw behind lines, delineated in Annex 1 on the basis of the recommendations of the HLPG and outside any territory of Armenia.

(4) Heavy armaments shall be withdrawn to positions specified in Annex 1 on the basis of the recommendations of the HLPG, to be monitored by the OSCE peacekeeping force, with requirements for transparency and reporting as set forth in that Annex.

III. The territory subject to these withdrawals shall constitute a Buffer Zone and a Zone of Separation, the details of which are set forth in Annex 2.

A. Upon completion of the withdrawal of forces, the Buffer Zone shall be located around the 1988 boundaries of the NKAO, the northern and southern boundaries of the Lachin District. The Buffer Zone shall be unpopulated and completely demilitarized except for the presence of elements of the OSCE Peace Keeping Operation.

B. The Zone of Separation shall be demilitarized with the exception of forces permitted to operate in cooperation with the Permanent Mixed Commission as set forth in detail in Annex 2, to include:

(1) elements of the OSCE Peace Keeping Operation; (2) formations for border patrolling and demining;

(3) civilian police whose numbers and permitted weaponry are delimited by Annex 2.

C. A no-fly zone shall be established in the Buffer Zone and Zone of Separation, in which the Parties shall exclude military flights with monitoring by the OSCE peacekeeping force, as set forth in Annex 2.

D. After withdrawal of forces in accordance with Article II, security in all the regions which remain under the control of Nagorno-Karabakh shall be maintained by relevant security forces of Nagorno-Karabakh.

IV. Pursuant to OSCE's decisions at the 1994 Budapest Summit, and with the assistance and cooperation of the Parties, an OSCE multinational peacekeeping force ('PKF'), in cooperation with the Permanent Mixed Commission and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Binational Commission, shall monitor the withdrawal of forces and heavy weapons, the exclusion of military flights, the maintenance of the demilitarization regime and the situation along the Armenian-Azerbaijani frontier as set forth in Annex 2. The Parties call on the UN Security Council to adopt an appropriate Resolution for an initial period of no more than one year, renewable as necessary upon recommendation of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The Parties agree that overall duration of the PKO shall be kept to the minimum period necessary in light of the situation in the region and the pace of the comprehensive settlement of the conflict. The Parties shall cooperate fully with the PKF to ensure the implementation of this Agreement, and to prevent any breach in or interruption of the peacekeeping operation.

V. The Parties shall facilitate the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons to their former places of residence within the Zone of Separation, as set forth in Annex 2. The PKF in cooperation with the Permanent Mixed Commission will monitor the security of the returning populations and promote confidence on all sides in the observance of the demilitarization regime in this zone. The Parties shall conduct negotiation to achieve the earliest safe and voluntary return of all other persons, not covered by this Agreement or the comprehensive settlement, who were displaced by the conflict and by tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1987.

VI. Simultaneously with the withdrawal of forces, the Parties shall undertake immediate measures to open roads, railroads, power, communications, trade and other links, including all work necessary to accomplish this in the shortest possible period, according to the schedule and detailed provisions set forth in Annex 3. The Parties shall guarantee use of these links to all, including ethnic minorities, guaranteeing the latter access to their co-ethnics elsewhere in the region. Each Party commits itself to lift all blockades and

ensure delivery of goods and people to the other Parties without hindrance. The Parties shall guarantee free and safe rail communication to one another.

VII. The Parties shall cooperate fully with the ICRC, UNHCR and other international entities to ensure the prompt and safe return of all persons detained in connection with the conflict, the investigation of the fate of those missing in action, repatriation of all remains and the delivery without discrimination of humanitarian and reconstruction aid through territories under their control to the regions that have suffered during the conflict. The Parties shall cooperate with the OSCE PKF through the Permanent Mixed Commission to establish confidence-building measures.

VIII. The Parties shall immediately establish a Permanent Mixed Commission ('PMC') to supervise the implementation of the provisions of this Agreement with regard to issues affecting Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The Chairman of the PMC shall be a representative designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The Vice Chairmen of the PMC shall be representatives of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The primary responsibility of the PMC shall be to supervise implementation of the Agreement. The responsibilities of the OSCE Chairman shall also include mediation of cases of disagreement and authorization of responses to emergencies such as natural disasters.. The PMC shall have Military, Economic, Humanitarian and Cultural, and Liaison Subcommissions. The structure, duties and other details concerning the PMC are set forth in Annex 4.

IX. The Parties shall immediately establish an Armenian- Azerbaijani Binational Commission ('AABC') to assist in the prevention of border incidents between Armenia and Azerbaijan, conduct liaison between border troops and other relevant security forces of both countries and observe and facilitate the arrangements for opening roads, railroads, trade, communications, pipelines and other links. The AABC shall have two Co- chairs, one from Armenia and one from Azerbaijan. The Commission shall include a representative designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The structure, duties and other details concerning the AABC are set forth in Annex 5.

X. The Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia shall promptly establish full diplomatic relations with permanent diplomatic missions headed by ambassadors. The Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia shall engage in negotiations, bilaterally and, multilaterally in appropriate international and regional fora, to ensure larger security of the region, including military transparency and full compliance with the CFE/Treaty.

XI. Having brought to the end the military aspect of the conflict, the three Parties to the current agreement shall continue to negotiate in good

faith (in cooperation with the Co-chairs of the Minsk conference and other appropriate parties invited by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office) to achieve without delay a comprehensive settlement which shall include resolution of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and of the issues of Lachin district, Shusha and Shaumyan district; after such a settlement is achieved during the negotiations and signed by the three above Parties, it is subject to recognition by the international community at the Minsk Conference convened at the earliest possible date.

XII. Each Party shall fully respect the security of the other Parties and their populations; undertake to promote good-neighborly relations among their peoples, facilitating trade and normal interaction among them; and refrain from statements or actions that could undermine this Agreement or good relations.

XIII. In addition to the specific provisions concerning peacekeeping and monitoring of withdrawals set forth above, and recalling the relevant principles and commitments of the OSCE, including those reflected in the Helsinki Document of 1992 and the Budapest Document of 1994, the OSCE, through appropriate mechanisms, shall monitor the full implementation of all aspects of the present Agreement and take appropriate steps, in accordance with those principles and decisions, to prevent and respond to violations of the terms of this Agreement. The witnesses of the present Agreement acting through the OSCE Permanent Council and the UN Security Council, facilitate its full implementation. In case of a serious violation of the present Agreement they consult each other about the necessary steps to be taken, inform immediately the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the Chairman of the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary General and ask the OSCE Permanent Council or the UN Security Council to consider appropriate actions.

XIV. The Parties assume mutual obligations to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Agreement including guarantees for the security of Nagorno-Karabakh, its whole population, and the returning displaced persons, to undertake necessary measures for implementation of all commitments resulting from the present Agreement.

XV. This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature and ratification and shall remain in force except as provided in the comprehensive settlement referred to in Paragraph XI. The present Agreement can be modified, supplemented and stopped with the consent of all the Parties.

December 1997

Annexes (*not published in this edition*)

Annex 1 Implementation of withdrawal of forces and return of displaced persons

Annex 2 Security regime for the Zone of Separation

Annex 3 Restoration of communications and transportation links

Annex 4 Permanent Mixed Commission

Annex 5 Armenian-Azerbaijani Binational Commission

## **OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRMANSHIP On the Principles of Comprehensive Settlement Of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armed Conflict**

Being determined to implement a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in accordance with the norms and principles of international law including principles of territorial integrity of states and self-determination of people, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh agree on the following:

### **I Agreement on the Status of Nagorno-Karabakh**

The Parties shall conclude an Agreement on status of Nagorno-Karabakh which includes the following provisions:

Nagorno-Karabakh is a statal and territorial entity in the form of a Republic, which constitutes a common state with Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh shall sign an Agreement on delimitation of spheres of competence and on reciprocal delegation of powers between their relevant authorities, which shall have the force of a Constitutional Law.

Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh shall establish a Joint Committee, which shall include representatives of the presidents, prime-ministers, and chairmen of the parliaments, whose mission shall be to define policies and activities within the sphere of joint competence.

In order to maintain contacts and effect coordination of joint actions, reciprocal representations of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan shall be established in Baku and Stepanakert respectively.

Nagorno-Karabakh shall have the right to establish direct external contacts with foreign states and relevant regional and international organizations in the areas of economics, science, culture, sports and humanitarian affairs through appropriate representations abroad. Political parties and non-gov-



ernmental organizations in Nagorno-Karabakh shall have the right to establish links with political parties and non-governmental organizations of foreign states.

Nagorno-Karabakh shall participate in execution of the foreign policies of Azerbaijan, with respect to the issues touching upon its interests. Decisions on such issues shall not be taken without consent of the two Parties.

Where it has special interests, the government of Nagorno-Karabakh shall be entitled to have its own representatives in the embassies and consular missions of Azerbaijan accredited in foreign states. Nagorno-Karabakh may also include its experts in Azerbaijani delegations to take part in international negotiations that impinge upon the interests of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The borders of Nagorno-Karabakh shall correspond to the borders of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. Should there be verification or alterations, these shall be the subject of special mutual agreement between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The borders between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh shall be reciprocally open for free movement by their unarmed citizens. Citizens travelling and conducting business across the borders shall not be subject to customs fees and other tariffs. Their respective governments shall have the competence to grant the right of permanent residence. Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh shall not use force or threaten to use force to settle disputes.

In the event of disputes or differences that cannot be resolved within the framework of the Joint Committee, the Parties shall be entitled to seek a consultative opinion of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, which shall be taken into account in the final decision.

Nagorno-Karabakh shall also enjoy the rights and privileges, listed below, that shall be formalized in the Agreement on the Status of Nagorno-Karabakh and endorsed by the Minsk Conference.

1. Nagorno-Karabakh shall have its own constitution, adopted by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh through a referendum. This Constitution shall incorporate the provisions of the Agreement on the Status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan shall likewise amend its constitution to incorporate this Agreement. The provisions of that Agreement, and those portions of the Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijani constitutions that incorporate them, shall not be changed without the consent of all three parties.

2. The constitution and laws of Nagorno-Karabakh shall be in effect on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. The laws, regulations and executive decisions of Azerbaijan shall be in effect on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh if they do not contradict the constitution and laws of the latter.

3. Nagorno-Karabakh shall have its own flag, seal and anthem.

4. Nagorno-Karabakh shall, pursuant to its Constitution, form its own legislative, executive and judicial authorities.

5. Citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh shall bear as their identification documents Azerbaijani passports carrying the special notation 'Nagorno-Karabakh.' The government of Nagorno-Karabakh or its authorized agencies shall have the exclusive right to issue such passports.

The citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh of Armenian descent may emigrate to Armenia and, in the case of a permanent resettlement, they may take up Armenian citizenship in accordance with laws of that country.

6. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh shall have the right to elect their representatives to the Parliament of Azerbaijan and to participate in the election of the President of Azerbaijan.

7. Nagorno-Karabakh shall constitute a Free Economic Zone. It shall have the right to issue its own currency notes, which will be in circulation along with Azerbaijani currency notes, as well as the right to issue its own stamps.

8. Nagorno-Karabakh shall have the right to free and unrestricted transport and communications access to Armenia and Azerbaijan.

9. Nagorno-Karabakh shall possess National Guard (security forces) and police forces formed on a voluntary basis. These forces may not operate outside Nagorno-Karabakh without the consent or special request of the government of Azerbaijan.

10. The army, security and police forces of Azerbaijan shall not have the right to enter the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh except with the consent of the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities.

11. The Armenian language shall be the primary official language in Nagorno-Karabakh. The second official language shall be Azerbaijani. Each

citizen shall enjoy the right to use his or her native language in all official and non-official contexts.

12. The budget of Nagorno-Karabakh shall consist of receipts derived from its own resources. The Nagorno-Karabakh Government shall encourage and guarantee investments by Azerbaijanis and foreign companies and persons.

## **II Regarding the Lachin Corridor**

**The question of utilization of the Lachin Corridor by Nagorno-Karabakh, with a view to ensuring unrestricted communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, shall be agreed upon separately, provided Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh do not agree on other arrangements concerning a special status of the Lachin district. The Lachin district shall remain permanently a fully demilitarized zone.**

## **III Regarding the towns of Shusha and Shaumyan**

The Parties agree that all Azerbaijani refugees may return to the places of their residence in the town of Shusha. Their security shall be guaranteed by the appropriate authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh. They shall enjoy equal rights with all citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the right to form political parties, to participate in elections at all levels, to be elected to all legislative bodies and organs of local self-governance, and to serve in state bodies, inclusive law enforcement agencies.

The same rights shall be granted to Armenian refugees on their return to the town of Shaumyan.

Citizens of the towns of Shusha and Shaumyan shall have unrestricted access by road, telecommunications and other links with the rest of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan shall assist in the deployment and activities of the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) missions.

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The Agreement on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh shall be signed by the three Parties and enter into force upon its endorsement by the Minsk Conference.

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## IV Agreement on the Cessation of the Armed Conflict

The Parties agree that the agreement on the cessation of the Armed Conflict shall include the following provisions:

I. The Parties renounce the threat or use of force to settle disputes among them. They shall settle all such disputes, including any that may arise in connection with the implementation of the agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict by peaceful means, above all, through direct negotiations or in the framework of the OSCE Minsk process.

II. The Parties shall withdraw their armed forces in accordance with the following provisions and as set forth in detail in Annex 1

A; In the First Stage, forces along the current line of contact to the east and south of Nagorno-Karabakh shall withdraw to lines delineated in Annex 1, and in accordance with the schedule therein, with due consideration for the recommendations of the OSCE High Level Planning Group ('HLPG'), to facilitate initial deployment of the vanguard of an OSCE multinational force in a militarily sound transitional buffer zone, to separate the Parties along that line and to provide security during the second stage of withdrawals.

B. In the Second Stage, forces shall withdraw simultaneously and in accordance with the schedule set forth in Annex 1 as follows:

(1) Any forces of Armenia located outside the frontiers of the Republic of Armenia shall withdraw behind those frontiers.

(2) The forces of Nagorno-Karabakh shall withdraw behind the 1988 boundaries of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast ('NKAO'), with the exception of the Lachin District, until achievement of an agreement on unrestricted communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.

(3) The forces of Azerbaijan shall withdraw behind lines delineated in Annex I on the basis of the recommendations of the HLPG and shall withdraw from any territory of Armenia.

(4) Heavy armaments shall be withdrawn to positions specified in Annex 1, on the basis of the recommendations of the HLPG. These withdrawals shall be monitored by the OSCE peacekeeping force, with requirements for transparency and reporting as set forth in that Annex.

III. The territory subject to these withdrawals shall constitute a Buffer Zone and a Zone of Separation, the details of which are set forth in Annex 2.

A. Upon completion of the withdrawal of forces, the Buffer Zone shall be located around the 1988 boundaries of the NKAO. It may be also located along the northern and southern boundaries of the Lachin District in the event of an appropriate agreement. The Buffer Zone shall be completely demilitarized and unpopulated except for the presence of elements of the OSCE Peace Keeping Operation (PKO).

B. The Zone of Separation shall be demilitarized with the exception of forces permitted to operate for the PKO in cooperation with the Permanent Mixed Commission, as set forth in detail in Annex 2, to include:

(1) elements of the PKO

(2) Azerbaijani units for border patrolling and demining; and

(3) Azerbaijani civilian police whose numbers and permitted weaponry are delimited by

Annex 2.

C. A no-fly zone shall be established in the Buffer Zone and the Zone of Separation in which the Parties shall exclude military flights, with monitoring by the OSCE peacekeeping force as set forth in Annex 2.

D. After withdrawal of forces in accordance with Article II, security in all the regions

which remain under the control of Nagorno-Karabakh shall be maintained by relevant security forces of Nagorno-Karabakh.

IV. Pursuant to OSCE's decisions at the 1994 Budapest Summit, the Parties shall invite and facilitate deployment of the OSCE multinational peacekeeping operation ('PKO') which will act in cooperation with the Permanent Mixed Commission (PMC) and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission (AAIC). The PKO shall monitor the withdrawal of forces and heavy weapons, the exclusion of military flights, the maintenance of the demilitarization regime and the situation along the Armenian-Azerbaijani frontier, as set forth in Annex 2.

The peacekeeping operation shall be established pursuant to an appropriate UN Security Council Resolution for an initial period of no more than one year, renewable as necessary upon recommendation of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The Parties agree that overall duration of the PKO shall be kept to the minimum period necessary in light of the situation in the region and the pace of the comprehensive settlement of the conflict. The Parties shall cooperate fully with the PKO to ensure the implementation of this Agreement, and to prevent any breach in or interruption of the peacekeeping operation.

V. The Parties shall facilitate the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons to their former places of residence within the Zone of Separation, as set forth in Annex 2. The PKF, in cooperation with the Permanent Mixed Commission, will monitor the security of the returnees and promote confidence of all the Parties in the observance of the demilitarization regime in this zone. The Parties shall conduct negotiations to achieve the earliest safe and voluntary return of all other persons not covered by this Agreement or the comprehensive settlement who were displaced by the conflict and by tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1987.

VI. Simultaneously with the withdrawal of forces, the Parties shall undertake immediate measures to open roads, railroads, power, communications, trade and other links, including all work necessary to accomplish this in the shortest possible period, according to the schedule and detailed provisions set forth in Annex 3. The Parties shall ensure unrestricted use of these links to all, including unrestricted access by specific communities to corresponding communities elsewhere in the region. Each Party commits itself to lift all blockades and ensure delivery of goods and people to the other Parties without hindrance. The Parties shall ensure free and safe rail communication to one another.

VII. The Parties shall cooperate fully with the ICRC, UNHCR and other international institutions to ensure (1) prompt and safe return of all persons detained in connection with the conflict, (2) investigation of the fate of those missing in action, (3) repatriation of all remains and (4) unimpeded delivery of humanitarian and reconstruction aid through territories under their control to the regions that have suffered during the conflict. The Parties shall cooperate with the OSCE PKF through the Permanent Mixed Commission to establish confidence-building measures.

VIII. The Parties shall immediately establish a Permanent Mixed Commission ('PMC') to supervise the implementation of the provisions of this Agreement with regard to issues affecting Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The Chairman of the PMC shall be a representative designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The Vice Chairmen of the PMC shall be representatives of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The primary responsibility of the PMC shall be to supervise implementation of the Agreement. The responsibilities of the OSCE Chairman shall also include mediation of cases of disagreement and authorization of responses to emergencies such as natural disasters. The PMC shall have Military, Economic, Humanitarian and Cultural, and Liaison Subcommissions. The structure, duties and other details concerning the PMC are set forth in Annex 4.

IX. The Parties shall immediately establish an Armenian-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission ('AAIC') to assist in the prevention of border incidents between Armenia and Azerbaijan, to conduct liaison between border-guard troops and other relevant security forces of both countries, and to observe and facilitate arrangements for opening roads, railroads, trade, communications, pipelines and other links. The AAIC shall have two Co-Chairs, one from Armenia and one from Azerbaijan. The Commission shall also include a representative designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The structure, duties and other details concerning AAIC are set forth in Annex 5.

X. The Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia shall engage in negotiations, bilaterally and multilaterally in appropriate international and regional fora, to ensure the larger security of the region, including military transparency and full compliance with the CFE Treaty.

XI. Each Party shall fully respect the security of the other Parties and their populations; undertake to promote good-neighboring relations among their peoples, facilitating trade and normal interaction among them; and refrain from statements or actions that could undermine this Agreement or good relations.

XII. In addition to the specific provisions concerning peacekeeping and monitoring of withdrawals set forth above, and recalling the relevant principles and commitments of the OSCE, including those reflected in the Helsinki Document of 1992 and the Budapest Document of 1994, the OSCE, through appropriate mechanisms, shall monitor the full implementation of all aspects of the present Agreement and take appropriate steps, in accordance with those principles and decisions, to prevent and respond to violations of the terms of this Agreement.

XIII. The Agreement on the Cessation of the Armed conflict shall be signed by the three Parties and shall enter into force upon its endorsement by the Minsk Conference and ratification by Parliaments of the three Parties.

XIV. The Azerbaijani Republic and the Republic of Armenia shall establish full diplomatic relations, with permanent diplomatic missions headed by ambassadors, following signature of the agreements and their endorsement by the Minsk Conference.

V  
On Guarantees

1. The Parties shall take upon themselves mutual commitments to ensure compliance with the aforementioned Agreements, including guarantees of the security of Nagorno- Karabakh, its population and those refugees and displaced persons returning to the places of their former residence.
2. The UN Security council shall monitor implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement.
3. The Agreement on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Agreement on the Cessation of the Armed Conflict may be signed by the Minsk Conference Co-Chairs as witnesses. The Presidents of France, the Russian Federation and the United States of America affirm the intention of the three countries to work in unison to monitor closely the progress of implementation of the Agreements and to take appropriate measures to promote compliance with this Agreement. The OSCE and the UN Security Council shall adopt appropriate diplomatic, economic or, in extreme cases, military measures in accordance with the UN Charter, should the need arise.

November 1998



## **MOSCOW DECLARATION of November 2, 2008**

The Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation, following their meeting on November 2, 2008 in Moscow at the invitation of the President of the Russian Federation, having had a useful and meaningfully discussion in a constructive environment regarding the current situation and the future prospects of settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by political means, by the way of resuming a direct dialogue between Azerbaijan and Armenia, with Russia, the United States and France acting as mediators and facilitators in their capacity of the OSCE Minsk Group's Co-Chair countries.

1. Declare that they are resolved to work towards improvement of the situation in the South Caucasus and ensuring stability and security in the region through the political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of principles and norms of international law, as well as resolutions and documents adopted in this framework, which will ensure favourable conditions for economic development and comprehensive cooperation in the region.

2. Reaffirm the importance of continuation by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs of their mediatory efforts in the light of their meeting with representatives of the conflicting sides in Madrid on November 20, 2007 and the subsequent discussions with the purpose of further development of the fundamental principles of political settlement.

3. Agree that achievement of a peaceful settlement shall be accompanied with legally binding international guarantees in respect of all its aspects and stages.

4. Note that the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia have agreed to continue their joint work, including cooperation in the framework of further top-level contacts, on coordination of political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and have instructed their foreign ministers to ramp up their further steps in the negotiation process in cooperation with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

5. Believe it important to encourage facilitation of the implementation of confidence-building measures in the context of settlement efforts.

**DOCUMENTS RELATED TO RUSSIA'S  
MEDIATORY EFFORTS AND DIRECT  
CONTACTS BETWEEN BAKU  
(AZERBAIJAN)  
AND STEPANAKERT (NAGORNO-  
KARABAKH)**

Unlike the documents listed above, these documents are not widely known, have seldom been quoted, and are for the most part only published for the first time now. Their main point is limitation and cessation of military operations during the year of most active hostilities in the Karabakh war (mid-1993 – May 1994). The signatures of high officials clearly demonstrate who the sides to this conflict are and, consequently, who shall take part in the negotiations.

Авг. 18 '93 0:14 8888 244-22-83 TEL 244-22-83 P. 1

8-8852-282810

г-ну С. Кавказяну

С. Кавказян В. Кавказян  
17.6.93

Азербайджан Республикасы  
МУДАФИЗ НАЗАРЛИГИ



Азербайджанская Республика  
МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБОРОНЫ

Баш мэд., Шакибаев проспекти, 3

370601

г. Баку, проспект Азербайджана, 3

№ \_\_\_\_\_ в (У. в. УММ. \_\_\_\_\_ (1993) г.г.)

№0 Азербайджанской Республики  
Факс 38-30-69 (8822)

28<sup>00</sup>ч.

Москва, факс (290-24-74 (055)  
Министерство иностранных дел  
России  
Г-ну Кавказяну

В случае согласия противоположной стороны немедленно  
взять на себя обязательство не подвергать обстрелу г. Агдам,  
им обязуемся не обстреливать г. Хамкандя.

Начальник Генерального Штаба  
ВС Азербайджанской Республики

С.Азизов

**Document 1.** From Baku. On cessation of shelling of Stepanakert and Agdam (17.06.93).

Москва МИК ГУ

случае подтверждения вами согласия противодействующей стороны на  
взвешен образом на одну неделю в 5.00 часов утра 27 июня 1993 г.  
воскресенье) прекратить любые наступательные операции и попытки про-  
хода вперед с линии соприкосновения, которая сложилась на вышеу-  
казанный момент, любые ракетные и артиллерийские обстрелы, а также воз-  
можные самонадрывания на всем участке линии соприкосновения от села Яздагиз  
север до Агдана на юге. (Мадагиз-Мордакерт-Паправенд-Агдан).  
"в договоренность вступает в силу немедленно по получении упомяну-  
того подтверждения.

Командующий Армии Оборона НКР



С. БАБАЯН

**Document 2.** From Stepanakert. On limitation of hostilities in the area between Magadiz and Agdam (27.06.93).

Азербайжан Республикаси  
**МУДАФИВЕ НАЗИРЛИГИ**



Азербайжан Республикаси  
**МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБОРОНЫ**

Бакы ш.Ф. Февридеве проспекти, 3

370001

г. Баку, проспект Агабаева, 3

№

с

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дд/мм/гг.

230 - 24 - 74

Баку, 1993 Равани  
 г-ну Камирову В.И.

В случае подтверждения Вами фактов продолжения боевых действий с нашей стороны, мы обладаем оружием на случай войны с В.С.С. утре 27 июня 1993 года (воскресенье) прекратим любые наступательные операции и получим предложения вперед с линии обороны, которая основана на взаимовыгодной основе; также ракетам, артиллерийским обстрелам, а также воздушным бомбардировкам и всем другим видам действий от села МАДАГИЗ - на линии, до города АГДАМ - на юго. Это договоренность является в силу сразу по получении указанного подтверждения.


Начальник Генерального Штаба Вооруженных  
 Сил Азербайджанской Республики

подпись

 J. Agdam

27 июня 1993 года

**Document 3.** From Baku. On limitation of hostilities in the area between Magadiz and Agdam (27.06.93).

Азербайджан Республикасы			Азербайджанская Республика	
MUDAFIN NAZIRLIĞI			МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБОРОНЫ	
Bakı şəh., Qələbənin əraziləti, 8		370601	p. Bakı, prezident Lələbəyov, 8	
№ <u>2/281</u>		4 <u>24</u>	<u>110422</u>	<u>190.5</u> vaf.

ВЕРХОВНЫЙ СОВЕТ РЕСПУБЛИКИ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАН

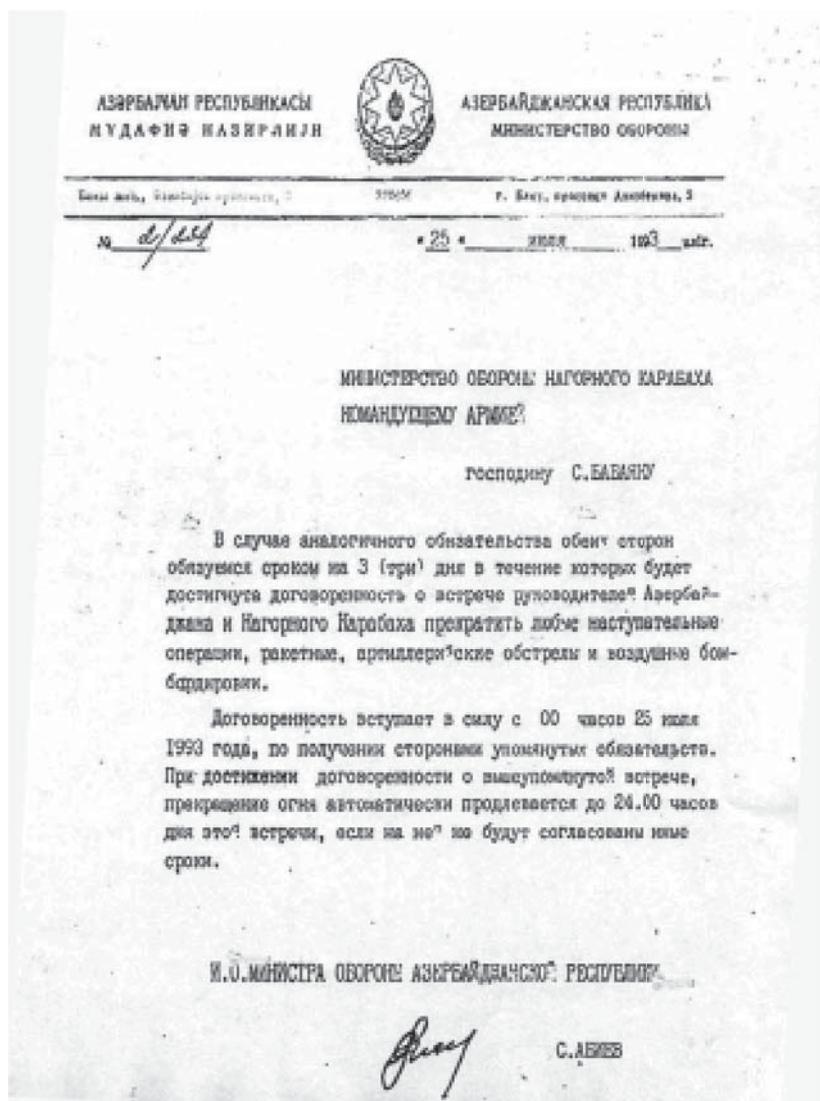
для господина БАБУРЯН К.  
*28-66-74*

В случае взаимного обязательства обеих сторон объявляем сроком на 3 дня прекратить любые наступательные операции, ракетные, артиллерийские обстрелы и воздушные бомбардировки. Договоренности вступают в силу с 16.00 часа 24 июля 1993 года, по получению сторонами уведомлений обязательства. При достижении договоренности о встрече, прекращение огня автоматическим предлагается до 24.00 часа дня этой встречи, если на ней не будут согласованы иные сроки.

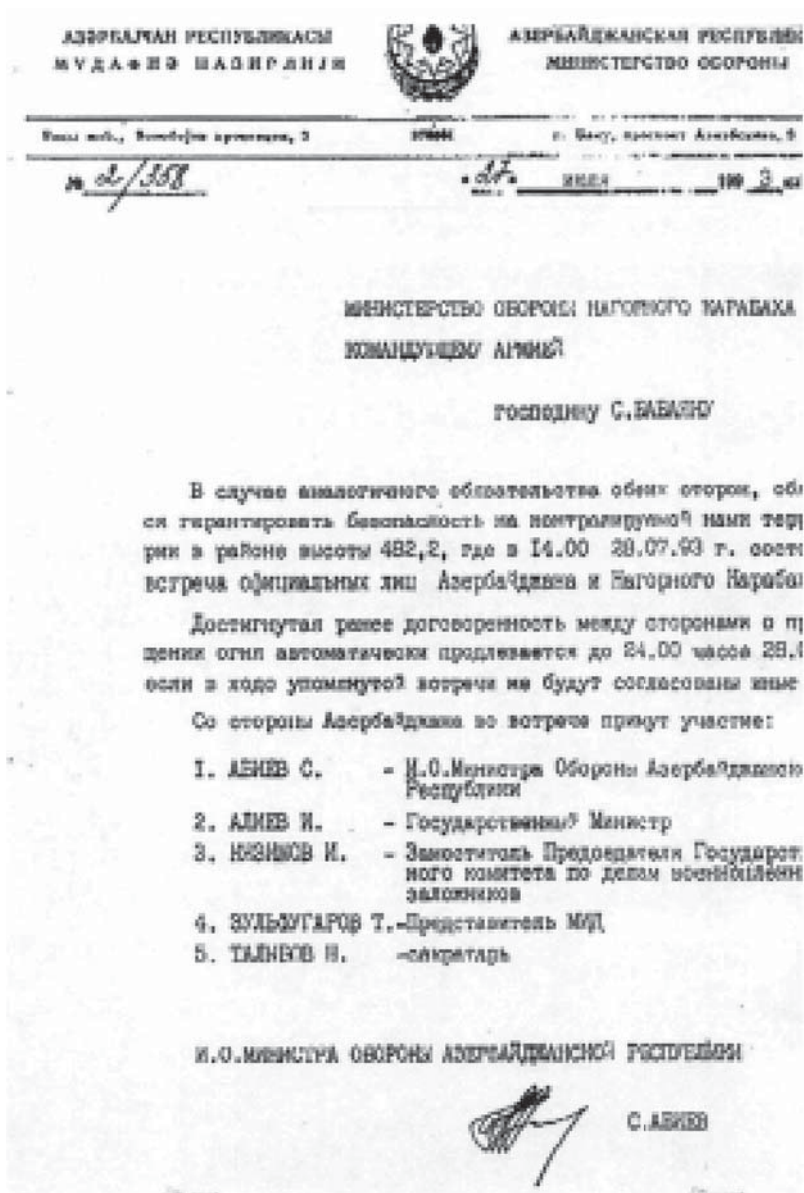
И.О. МИНИСТРА НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-РЕСПУБЛИКАНСКОЙ  
РЕСПУБЛИКИ *[Signature]* С. АЛИЕВ

*31-10-69*

**Document 4.** From Baku. On universal limitation of hostilities for a period of 3 days (24.07.93).



**Document 5.** From Baku. On universal limitation of hostilities for a period of 3 days (25.07.93).



Document 6. From Baku. On the meeting between the officials of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh on July 28, 1993 (27.07.93).



С о г л а ш е н и е  
достигнутое на встрече официальных лиц Азербайджана и  
Нагорного Карабаха 28.07.93 г.

Стороны согласились продлить достигнутую ранее / 24.07.93г. / договоренность о прекращении любых наступательных операций, ракетных, артиллерийских обстрелов и воздушных бомбардировок сроком на 7/семь/ дней, в течении которых будет достигнуто соглашение о встрече на высшем уровне руководителей Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха. Соглашение о предстоящей встрече подписывается уполномоченными на то официальными представителями Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха.

При достижении упомянутого соглашения договоренность о прекращении любых наступательных операций, ракетных, артиллерийских обстрелов и воздушных бомбардировок автоматически продлевается до 24.00 часов дня этой встречи, если на ней не будут согласованы иные сроки.

За Азербайджан  
и.о. Министра Обороны  
С.Абиев

За Нагорный Карабах  
Министр Обороны  
С.Саркисели



- Document 7.** From Stepanakert. On the extension of previous arrangements by 7 days and the summit meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh (28.07.93).

**С о г л а с и е**

договоренности на встрече официальных лиц Азербайджана и  
Нагорного Карабаха 28.07.93 г.

Стороны согласовали продлить договоренности ранее / 24.07.93г. /  
договоренности о прекращении всех наступательных операций, ракетных,  
артиллерийских обстрелов и воздушных бомбардировок сроком на 7 дней,  
в течение которых будет достигнуто соглашение о встрече на  
высоком уровне руководителей Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха. Согла-  
шение о предстоящей встрече предполагает взаимное согласие на по-  
добные мероприятия Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха.

Цель договоренности заключается в сохранении договоренности о прекращении  
всех наступательных операций, ракетных, артиллерийских обстрелов и  
воздушных бомбардировок автоматическим образом сроком до 24.08 часов для  
этой встречи, если за ней не будут согласованы иные сроки.

За Азербайджан  
и.о. Министр Обороны  
С.Алиев

За Нагорным Карабахом  
Министр Обороны  
С.Сурьянц

**Document 8.** From Baku. On the extension of previous arrangements by 7 days and the summit meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh (28.07.93).

## СОГЛАШЕНИЕ

Оборона согласилась продлить достигнутую ранее (23.07.93) договоренность о прекращении любых наступательных операций, ракетных, артиллерийских обстрелов и воздушных бомбардировок ерском на 3 (три) дня, в течении которых будет достигнуто договоренность о встрече руководителей Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха.

При достижении упомянутого соглашения договоренность о прекращении любых наступательных операций, ракетных, артиллерийских обстрелов и воздушных бомбардировок автоматически продлевается до 24. 00 часов дня этой встречи, если на ней не будут согласованы иные сроки.

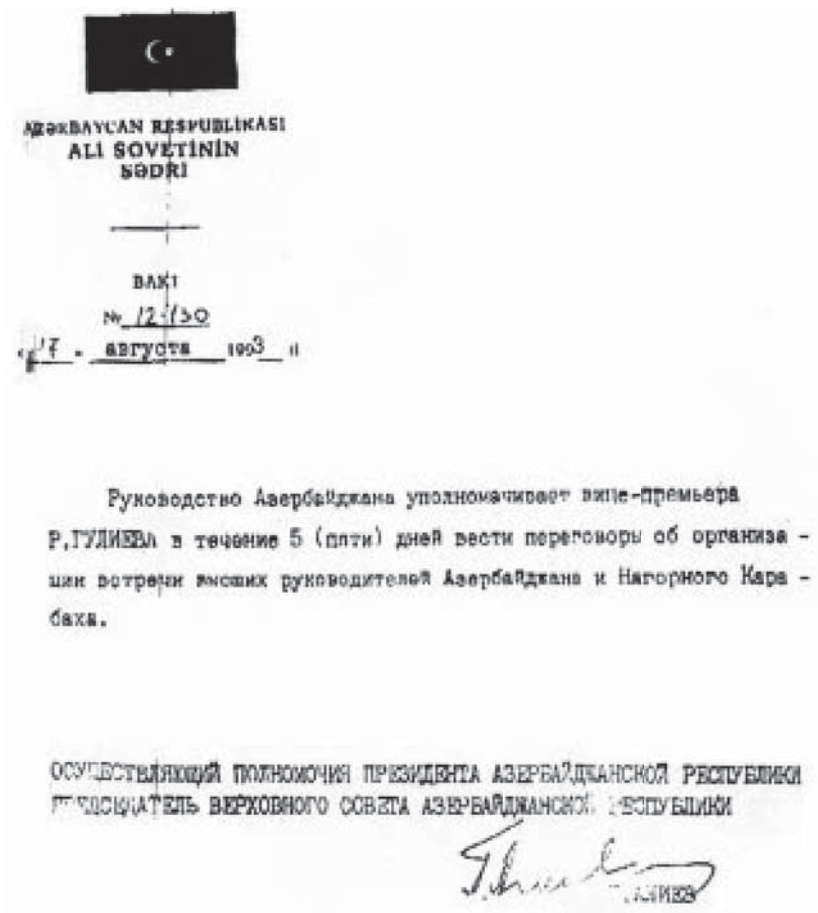
И. О Министра  
Азербайджанской Республики  
С. Миев

Министр Обороны  
Нагорного Карабаха  
С. Саркисян




5 августа 1993 года.

**Document 9.** From Baku. On the extension of previous arrangements by 3 more days and the meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh (05.08.93).





Document 10. Powers given by Heydar Aliyev to vice-premier Rasul Guliev (17.08.93).

АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЕ РАЕСПУБЛИКАНСКОЕ МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБОРОНЫ				АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБОРОНЫ	
Место: г. Баку, проспект Азербайджана, 8	87001	г. Баку, проспект Азербайджана, 8			
№ <u>2/611</u>	*11*	августа 1993 г.			

В продолжение ранее достигнутых договоренностей от 24 и 26 июля 1993 г. и в случае нового аналогичного обязательства обеих сторон обязуемая возобновить повсеместное прекращение огня, в том числе любых наступательных операций, ракетно-артиллерийских обстрелов и воздушных бомбардировок, сроком на пять дней, в течение которых будет достигнута договоренность о встрече высших руководителей Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха.

Договоренность вступает в силу с 18.00 18 августа 1993 года по получению сторонами упомянутых обязательств. При достижении договоренности о вышупомянутой встрече прекращение огня может быть автоматически продлено до 24.00 часа для этой встречи, если на ней не будут согласованы иные сроки.

Настоящее соглашение подтверждается подписями, помещенными на его официальном представителем Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха.

И.О. МИНИСТРА ОБОРОНЫ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ	ЧЛЕН ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВА ПРЕМЬЕР-МИНИСТРА НАГОРНОГО КАРАБАХА
 C. ALIYEV	 R. GULIYEV

**Document 11.** From Baku. On the resumption of ceasefire for a period of 5 days and the meeting between the top leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh (17.08.93).

**Document 12.** From Baku. On the resumption of ceasefire for a period of 11 days and the meeting between the top leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh (30.08.93). →

FROM 238-2474  
Протокол заседания лично г-ну Гейдару АЛИЕВУ и г-ну Аджалилову.  
Это тот же текст, что в улучшенной, более четкой редакции.  
В. Казимирцов  
30. VIII. 93

РУКОВОДСТВУ НАГОРНОГО КАРАБАХА  
Копия: МИД РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ

1. В случае аналогичного обязательства обеих сторон в развитие договоренностей от 24 и 26 июля и 17 августа 1993 г. обязуемся возобновить повсеместное прекращение огня на период с 31 августа по 10 сентября 1993 г. включительно.

2. Стороны подтверждают, что до 5 сентября специально на то уполномоченными официальными лицами будет согласована, а до 10 сентября с.г. будет обязательно проведена встреча руководителей Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха, о которой была ранее достигнута договоренность.

3. Стороны примут самые решительные меры в целях соблюдения полководцами командирами прекращения огня, в особенности - до недопущения продвижения танков, ракетно-артиллерийских обстрелов воздушных бомбардировок. Они признают к ответственности нарушителей их непосредственных военачальников.

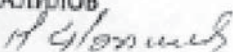
Одновременно будут приняты меры для выполнения неподконтролем вооруженных подразделений или групп, их устранения с линии соприкосновения сторон, а затем расформирования и разоружения.

4. Стороны обязуются постоянно поддерживать прямой телефонный контакт на уровне высшего руководства вооруженных сил в целях предотвращения и урегулирования нарушений.

ЗАМЕСТИТЕЛЬ ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЯ  
ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

И.О.МИНИСТРА ОБОРОНЫ  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

АДЖАЛИЛОВ



С. АБИЕВ





AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASI  
ƏLİ SOVETİNİN  
SƏDRİ

BAKI

№ 140

31. avqust 1993 il

Ғузориниҗтеп Азербайҗаннаҗ Улоқиниҗминиҗлет, җәһеҗттеҗтеп

Президенти Азербайҗан Совети А.Павлова яғни җеҗттеҗтеп.

Өзгөҗтөлөүҗөк җөҗөнөҗөк Президенти  
Азербайҗанҗанҗан Республикаҗи,  
Президенти Верховного Совета  
Азербайҗанҗанҗан Республикаҗи

Ғ.АЛИЕВ.

**Document 13.** Powers given by Heydar Aliyev to vice-speaker A. Jalilov (31.08.93).



**Document 14.** Powers given by Heydar Aliyev to vice-speaker A. Jalilov (03.09.93).



*Прому передать лично г-ну Гейдару АЛИЕВУ*  
*9.1X.93* *Министров*  
**СРОЧНО**

Конфиденциально

**РУКОВОДСТВУ НАГОРНОГО КАРАБАХА**  
**Копия: МИД РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ**

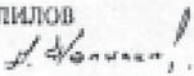
В случае аналогичного обязательства обеих сторон мы обещаны продлить повсеместное прекращение огня на период с 10 по 13 сентября 1993 г. включительно.

В этот период состоятся переговоры в Москве специально на то уполномоченных официальных лиц по подготовке встречи руководителей Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха, о которой была ранее достигнута договоренность (если переговоры в Москве продолжатся дольше, то прекращение огня автоматически будет продолжено до дня их завершения включительно).

ЗАМЕСТИТЕЛЬ ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЯ  
ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

НОМИНИСТРА ОБОРОНЫ  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

А.ДЖАЛИЛОВ



10 сентября 1993 г.

САБИЕВ



- Document 15.** From Baku. On the extension of ceasefire for a period of 3 more days (10.09.93).
- Document 16.** From Moscow. Joint communique of representatives of the Azeri and the Nagorno-Karabakh leaderships based on the results of their meeting at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (13.09.93). →

**СОВМЕСТНОЕ КОММЮНИКЕ ПО ИТОГАМ ПЕРЕГОВОРОВ  
ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЕЙ РУКОВОДСТВА АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА И НАГОРНОГО  
КАРАБАХА**

12 и 13 сентября 1993 г. представители руководства Азербайджанской Республики А.Джалылов и Нагорного Карабаха А.Гукасян при содействии МИД России провели прямые переговоры в духе доброй воли с целью поиска путей скорейшего урегулирования вооруженного конфликта. Встреча в Москве явилась продолжением установленных в последнее время контактов - прямых, через посредника и в рамках минской группы СБСЕ.

В результате налаживающихся контактов неоднократно оформлялась и продлевалась договоренность о временном прекращении огня. Несмотря на некоторые нарушения, она в основном соблюдается, что создало относительное затишье в зоне недавних боевых действий. Это побуждает к новым шагам в направлении примирения. В итоге московских переговоров прекращение огня еще раз продлено - до 5 октября 1993 г. включительно.

Согласившись, что в многолетнем конфликте, унесшем тысячи человеческих жизней, лишившем крова сотни тысяч людей, нет и не может быть силового решения, стороны выразили стремление преодолеть взаимное недоверие. Придавая особое значение начавшемуся диалогу, они подтвердили свою готовность рассмотреть весь комплекс вопросов по мирному урегулированию проблемы Нагорного Карабаха, в первую очередь вопросы окончательного прекращения военных действий, а также вывода войск с занятых территорий и восстановления коммуникаций.

Участники встречи считают важным поэтапное решение спорных вопросов. Они видят в Минской конференции СБСЕ форум, который может стать эффективным средством всеобъемлющего и прочного мирного урегулирования.

Подробно обсуждены вопросы подготовки встречи руководителей Азербайджана и Нагорного Карабаха. Достигнута договоренность о ее проведении, а также поддержании контактов на различных уровнях.

Состоялся обмен мнениями о взаимной передаче пленных и заложников, а также по другим вопросам, представляющим обоюдный интерес.

Участники переговоров, прошедших в деловой конструктивной атмосфере, выразили признательность МИД Российской Федерации за содействие в их проведении.

Москва, 13 сентября 1993 г.

*А. Джалылов*  
*А. Гукасян*  
13. IX. 93

РУКОВОДСТВУ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА  
 Команд: АИД РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ  
 А.В. Козыреву, В.И. Козининову

В соответствии с условиями договоренности, достигнутой 16 декабря 1993 г., мы подтверждаем, что ССГ и АСНЧ в случае аналогичных обязательств обеих сторон повсеместно установить новое прекращение огня между Азербайджаном и Ичкерией Карабахом сроком до 26 декабря 1993 г. включительно.

На этот период военное командование примет самые решительные меры в целях соблюдения полными командиром полного прекращения огня и в особенности недопущения продолжения танков и другой бронетехники, ракетно-артиллерийских обстрелов и воздушных бомбардировок. Несоблюдение этого обязательства будет считаться грубым нарушением данной договоренности, достигнутой при посредничестве России. В таком случае виновные нарушители и их непосредственные начальники будут немедленно привлечены командованием к ответственности.

Будет постоянно поддерживаться прямой телефонный контакт на уровне высшего руководства вооруженных сил в целях предотвращения и урегулирования нарушений.

В период с 19 по 24 декабря официально уполномоченные представители при содействии российского посредника приступят к переговорам относительно возможного продления истекающей договоренности и заключения соглашения о полном и повсеместном прекращении военных действий.

Истекающая договоренность вступает в силу немедленно после подтверждения посредником получения обеих аналогичных документов, подписанных уполномоченными представителями.

МИНИСТР ИНОСТРАННЫХ ДЕЛ  
 НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКОЙ  
 РЕСПУБЛИКИ

А. ГУЛАСЯН



НАЧАЛЬНИК ШТАБА АРМИИ  
 СЕВЕРНО-КАРАБАХСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

С. СЕГАН



Степанакерт, 16 декабря, 1993г.

Тариэль,  
Прошу доложить  
Президенту, что  
до сих пор из Баку  
не получен посредником  
азербайджанский текст  
о прекращении огня,  
подписанный А.Джалиловым  
и Н.Садыховым. Так  
работать невозможно.  
Дело достаточно серьёзное  
и в нем должен быть порядок.  
Или тогда надо отменить  
прекращение огня. 18.XII 21<sup>00</sup>  
М.В. В.Н.КАЗИМИРОВ  
*Перезан на языке В.Н.Казимиров*

• TRANSMISSION REPORT •  
04-18 131 20147 214-22-07 244-22-07

DATE	START TIME	END TIME	STATION NAME	MODE	DURATION	RESULT

**Document 18.** From Moscow. On Baku's failure to observe the agreement reached between the mediator and Heydar Aliev re formalisation of the 10-day ceasefire regime (18.12.93).



Azərbaycan Respublikası  
MÜDƏFİƏ NAZIRI

Азербайджанская Республика  
МИНИСТР ОБОРОНЫ

№ 190-И  
Təqdim №-ni  
Təyinat №  
16-1000 93

ЛИЧНОМУ ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЮ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА  
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ  
ГОСПОДИНУ КАЗИМИРОВУ В.Н.

УВАЖАЕМЫЙ ВЛАДИМИР НИКОЛАЕВИЧ!

Мы с интересом ознакомились с предложением относительно  
возможного продления настоящей договоренности и заключения  
соглашения о полном и повсеместном прекращении военных дейст-  
вий.

Как Вам известно, позиция нашей стороны остается неизмен-  
ной, направленная на мирное урегулирование армяно-азербайджан-  
ского конфликта.

Принимая во внимание вышесказанное, показывая в очередной  
раз свою добрую волю, мы не возражаем о взаимном прекращении  
огня и предлагаем противоположной стороне в ответ на наши благие  
намерения отодвинуть свои войска вглубь на 10 км от занимаемых  
позиций.

Мы надеемся на понимание выдвинутых нами предложений и ...»

ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬ  
ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО РУКОВОДСТВА  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

*Рахманов*

НАЧАЛЬНИК ГЕНЕРАЛЬНОГО  
ШТАБА ВООРУЖЕННЫХ СИЛ  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

*Н. Садыков*  
Н. САДЫКОВ

Предпоследняя строка: «Мы надеемся на понимание выдвинутых нами  
предложений и ...»

**Document 19.** From Baku. Answering letter liable to misinterpretation  
which wrecked the 10-day long ceasefire agreement taking  
effect on December 17 (19.12.93).

Министерство Обороны РФ  
П. ГРАЧЕВУ

Министерство иностранных дел РФ  
А. КУЗЬМОВУ, В. КАЗИМИРЧЕВУ.

Руководство Нагорно-Карабахской Республики, приняв предложение Российской Федерации и подтверждая готовность к мирному урегулированию вооруженного конфликта между АР и НКР, согласно обеспечить полное прекращение огня и военных действий с 00 ч.01 минут 29 апреля 1994 г. в соответствии с Протоколом от 18 февраля 1994 г.

Учитывая отсутствие наблюдателей, взаимное недоверие противоборствующих сторон, стремясь исключить возможные попытки использования временной передышки в целях подготовки к очередному широкомасштабному наступлению и способствовать тем самым обеспечению необратимости мирного процесса, руководство НКР считает необходимым задействовать весь механизм вышеупомянутого Протокола, подписанного сторонами конфликта при участии Министерства Обороны Российской Федерации.

Только реализация всего комплекса предусмотренных военно-технических мер может гарантировать устойчивое прекращение военных действий и создать благоприятные условия для решения политических проблем.

Руководство Нагорно-Карабахской Республики готово отдать соответствующие приказы после того, как Посредник подтвердит получение от противоборствующей стороны идентичного документа.

МИНИСТР  
ИНОСТРАННЫХ ДЕЛ  
НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКОЙ  
РЕСПУБЛИКИ

А. ГУКАСЯН



КОМАНДУЮЩИЙ  
АРМИЕЙ ОБОРОНЫ  
НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКОЙ  
РЕСПУБЛИКИ

С. БАБАЯН



Степанаверт, 28 апреля 1994г.

Document 20. From Baku. On the 10-day long ceasefire taking effect (26.04.94).

Министерство Обороны РФ  
П. ГРАЧЕВУ

Министерство иностранных дел РФ  
А. КИЗЫРБЕВУ, В. КАЗИМИРЬЕВУ.

Руководство Нагорно-Карабахской Республики, приняв предложение Российской Федерации и подтвердив готовность к мирному урегулированию вооруженного конфликта между АР и НКР, согласно обеспечить полное прекращение огня и военных действий с 00 ч.01 минут 29 апреля 1994 г. в соответствии с Протоколом от 18 февраля 1994 г.

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Руководство Нагорно-Карабахской Республики готово отдать соответствующие приказы после того, как Писардик подтвердит получение от противооборудующей стороны идентичного документа.

МИНИСТР  
ИНОСТРАННЫХ ДЕЛ  
НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКОЙ  
РЕСПУБЛИКИ

А. ГУКАСЯН



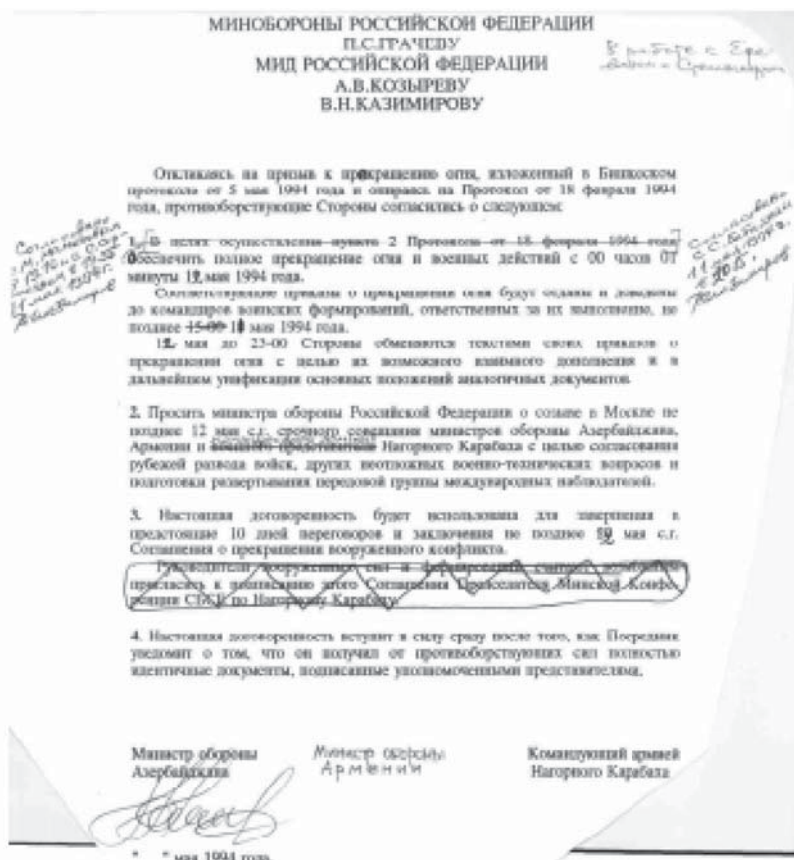
КОМАНДУЮЩИЙ  
АРМИЕЙ ОБОРОНЫ  
НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКОЙ  
РЕСПУБЛИКИ

С. БАБАЯН



Степанакерт, 28 апреля 1994 г.

Document 21. From Stepanakert. On implementation of the protocol of February 18 instead of the 10-day long ceasefire (28.04.94).



**Document 22.** From Baku. On universal ceasefire taking effect on May 12, 1994 (09.05.94).





МИНОБОРОНЫ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ  
П.С.ГРАЧЕВУ  
МИД РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ  
А.В.КОЗЫРЕВУ  
В.Н.КАЗИМИРОВУ

Откликаясь на призыв к прекращению огня, изложенный в Бишкекском протоколе от 5 мая 1994 года, и опираясь на Протокол от 18 февраля 1994 года, противоборствующие Стороны согласились о следующем:

1. Обеспечить полное прекращение огня и военных действий с 00 часов 01 минуты 12 мая 1994 года.

Соответствующие приказы к прекращению огня будут отданы и доведены до командиров воинских формирований, ответственных за их выполнение 11 мая 1994 года.

12 мая до 23.00 Стороны обменяются текстами своих приказов о прекращении огня с целью их возможного взаимного дополнения и в дальнейшем унификации основных положений аналогичных документов.

2. Просить министра обороны Российской Федерации о созыве в Москве не позднее 12 мая с.г. срочного совещания министров обороны Азербайджана, Армении и командующего Армией Нагорного Карабаха с целью согласования рубежей развода войск, других неотложных военно-технических вопросов и подготовки развертывания передовой группы международных наблюдателей.

3. Настоящая договоренность будет использована для завершения в предстоящие 10 дней переговоров и заключения не позднее 22 мая с.г. Соглашения о прекращении вооруженного конфликта.

4. Настоящая договоренность вступит в силу сразу после того, как Посредник уведомит о том, что он получил от противоборствующих сил полностью идентичные документы, подписанные уполномоченными представителями.

Министр обороны  
Азербайджана

Министр обороны  
Армении

Командующий Армией Обороны  
Нагорного Карабаха

11 мая 1994 г.

Document 24. From Stepanakert. On universal ceasefire taking effect on May 12, 1994 (11.05.94).

Проект

**ДОГОВОРЕННОСТЬ О ПОРЯДКЕ ПОДДЕРЖАНИЯ  
ПРЯМЫХ КОНТАКТОВ**

Прямые закрытые контакты предназначены для проведения консультаций с целью поиска взаимопонимания по элементам будущего статуса Нагорного Карабаха на основе договорных отношений между Баку и Степанакертом.

Интервал между встречами, как правило, не должен быть больше месяца. Контакты не будут прерываться или откладываться односторонне под каким бы то ни было предлогом. Место и время каждой новой встречи будет согласовываться на предыдущей встрече.

Ни одна из сторон не будет оглашать факт проведения этих консультаций и не допустит утечки информации об этом. В случае появления информации об этих контактах, стороны не будут ни подтверждать, ни опровергать ее.

Оглашение факта консультаций, если оно потребуется, может иметь место только одновременно на основе совместного решения, а выбор соответствующей формы и момента – только по обоюдной договоренности.

Контакты поручено осуществлять \_\_\_\_\_

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*Примечание: Р. Кочарян проявил готовность подписать эту договоренность, но только после Г. Алиева. Президент АР в беседах наедине с российским посредником 8 раз (!) подтверждал, что готов к такой договоренности, но не стал подписывать документ, подготовленный по его предложению. В двух последних беседах он сам поднимал эту тему.*

**Document 25.** From Moscow. Understanding on private contacts between Baku and Stepanakert (was not signed).

# TIMELINE OF RUSSIA'S MEDIATORY EFFORTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

## Key dates and facts in the history of Russia's mediation in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

### 1991

- August 30** The Republic of Azerbaijan declares its independence from the former Soviet Union.
- September 2** Nagorno-Karabakh declares its secession from Azerbaijan.
- September 8** Ayaz Mütalibov is elected President of Azerbaijan.
- September 20–23** **President of Russia Boris Yeltsin and his Kazakhstani counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev travel to Yerevan, Stepanakert, Ganja and Baku.**
- September 23** **Zheleznovodsk. A meeting between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan with the participation of Nagorno-Karabakh representatives is initiated by presidents Yeltsin and Nazarbayev. A joint communique setting the objective to achieve a ceasefire by January 1, 1992 was signed. This was never achieved through the fault of the conflicting sides.**  
Armenia declares its independence from the former Soviet Union.
- October 16** Levon Ter-Petrosyan is elected President of the Republic of Armenia.
- December 16** **CIS leaders urge Azerbaijan and Armenia to resume the negotiation process.**
- December 31** Dissolution of the Soviet Union.

1992

- January 2** Czechoslovakia (in the person of its foreign ministers Jiří Dienstbier and later Jozef Moravčík) takes over the CSCE chairmanship from Germany.
- January 30** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement in connection with the escalation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.**
- January 30–31** Prague. The second session of the Council of Ministers of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan become CSCE members. A resolution was passed on deploying the CSCE Rapporteur with a mission to the CIS member states recently joining CSCE, and to the Nagorno-Karabakh region.
- February 12–18** CSCE Rapporteur travels down to the region of the conflict.
- February 20** **Moscow. Meeting between the Armenian Foreign Minister and his Azerbaijani opposite number, initiated by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei V. Kozyrev. A joint communique is adopted.**
- February 24** Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati travels to the region of the conflict.
- February 28** The 7<sup>th</sup> session of the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials requests from the countries of the region, **primarily Russia and Kazakhstan, to pursue their peacemaking efforts in quest of a ceasefire and to promote negotiations.**
- March 5** **The President of Russia makes a statement in connection with the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- March 13** The 8<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Senior Officials resolved to convene an extraordinary session of the CSCE Council of Ministers dedicated to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- March 16** Tehran. A trilateral communique (involving Iran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) is signed envisaging a week-long ceasefire, which was in the end never achieved.
- March 18–20** **The special Envoy of the Russian president visits Baku and Yerevan.**
- March 20** **The Council of CIS Heads of State meets in Kyiv. An agreement on teams of observers and a CIS collective peacekeeping force is signed. The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is discussed.**
- March 24** At a supplementary session held in Helsinki the CSCE Council of Ministers resolves to convene in Minsk a conference dedicated to

- the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict under the CSCE aegis, with 11 member states participating. "Elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh" are to be invited to attend as interested parties.
- March 30–April 3** CSCE Chairman-in-Office Jiří Dienstbier travels to the conflict zone.
- March 31–April 14** **The special envoys of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spend time in the Karabakh conflict zone.**
- Early April** Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran Mahmud Vayazi travels to the region of the conflict.
- April 3–5 and April 10** **Two trips by Andrei Kozyrev down to the region of the conflict.**
- April 7** The CSCE Chairman-in-Office appoints Italian Mario Raffaelli Chairman of the Minsk Conference.
- April 13** **Russia suggests a two-stage plan of settlement for the Karabakh conflict.**  
The CSCE mission led by personal representative of its Chairman-in-Office travels to the zone of the conflict.
- April 14** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement concerning the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.**  
**Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev addresses a letter about prospects for settlement of the conflict in Karabakh to the UN Secretary General.**
- May 1** The 10<sup>th</sup> session of the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials.
- May 2** **Meetings with members of the Armenian and Azerbaijani parliaments and Nagorno-Karabakh representatives are held in Moscow.**
- May 5** **A Russian mediation mission led by Russian Ambassador-at-large Vladimir Kazimirov is established for the purposes of follow-through on the peaceful settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- May 7** In Tehran a meeting is held between Armenian president Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Acting President Yaqub Mammadov. A joint statement is signed also by Irani president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.
- May 8** The Armenian forces capture Shusha.
- May 10** **The Republic of Armenia calls upon the UN to prevent further escalation of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- May 12** The President of the UN Security Council makes a statement in connection with the occupation of Shusha.

- May 13**                    **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement in connection with the occupation of Shusha.**
- May 18–21**                The 11<sup>th</sup> session of the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials focusing on the opening of the CSCE Minsk Conference dedicated to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh takes place in Helsinki on June 23
- May 19**                    The town of Lachin is captured by the Armenian forces. Azerbaijan refuses to take part in the Minsk Conference as long as Lachin and Shusha remain occupied by the Armenians. An agreement is reached to hold “an extraordinary preparatory meeting” of the Minsk Conference member states’ representatives which subsequently led to the spontaneous emergence of the CSCE Minsk Group.
- May 22**                    **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement in connection with the invasion of Lachin.**
- June 1–5**                 An extraordinary preparatory meeting of the Minsk Conference member states is held in Rome. These will later form the CSCE Minsk Group.
- June 7**                    Abulfaz Elchibey is elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- June 12**                    Russia’s suggestions regarding de-escalation and normalisation of the life of civilians were passed on to the conflicting sides in Moscow, and to the Minsk Group members – on June 15-20 in Rome. Those, however, did not catch the interest of the Minsk Group leaders and the conflicting parties.
- The Azeri forces launch an offensive in the north of Nagorno-Karabakh.
- June 14**                    **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement in connection with the offensive launched by the Azeri forces in the north of Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- June 15–20**                The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the extraordinary preparatory meeting of the CSCE Minsk Group takes place in Rome. **Russia puts forward proposals regarding definitive cessation of offensive actions and cessation of military operations in general for a period of 30 days.**
- June 29–July 7**            The 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the extraordinary preparatory meeting of the CSCE Minsk Group takes place in Rome. **On July 3, Russia initiates an appeal to cease military operations for a period of 30 days starting on July 9, 1992 – the CSCE summit opening date - was**

- adopted (Armenia was the only side to support this, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh did not respond).**
- July 9–10** ACSCE summit is held in Helsinki. Sharp contradictions between Azerbaijan and Armenia preclude the carrying of a document on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- July 11** **Russia's mediation mission travels down to Yerevan and meets with Levon Ter-Petrosyan.**
- July 17–21** An informal meeting of the 8 “neutral” members of the CSCE Minsk Group is held in Rome.
- July 21–27** **The Russian mediation mission travels to Baku, Nakhchivan, Stepanakert and Yerevan, where it meets with Abulfaz Elchibey, Tofiq Gasimov, Isa Gambar, Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Ashot Manucharyan and Georgy Petrosyan.**
- July 31–August 5** The 4<sup>th</sup> round of the Minsk Group meeting (with the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian community participating for the first time) takes place in Rome. **At Russia's suggestion, an appeal to cease military operations for a period of 60 days was carried on August 5 (Yerevan and Stepanakert consented, Baku refused. Later Mario Raffaelli spent many months on end coaxing Azerbaijani president Abulfaz Elchibey's consent).**
- August 7–8** A meeting between the personal representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents is held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. An agreement on normalization of the situation along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border is drafted under the auspices of the Russian Foreign Ministry. The Republic of Azerbaijan eventually shied away from signing it.
- August 8** The Azeri forces capture the Armenian town of Artsvashen (Azerbaijani name: Bashkend).
- August 11 and August 14** **Statements regarding the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh are made at briefings held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.**
- August 15** Nagorno-Karabakh's state defense committee headed by Robert Kocharyan is established.
- August 20** A protocol on the restoration of railway communication and power supply is signed following the results of the meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani government delegations.
- August 21** **A meeting between the presidents of Russia and Armenia is held in Moscow.**



- August 22** The president of Russia addresses an appeal to the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- August 24–26** Chairman of the Minsk Conference Mario Raffaelli travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert to hand the appeal to cease military operations for a period of 60 days to the conflicting sides.
- August 26** Statement by the President of the UN Security Council.
- August 27** A meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan is held in Alma-Ata at the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan. A memorandum is signed. Cessation of fire along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border is scheduled to take effect on September 1, however, very soon exchanges of fire resume.
- August 28** President Elchibey addresses a letter of response to Mario Raffaelli.
- September 4** **The President of Azerbaijan addresses a letter of response to the President of Russia.**
- September 7–10** The 5<sup>th</sup> round of the CSCE Minsk Group meeting is held in Rome.
- September 11** The Minsk Conference Chairman reiterates his appeal to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for a cessation of military operations for a period of 60 days.
- September 15** **Moscow. First low-profile contacts between representatives of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- September 16–17** **The personal representative of the Russian president travels to Baku where he meets with President Abulfaz Elchibey, Isa Gambar, Tofiq Gasimov and Rahim Gaziev. The proposal to cease military operations for a period of 60 days starting on September 22 is sidestepped by the Azeri side.**
- September 19** **An agreement on cessation of all forms of military operations for a period of 2 months is signed by the Defence Ministers of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan in Sochi, under the auspices of the Russian ministers of defence and security.**
- September 23** Mario Raffaelli requests from the CSCE Chairman-in-Office to refine the Minsk Conference mandate.
- September 23–25** **A military technical protocol on the mechanism of implementation for the Sochi Agreement is signed in Moscow. Over 50 Russian observers head for the conflict zone. Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Georgia decline to dispatch observers on their**

- part. The parties failed to cease fire, each laying the blame for this on the other. The Russian observers very soon had to be withdrawn.
- September 30** Acting head of the Russian government Yegor T. Gaidar travels down to Baku and Yerevan. Among those accompanying him is the head of the Russian mediation mission. Meetings are held with the Azerbaijani President Elchibey and his Armenian counterpart Ter-Petrosyan.
- October 6** In Moscow Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev meets with his Azerbaijani opposite number Tofiq Gasimov.
- October 12** In Moscow the President of Russia meets with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan who is on an official visit in the Russian Federation.
- October 20** President Elchibey addresses a letter of response to Mario Raffaelli concerning possible cessation of military operations for a period of 60 days.
- October 24–27** The Russian mediation mission travels to Yerevan and Stepanakert where it holds meetings with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Arman Kirakosyan and Robert Kocharyan.
- October 27** The President of the UN Security Council makes a statement expressing deep concern about the continuing combat operations in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- October 28 – November 3** The Russian negotiation mission travels to Turkey and Iran, where it holds meetings with representatives of the Turkish and Irani Foreign Ministries.
- November** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation submits for consideration by the conflicting sides a draft timetable of measures: from the cessation of military operations to the opening of the OSCE Minsk Conference. Work is underway in preparation for holding a meeting between the presidents of Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus in Sochi with the objective to sign an agreement on the guidelines and approaches to settling the conflict (the so-called “Sochi-2”).
- November 2** Mario Raffaelli addresses another letter to President Elchibey seeking to clarify whether the previous letter dated October 20 was correctly understood to mean consent to have military operation ceased for a period of 60 days. Elchibey reaffirmed this.
- November 5–7** The 17<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Senior Officials authorizes the CSCE Chairman-in-Office to dispatch international observers

- to the zone of the conflict, along with approving the integration of the Russian/CIS observers into the CSCE observer mission advance team.
- November 7** **Russia's mediation mission travels to Baku where it meets with President Elchibey and Surat Huseynov.**
- November 14** **In Moscow the Russian mediator holds consultations with the Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Ashot Kirakosyan.**  
In Yerevan the Republic of Armenia declares its determination to unblock all railways leading to Nagorno-Karabakh and to extend security assurances in respect of cargo shipments to Nakhchivan.
- November 16–17 In Moscow consultations are held with CSCE Minsk Group Chairman Mario Sica and US representative there John Maresca. The American diplomat delivers a letter from US Assistant Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger addressed to Andrei Kozyrev.
- November 20** **The head of Russia's mediation mission to Nagorno-Karabakh holds a briefing in Moscow.**
- November 22–24** **The Russian mediation mission travels to Baku where it meets with Tofiq Gasimov, Rahim Gaziev, Afiyaddin Dzhaililov.**
- November 26 – December 1 The CSCE special Vienna.
- December 7 Another in the series of meetings between the delegations of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan dedicated to restoring the railway service along the Megri section ended with no result.
- December 7–9 Geneva. An informal meeting of the personal representatives of the Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, US and Turkish presidents (the format of 5). Armenian representative suggested undelayed ceasefire. The Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan evaded reacting.
- December 11–13 Stockholm. The 18<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Senior Officials. Preparations for the CSCE Council of Ministers meeting.
- December 14–15 Stockholm. The third meeting of the CSCE Council of Ministers.
- December 19 Message from Lawrence Eagleburger to Andrei Kozyrev regarding the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- 1993**
- January 1** Sweden (in the person of its Foreign Minister Margaretha af Ugglas) takes over the CSCE chairmanship from Czechoslovakia.

- January 3            The Presidents of Russia and the US make a joint statement concerning the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- January 5–8        The personal representatives of the Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, US and Turkish presidents and the CSCE Minsk Group Chairman meet in Moscow (the “5+1” format). The “settlement calendar” suggested by Russia is adopted. Documents formalising the ceasefire are developed. But Baku later disowned its representative at that meeting – Azerbaijani deputy prime minister and ambassador Hikmit Hajizade.
- January 10         The Russian President meets with his Armenian opposite number in Moscow.
- January 17–18     The acting Foreign Minister of Armenia and the advisor to the Azerbaijani president Vafa Guluzade hold consultations on the Russian Foreign Ministry premises in Moscow.
- January 18–24     Minsk Conference Chairman Mario Raffaelli travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert.
- January 25         In Moscow Raffaelli is received in audience by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.
- January 29         Statement by the President of the UN Security Council.
- February 6–8      The religious leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Montreux (Switzerland) at the initiative of the World Council of Churches.
- February 22–  
March 1            The CSCE Minsk Group meets in Rome. The draft mandate of the observer mission advance team is adopted. **The Russian representatives submit a draft of “Operating Guidelines for the settlement of the Karabakh conflict” along with a suggestion to establish a Joint Coordination Commission.**
- February 25        Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and the US Secretary of State make a joint statement.
- March 1            Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev meets his Turkish opposite number Hikmet Cetin in Moscow and they arrange a prospective joint trip to the region of the conflict with the purpose of achieving a definitive ceasefire. After his visit to Baku, Cetin began to seek to make ceasefire conditional on the withdrawal of the Armenian forces from Lachin and Shusha. As a result of this, the trip never took place.
- March 2            The foreign ministers of Russia and France make a joint statement.

- March 16** Another joint Russian-French statement, this time by the presidents of the two countries.
- March 17–21** Another meeting is held in the “5+1” format in Geneva. The agenda includes the discussion of the settlement calendar suggested by Moscow in the settlement in the Karabakh conflict.
- March 27–April 5** The Armenian forces capture Kelbajar district of the Republic of Azerbaijan’s territory.
- March 31–April 6** The meeting in the “5+1” format is resumed in Geneva. On April 6 Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Tofiq Gasimov walks out of the consultations and refuses to participate in the Minsk process until the Armenian side withdraws from Kelbajar.
- April 6** The President of the UN Security Council makes a statement on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- April 7** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement in connection with the escalation of military operations.**
- April** Turkey imposes blockade of the Republic of Armenia. Azerbaijan invests a great effort in prompting the convention of a UN Security Council session to adopt a resolution in connection with the capture of Kelbajar district, as well as requests from the CSCE Chairman-in-Office to convene an extraordinary meeting (without specifying, however, a meeting of which body it is supposed to be).
- April 8** **The Russian president offers the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as to Nagorno-Karabakh leaders, his mediation, primarily with a view to achieving a ceasefire. All three sides accept Russia’s mediation.**  
 Vazgen Sarkisyan and P. Huseynov meet at the initiative of Azerbaijan and under the auspices of the Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev. It is agreed to cease fire on April 9 and to hold, on April 13, a meeting of the prime ministers who were to prepare a summit meeting. Stepanakert does not take part in this. No tangible results are achieved.
- April 10–16** Closed-door negotiations between the personal representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents are held in Moscow under Russia’s auspices. They are later joined by a representative of the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership. A draft ceasefire agreement is prepared which also provided for a withdrawal of the Armenian forces from Kelbajar and for the blockades of the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to be lifted. Baku

- again disowns Deputy Prime Minister Hajizade despite his commissions signed by President Elchibey on April 9.
- April 11** In furtherance of President Yeltsin's suggestion, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev calls upon the conflicting sides to cease all offensive operations on April 13 for at least a week. Stepanakert and Yerevan assent, Baku requests a respite of one day, following which it evades the proposal.
- The President of Armenia addresses a letter of reply to the President of Russia.
- April 12** The President of Azerbaijan addresses a letter of reply to the President of Russia.
- April 18** Agreement is reached on temporary ceasefire to last for the duration of the CSCE preparatory mission's stay in the region of the conflict. The mission is headed by Finland's Colonel Heikki Happonen.
- April 20–22** The Russian delegation (represented by Grigory Khizha, Vladimir Kazimirov, Albert Chernyshev) attends the funeral service for the Turkish president Turgut Ozal in Ankara where it meets with Presidents Elchibey and Ter-Petrosyan, and with Heydar Aliiev.
- The Azerbaijani President Abulfaz Elchibey meets with his Armenian counterpart Levon Ter-Petrosyan.
- April 24** Russia's proposal to cease fire until April 28 –for the duration of the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials session in Prague– is seconded by the US and Turkey. It was however rejected by the Azerbaijani acting prime minister Ali Masimov in his letter (Stepanakert and Yerevan accepted).
- April 27–28** Russia's mediation mission travels to Baku where it meets with the Azerbaijani President Abulfaz Elchibey.
- April 29–30** The personal representative of the Russian president meets with the representatives of the US and Turkish presidents in Moscow. A High Priority Measures Schedule providing for a ceasefire for a period of 60 days was proposed pursuant to the Russian president's initiative voiced on April 8.
- April 30** United Nation Security Council Resolution 822 is adopted. The representative of the Russian Presidential suggests to his Turkish and American counterparts to bring the Schedule in line with the provisions of this Resolution before its distribution, but both backed out of it.

- May 6                    **Statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman in connection with the adoption of Resolution 822.**
- May 7–9                **The Russian mediation mission travels to Yerevan and Stepanakert where it meets with President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Nagorno-Karabakh leader Robert Kocharyan.**
- May 13–14            **In Moscow the Russian mediator holds consultations with the Armenian presidential representative and the leader of the Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- May 14–15            **Another meeting between the personal representative of the Russian president and his Turkish and American counterparts is held in Moscow and is dedicated to fine-tuning the High Priority Measures Schedule.**
- May 25                **The President of Russia meets with the Azerbaijani president in Moscow.**
- May 26                The Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan accept the Minsk Group's High Priority Measures Schedule. Nagorno-Karabakh presses for the fulfillment of Resolution 822. Russia, the US, Turkey and the CSCE Minsk Conference call upon the warring sides to fulfill its provisions in full and with no delay. The Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh assented but the Republic of Azerbaijan responded with silence, even though it had actually initiated the meeting. Baku demands that the Armenian forces are withdrawn from Kelbajar district in exchange for cessation of military operations for a period of 60 days, but not a definitive ceasefire.
- May 28                **Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the response of the conflicting sides to Russia's mediation proposals.**
- June 3–4              Consultations of the Minsk Nine are held in Rome without the conflicting sides taking part. **On Russia's insistence the High Priority Measures Schedule is tied to the fulfillment of Resolution 822.**
- June 4                Surat Huseynov leads a revolt against President Elchibey in Ganja.
- June 9                **Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev visits Yerevan.**
- June 15                In Baku Heydar Aliev is elected the speaker of the Azerbaijani Parliament.
- June 16                **Russia reiterates its proposals concerning the establishment of a Joint Coordination Commission addressed to the members of the Minsk Nine.**

- June 17** Under Russia's auspices an agreement is reached to cease the shelling of Agdam and Stepanakert. Azerbaijan rejects the mediator's suggestion to cease the shelling. (The Armenian side had no combat artillery).
- June 17–18** President Abulfaz Elchibey flees to Nakhchevan. The senior official remaining in office is now Speaker of the Azerbaijani Parliament Heydar Aliev.
- June 24** In Baku the Azerbaijani Parliament vests Heydar Aliev with emergency powers.  
**The Russian Foreign Ministry makes a statement in connection with the situation in Azerbaijan.**
- June 25** To mitigate the intensity of fighting in the Agdam and Mardakert districts, the Russian Foreign Ministry suggested to Baku and Stepanakert to vacate a number of settlements and heights captured by both sides respectively. There were no replies.
- June 26** The Armenian forces capture the town of Mardakert.
- June 27** Under Russia's auspices an agreement was reached between the military leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh on ceasing offensive operations, rocket and shell attacks, and air bombardments in the vicinity of Agdam and Mardakert for one week.  
Acting Defence Minister of Azerbaijan Safar Abiev has his first telephone conversation with the "Defence Minister of Nagorno-Karabakh" Serzh Sargsyan.
- June 28– July 4** The Russian mediation mission travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert.
- June 29** Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev addresses the conflicting sides with a suggestion to extend and expand the June 27 ceasefire arrangements.
- July 2** Following the approval by Heydar Aliev, the Russian mediator further elaborated the suggestion to extend the June 27 ceasefire arrangements and expand them so as to cover the Fizuli and Hadrut provinces. Nagorno-Karabakh assented to everything, except the suggestion to withdraw from a number of heights. Baku did not vouchsafe a reply despite a series of reminders. The fighting near Agdam soon resumed.
- July 12** Minsk Conference Chairman Mario Raffaelli travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert seeking to persuade the conflicting sides



- accept the High Priority Measures Schedule proposed by the Minsk Nine.
- July 18–20** **The Russian mediation mission travels to Baku and holds negotiations with the new leaders of Azerbaijan (Heydar Aliiev and others).**
- July 21–August 12** The CSCE Minsk Group holds meetings in Rome, both in full and without the conflicting sides taking part. The Schedule of High Priority Measures in the fulfillment of Un Security Council Resolutions 822 and 853 is adopted.
- July 23** Agdam is captured by the Armenian forces.
- July 24** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement in connection with the capture of Agdam.**
- July 24–25** In fax correspondence acting Azerbaijani Defence Minister Safar Abiev and Nagorno-Karabakh army commander Samvel Babayan agree to cease offensive operations, shell attacks and bombardments for three days starting with July 25, during which period the leaders of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh had to arrange a meeting.
- July 27** The CSCE Minsk Group reports to the UN Security Council.
- July 28** The battle line runs through Mardakert district at the height of 482.2 m.  
The Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh officials meet with the meeting being chaired by acting Azerbaijani Minister of Defence Safar Abiev and Chairman of the Nagorno-Karabakh Self-Defence Committee Serzh Sargsyan. The July 24 arrangements are further extended by 7 days.
- July 29** The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 853.
- August 4–5** The “Minsk Nine” meet in Rome.
- August 5** Fizuli and Jebrail are captured by ethnic Karabakh Armenian armed groups.  
The planned extension of ceasefire by 3 days is ruined by the armed clashes in which all conflicting sides were involved.
- August 10** **The Russian Foreign Ministry makes a statement warning against shell attacks, bombardments and further seizures of territories.**
- August 13** The Schedule of High Priority Measures in the fulfillment of Un Security Council Resolutions 822 and 853 is amended.
- August 17** **An agreement to restore the ceasefire for 5 days starting on August 18 was reached under Russia’s auspices. It was soon**

- wrecked by the Azeri side, which resulted in them yielding Fizuli and Jebrail.
- August 18** The President of the UN Security Council makes a statement.
- August 20** In Moscow Andrei Kozyrev receives in audience the leader of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian community Robert Kocharyan.
- August 20–22** The delegation of the Russian Foreign Ministry and Russia's mediation mission travel down to Baku (Boris Kolokolov and Vladimir Kazimirov meet with Heydar Aliev, Rasul Guliev, Hasan Hasanov).
- August 21** "Defence Minister of Nagorno-Karabakh "Serzh Sargsyan is appointed the Defence Minister of the Republic of Armenia.  
Acting President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliev addresses a message to the President of Russia.
- August 23** Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev proposes in a phone call to the US Secretary of State to hold in Moscow a meeting of the ambassadors of both countries in the Minsk Group.  
The Azeri troops leave Fizuli and Jebrail. In his address to the public Heydar Aliev acknowledges violations of the ceasefire by the Azeri side.
- August 24–28** Russia's mediation mission travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert where it meets respectively with Heydar Aliev on August 24 and 28, and with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Robert Kocharyan.
- August 26** A trip to Goradiz in the company of Afiyaddin Dzhaliyov.
- August 28** Russia proposes to cease fire along the entire length of the Armenian-Azeri border (this proposal was rejected by Armenia).
- August 29** A referendum on a motion of no confidence in President Elchibey is held in the republic of Azerbaijan.
- August 30** In Moscow consultations on separation forces are held with the US envoy in the Minsk Group John Maresca.
- August 31** Armenian forces capture the town of Qubatli.  
Under Russia's auspices the ceasefire is restored for a period of 10 days – until September 10.
- September 1** Moscow and the Armenian president call for the Nagorno-Karabakh forces to be withdrawn to the previous fighting line (prior to the capture of Qubatli). Robert Kocharyan agrees but

- in actual fact fails to keep his word, confining himself to temporarily withdrawing the troops from several villages in that zone.
- September 8** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement.**
- September 9** **The Russian president calls upon his Azerbaijani and Armenian counterparts (also addressing an oral message to the Nagorno-Karabakh leader) to sign an agreement on full and universal ceasefire.**
- September 9–11** ACSCE Minsk Group meeting dedicated to fine-tuning the High Priority Measures Schedule is held in Moscow. The Minsk Nine recognises Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. The western partners try to conspire against Russia, holding a separate meeting secretly from the hosting side (!).
- September 11** **Under Russia’s auspices the ceasefire was extended until September 13 inclusive.**
- September 12–13** **The Russian Foreign Minister hosts negotiations between the representatives of the Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh leaders (deputy speaker Afiyaddin Dzhililov, acting Defence Minister Safar Abiev – “Foreign Minister” Arkadi Ghukasyan), in Moscow and under Russia’s auspices. The ceasefire is extended until October 5. A roadmap outlaying further steps in the peace process is adopted, as is a joint communique.**
- September 14** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement following the results of the negotiations between representatives of the Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh leadership in Moscow.**
- September 17–19** **Russia’s mediation mission travels down to Yerevan.**
- September 16–20** **The presidents of the US and Russia exchange personal messages regarding the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- September 21–28** The CSCE Minsk Group meets in Paris. The High Priority Measures Schedule is revised. Russia is represented by Ambassador Vadim Kuznetsov.
- September 22–25** **Negotiations between the Armenian President and Foreign Minister and their Azerbaijani counterparts regarding the draft ceasefire agreement suggested by Russia are held in Moscow.**
- September 23** **Robert Kocharyan addresses the President of Russia with a personal message.**
- September 23–25** Consultations with the representatives of the CSCE Chairman-in-Office Mathias Mossberg and the Minsk Conference Luca Fornari are held in Moscow.

- September 24** A verbal arrangement on extending the ceasefire until November 5 is reached under Russia's auspices. Roadmap-2 is finalised, but later the Azeri side will nevertheless fail to respect their commitments in this regard.  
The Russian mediator was offered to consider the draft protocol suggested by Azerbaijan as an alternative to the Russian draft agreement.
- September 24–25** In Moscow Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev holds meetings with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts, as well as with the leader of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian community. Hasan Hasanov suggests postponing the signing of the agreement until October 5, in addition to backing out of adopting the statement and failing to turn up for joint fine-tuning the draft agreement together with Robert Kocharyan and David Shakhnazaryan, in violation of respective arrangements made earlier.
- September 25** The Council of CIS Heads of State meets in Moscow. The Russian President holds talks with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliev holds a meeting with Levon Ter-Petrosyan and a closed-door meeting with Robert Kocharyan.  
The frontline now runs through the Agdam district. A meeting is held between Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Abbas Abbasov and his Nagorno-Karabakh opposite number Zhirayr Pogosyan.
- September 28** The Russian mediator formalizes the extension of the ceasefire until November 5. A trilateral (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh) meeting is scheduled to be held before November 25.
- September 29** The Russian mediator's remarks on the draft protocol proposed by the Azerbaijani side are submitted to the latter, along with a suggestion to sign the agreement on October 5.
- September 30** The Armenian President addresses a personal message to the President of Russia.
- October 1** CSCE Minsk Conference Chairman addresses a letter to the President of the UN Security Council.
- October 3** Heydar Aliev wins the presidential elections, becoming the President of Azerbaijan.

- October 6–14** The CSCE mission led by Personal Representative of the CSCE Chairman-in-Office Mathias Mossberg travels to the region of the conflict.
- October 10** In Baku Heydar Aliev is officially inaugurated as President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- October 10–12** **Heydar Aliev’s inauguration ceremony in Baku is attended by First Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin and head of Russia’s mediation mission Vladimir Kazimirov, among other guests.**  
 An armed encounter between the Azeri and the Karabakh Armenian troops occurs in the vicinity of the village of Quycaq (east of Jebrail). **The incident is settled with Russia’s intervention. The ceasefire regime is restored.**
- October 13** **The Russian mediator suggests to Heydar Aliev and Robert Kocharyan to fix the contact line between the troops of the conflicting sides, to avoid further disputes and incidents in this connection.**
- October 14** Resolution 874 is carried by the UN Security Council.
- October 18** Mathias Mossberg’s report on the results of the CSCE mission trip to the region of the conflict is presented, accompanied by the conclusions made and ensuing recommendations.
- October 18–21** The CSCE Minsk Group meets in Rome.
- October 19** **Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev meets in Moscow with CSCE Chair-in-Office Margaretha af Ugglas who suggests creating a kind of “Minsk Three” to be entrusted by the Minsk Group and Russia to negotiate with the conflicting sides.**
- October 21** US Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrives in Moscow on a visit.  
 A local violation by the Azeri side of the ceasefire regime along the southern section of the frontline results in grave consequences for the Republic of Azerbaijan. **The ceasefire that has been holding under Russia’s auspices since August 31 (for 50 days) is wrecked.**
- October 22–27** Taking advantage of this violation as a pretext for their retaliation, the Armenian troops advance towards the river Arax, cut off and later capture the entire south-western part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- October 24–28** CSCE Chair-in-Office Margaretha af Ugglas travels to the South Caucasus accompanied by Mario Sica, Mathias Mossberg and

- Vladimir Kazimirov. Together they visit Tbilisi on October 24, Baku – on October 25, and Yerevan – on October 27.
- October 25** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement in connection with the escalation of the conflict.**
- October 29** The town of Zangelan is captured by the Armenian forces.  
The Russian mediator addresses Heydar Aliev and Arkadi Ghukasyan with a **proposal to enter into provisional agreements between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. That proposal is not accepted, but later serves as a basis for mediation proposals.**  
With contributions by the Italian ambassador Mario Sica and the Swedish ambassador Mathias Mossberg, the Russian mediator prepares and sends to Heydar Aliev, David Shakhnazaryan and Arkadi Ghukasyan a draft of a joint statement by the Republic of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia in connection with the recent violation of the ceasefire arrangements and the wide-scale military operations. The conflicting sides reject the possibility of such a joint statement being made.
- November 2–8** The CSCE Minsk Group meets in Vienna. The High Priority Measures Schedule is passed on to the representatives of the conflicting sides. This is the last Minsk Group meeting in which the US envoy John Maresca takes part.
- November 4** The “Minsk Nine” make a statement.
- November 9** Chairman of the CSCE Minsk Conference Mario Raffaelli addresses a letter to the President of the UN Security Council.  
**Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and head of Russia's mediation mission Vladimir Kazimirov hold in-depth talks with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan concerning the upcoming trip by the Russian mediation mission to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert, the mission's task being to bring a draft ceasefire agreement.**
- November 12** Resolution 884 adopted by the UN Security Council.
- November 12–19** **Russia's mediation mission travels to Baku to work on the draft of a ceasefire agreement and to hold meetings with Heydar Aliev, Hasan Hasanov, Vafa Guluzade. Hasanov asks to pass on the draft agreement suggested by Azerbaijan to the Armenian side pretending they are suggested by Russia (!?).**

- November 16** First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russian Anatoly Adamishin meets with Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Abbas Abbasov in Moscow.
- November 17–18** The leaders of the Armenian Apostolic Church and of the Azerbaijani Muslims meet in Moscow under the auspices of the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church. A joint communique is adopted.
- November 20** The escort vehicle of the Russian mediation mission comes under fire on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. **Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev makes a statement in this connection.**
- November 22** **A statement made by the Russian government, and a press conference held by Andrei Kozyrev and Vladimir Kazimirov in connection with the attack on Russia's mediation mission.**
- November 28** Informal consultations of the CSCE Minsk Group are held in Rome (in the absence of the Russian envoy).
- November 30 – December 1** The fourth meeting of the CSCE Council is held in Rome. Italy takes the CSCE chairmanship over from Sweden. At the CSCE Minsk Group and Minsk Conference the vice versa happens – the chair goes from Italy to Sweden. The confrontation between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan disrupts the adoption of a resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh.
- November 30 – December 4** **Negotiations between the Russian mediator and the Armenian president's representative David Shakhnazaryan are held in Moscow.**
- November 13** Negotiations between the Russian mediator and the representative of the Italian Chairman of the CSCE Minsk Group are held in Moscow.
- December** Preparations are launched for a counteroffensive by the Azerbaijani troops along several lines.
- December 16** Aggravation of the situation at the front, near the town of Beylagan. **The suggestion of the Russian mediator to cease fire for a period of 10 days, with a possibility of extension later, is accepted by Heydar Aliiev and Robert Kocharyan, who instruct Afiyaddin Dzhililov and Nuretdin Sadykov; and Arkadi Ghukasyan and Seyran Ohanyan respectively to sign this document. Stepanakert promptly signs it that very evening. Baku only submits it at 9 pm on December 19 (at the lapse of 3 days!), and in an improper form too. The ceasefire arrangements**

- are wrecked. The most probable reason for this are attempts to camouflage the counteroffensive being prepared by Azerbaijan.
- December 20** In Paris Russian Ambassador Yury Ryzhov informs Heydar Aliiev during the latter's visit to France that, despite the verbal arrangements with him personally as head of state, no properly formalised ceasefire document has been received from Baku since December 17. Aliiev promises to see to it once he is back in Baku (!?).
- December 21** In St Petersburg Azerbaijani representatives sidestep the signing of an agreement on normalisation of the situation along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border (the Republic of Armenia submitted its remarks on the draft suggested by the mediator).
- December 21–22** A symposium with the participation of the members of the Armenian and Azerbaijani parliaments and the elected representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh is held in Mariehamn (Åland Islands) at the initiative of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and with the assistance from the Åland Islands Peace Institute.
- December 23–24** A meeting of the CIS Heads of State is held in Ashgabad. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan are given a fine-tuned version of the draft ceasefire agreement suggested by Russia. The incident with the Russian mediation mission coming under fire on November 20 is settled.
- December 30** Russia suggests a ceasefire for the New Year festive season (Stepanakert welcomes the suggestion; Baku does not even vouchsafe a reply).
- Late December** Azerbaijan attempts to launch a large-scale counter-offensive in several directions. Major losses are suffered by all sides, especially by the Azeri forces in the vicinity of the Omar pass. They are only able to outflank the Armenians near the railway station of the town of Goradiz.
- 1994**
- January 1** Italy (in the person of its Foreign Minister Beniamino Andreatta, and later Antonio Martino) takes over CSCE Chairmanship from Sweden.
- January 6–10** Consultations on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh are held in Tehran (the negotiators are Vladimir Kazimirov on the Russian side and Morteza Bank on the Irani side).



- January 10–11      The Russian mediation mission travels down to Baku where it meets with Heydar Aliev and Hasan Hasanov.
- January 12        In Moscow, consultations with US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Kauzlarich are hosted by the Russian Foreign Ministry.
- January 18        Negotiations between Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and his Azerbaijani opposite number Hasan Hasanov are held in Moscow.
- January 20        Negotiations between Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and his Armenian opposite number Vahan Papazyan, as well as with the Foreign Minister of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Arkadi Ghukasyan, are held in Moscow.
- January 21–23     Consultations on the draft ceasefire agreement suggested by Russia are held in Moscow.
- January 25–27     Consultations are held in Stockholm by Russia, Sweden and the United States (represented by Vladimir Kazimirov, Mathias Mossberg and Craig Dunkerley respectively). **Russia sets forth three conditions to abide by for successful operation of the CSCE Minsk Group, one of them being to refrain from making contradictory proposals and from opposing proposals made by other members in plain view of the conflicting sides. Carried unanimously.**
- January 27        Russia brings forward a proposal to the conflicting sides to cease fire starting from February 1, for a period of at least 2-3 weeks, and to hold a meeting on foreign minister level on February 1-2 in Moscow. Stepanakert and Yerevan were in favour of this. Baku dodged both proposals (since December 16, 1993 the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh had accepted proposed ceasefire arrangements three times over, but the Republic of Azerbaijan kept evading the issue. Likewise fails the later attempt to arrange a ceasefire to last from February 4 until February 25.
- January 28–31     The Russian mediation mission travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert. It is revealed that, despite the arrangements reached in Stockholm, Washington has instructed the US embassies in Baku and Yerevan to “work hard to undermine the plan suggested by Russia”.
- February 1        The new CSCE Minsk Conference Chairman, Swedish diplomat Jan Eliasson, who succeeded Mario Raffaelli, comes into office.

- February 2** Azerbaijani Minister of Defence Mammadrafi Mammadov for the first time phones up his Armenian opposite number Serzh Sargsyan to suggest holding a meeting in Moscow hosted by their Russian counterpart Pavel Grachev, but in the absence of the Nagorno-Karabakh representatives.
- February 4** Consultations of the Minsk Nine are held in Vienna, the first time they are chaired by Jan Eliasson.
- February 5 – March 6** An Olympic truce is proposed, with reference to the resolution adopted by the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly at the suggestion of IOC. The President of Armenia favours the truce, but the Azerbaijani leaders do not.
- February 7–10** Consultations with the head of the Irani Foreign Ministry Morteza Bank are hosted by the Russian Foreign Ministry in Moscow. The Russian side is represented by Vladimir Kazimirov and Anatoly Adamishin.
- February 8** The Russian President addresses the US President in connection with the violation by the American side of the arrangements reached in Stockholm.
- February 16** In Moscow the Interagency Commission of the Russian Security Council discusses the report made by the head of the Russian mediation mission for Nagorno-Karabakh.
- February 17** The Russian mediator holds negotiations with First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia Gerard Libaridian in Moscow.
- February 17–18** Consultations with Jan Eliasson and Mathias Mossberg are held in Moscow. The Russian side is represented by Anatoly Adamishin, Sergey Lavrov, and Vladimir Kazimirov.
- February 18** Negotiations between the defence ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the participation of Nagorno-Karabakh representative, are held in Moscow under the auspices of the Defence Minister of Russia. A protocol providing for a cessation of fire starting from March 1, 1994 and a withdrawal of the adversaries' forces from the line of contact is signed.
- February** At joint initiative of the Chairman of the Council of CIS Heads of State and of the President of Russia, the CIS executive secretariat disseminates the material "Agreed Approaches to the Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict" prepared by

- the Russian mediator among all heads of CIS members states for examination and subsequent approval.
- February 22      The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation makes a statement.
- February 23      A meeting between Acting Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Anatoly Adamishin and Azerbaijani Defence Minister Mammadrafi Mammadov is held in Moscow. Head of the Russian mediation mission is appointed, by virtue of a Russian President's decree, the presidential plenipotentiary representative for Nagorno-Karabakh.
- February 28–  
March 1          Deputy Defence Minister of Russia Georgy Kondratyev travels together with the President's plenipotentiary representative to Yerevan and Baku where they meet with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Serzh Sargsyan, Heydar Aliev, Mammadrafi Mammadov. Non-flying weather prevents them from travelling to Stepanakert.
- Early March      The ceasefire provided for in the protocol signed by the defence ministers on February 18, 1994, scheduled to take effect on March 1 is wrecked due to Azerbaijan's refusal to withdraw its troops from the contact line.
- March 3          Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev and Defence Minister Pavel Grachev address Heydar Aliev with reference to the February 18, 1994 protocol in connection with his country's refusal to fulfill its commitment to withdraw its troops.
- March 3–4        Consultations are held between the Russian mediator and First Deputy Chief of the Azerbaijani General Staff of Armed Forces Rufat Amirov and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry representative Araz Azimov. The Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh decide against taking part in it, demanding that a statement be first made concerning the wrecking of the March 1 ceasefire arrangements.
- March 4          The 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Senior Officials held in Prague reaffirms the central role played by the Minsk Conference in the search for a political solution to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- March 6          Heydar Aliev replies to the letter addressed to him by Kozyrev and Grachev.
- March 6–8        Anatoly Adamishin arrives in Baku, accompanied by the head of Russia's mediation mission. They hold meetings with Heydar Aliev, Rasul Guliev and HasanHasanov.

- March 9** A meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State is held in Moscow. A statement on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is adopted, defining ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as an imperative goal: "The key priority and an absolute imperative insofar as the resolution of the conflict is concerned is an immediate cessation of fire and of all military operations whatsoever". In their addresses to Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan, Andrey Kozyrev and Mikhail Kolesnikov suggested that one of Azerbaijani districts captured by the Armenians in the autumn of 1993 be liberated.
- March 12** A meeting between the Chairmen of the Armenian and Azerbaijani parliaments Babken Ararktsyan and Rasul Guliev is held at the initiative of the Armenian side in the border region of Ijevan. Guliev leaves open the possibility for Nagorno-Karabakh to be treated as a party to the negotiation process.
- March 15** Robert Kocharyan addresses a letter of response to Andrey Kozyrev and Mikhail Kolesnikov expressing his refusal to "award" Azerbaijan for wrecking the arrangements on withdrawal of troops provided for by the protocol of February 18, 1994.
- March 16** Meetings with the representatives of Sweden chairing the CSCE Minsk Group Mathias Mossberg and GeneralBerg are held in Moscow.
- March 17** An Irani military transport aircraft flying from Moscow is shot down in the vicinity of Askeran (Nagorno-Karabakh). 32 people killed.
- March 19–27** Expert-level negotiations on the draft agreement on termination of the armed conflict and mitigation of its effects are held between the three conflicting sides in Moscow under Russia's auspices (these are the first negotiations attended by Mathias Mossberg, Generals Berg and Beckman representing the CSCE Minsk Group Chairmanship).
- March 22** The Russian mediator sends compromise suggestions on withdrawing the troops from the line of contact on the "balanced asymmetry" basis to Yerevan and Stepanakert, along with handing them over to the Azerbaijani Defence Minister in Moscow.
- March** Joint statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence on Russia's peacekeeping operations on the CIS territory.

- March 30** In Moscow Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev receives Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Kyrgyzstan Medetkan Sherimkulov who headed the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly peacekeeping group on the eve of the group's trip to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert.
- March 31–April 3** The peacekeeping group of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly headed by Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Kyrgyzstan Medetkan Sherimkulov travels to the South Caucasus, accompanied by the Russian president's plenipotentiary representative.
- April 4** The Russian mediator addresses a message to the leaders of the conflicting sides with reference to his proposal to withdraw the troops on the “balanced asymmetry” basis.
- April 5–7** The Russian mediation mission travels down to Baku in the hope of speeding up the consideration of the revised version of the peace agreement there. They have a meeting with Heydar Aliiev there.
- April 8** In Moscow Andrei Kozyrev, Pavel Grachev and Vladimir Kazimirov meet with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Vahan Papazyan and David Shakhnazaryan on the Russian Foreign Ministry premises.
- April 11–15** CSCE Minsk Group consultations are held in Prague, in the framework of which the package of confidence-building measures was approved. The preparations for the meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State to be held in Moscow precluded Russia from sending its envoys to take part in those consultations; it was therefore represented by the Russian Embassy minister Nikolay G. Fomin.
- April 12** In view of the escalation of the situation at the front, the Russian mediator called upon the conflicting sides to scale down their military operations” for a few days at least. Baku did not respond.
- April 15** A meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State is held in Moscow. A statement containing sternly-worded appeals to cease fire in Nagorno-Karabakh is adopted at this meeting. The President of Russia holds talks with his Azerbaijani and Armenian counterparts.
- An appeal by the religious leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia addressed to the leaders of the conflicting sides is adopted.

- Azerbaijani Minister of Defence Mammadrafi Mammadov turned down the March 22 proposal by the Russian mediator regarding withdrawal of forces on the “balanced asymmetry” basis as absolutely unacceptable and unfair.**
- April 19–20** The Russia mediator and Jan Eliasson hold consultations in Stockholm.
- April 25–27** A parliamentary delegation of Azerbaijan headed by the Azerbaijani Milli Meclis speaker Rasul Guliev is in Moscow on a visit.
- April 26** The Russian Foreign Ministry suggests to Baku and Stepanakert to cease offensive operations, rocket and shell attacks, and air bombardments for a period of 10 days starting on April 28, for the purposes of signing a ceasefire agreement no later than May 7. Baku immediately put its signature.
- April 28** Stepanakert replies that it is ready to fully cease all military operations starting from April 29, only this has to be in full compliance with the protocol signed on February 18, 1994. Due to the differences that arose between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh this arrangement fell through.
- April 26–May 2** The CSCE mission headed by Mathias Mossberg travels down to the conflict region.
- May 4–5** Heads of the Azerbaijani and the Armenian parliaments meet with Nagorno-Karabakh representatives in Bishkek, under the auspices of the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly (Vladimir Shumeiko, Mikhail Krotov), the Supreme Soviet of Kyrgyzstan (Medetkan Sherimkulov), and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Vladimir Kazimirov). The Bishkek Protocol containing an appeal to cease fire definitively on May 9 was carried and signed by all participants in the meeting except Afiyaddin Dzhililov (Heydar Aliev had not authorised him to sign any documents in Bishkek without securing his approval first).
- May 6** Andrei Kozyrev receives Jan Eliasson in Moscow. The Russian mediator also takes part in their meeting.
- May 7–10** The Russian mediation mission travels down to Baku. Milli Meclis speaker Rasul Guliev signs the Bishkek protocol on May 8 in Heydar Aliev's cabinet. Meetings are held with Heydar Aliev, Rasul Guliev and Mammadrafi Mammadov. The parliamentary crisis in Baku begins.

- May 9–11** The Azerbaijani leaders themselves begin to voice aspirations for a ceasefire, not making it conditional on their earlier demands. The Russian mediator executes an open-ended agreement on full and universal ceasefire in the form of an address by the defence ministers of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in Moscow. The document is signed by the Azerbaijani defence minister in Baku, the Armenian defence minister in Yerevan and the Nagorno-Karabakh representative in Stepanakert. The actual cessation of fire is scheduled for 00 hours 01 minutes on the night of May 12.
- May 12–15** Joint trip to Baku and Yerevan of the head of the Russian mediation mission Vladimir Kazimirov and the CSCE Minsk Conference Chairman Jan Eliasson, with meetings with Heydar Aliiev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan held there. The Swedish diplomat advocates the so-called “minor agreement” (for the enhancement of the ceasefire regime), **the Russian mediator, on the contrary, advocates the draft of the “big agreement”.**
- May 16–17** A meeting of the defence ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the Commander-in-Chief of Nagorno-Karabakh is held in Moscow under the auspices of the Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence. An agreement is signed regarding the procedure for the implementation of the February 18, 1994 protocol, which provided for the deployment of mixed observation posts (with Russia’s involvement) in the conflict zone. On the night of May 17 Azerbaijani Defence Minister Mammadrafi Mammadov is recalled by Heydar Aliiev back to Baku for consultations. Thus postponing the signing of the document, Mammadov never got to sign it once he was back in Moscow.
- May 17–18** **The special envoy of the Russian president arrives in Baku together with the Azerbaijani Minister of Defence. They hold separate meetings with Heydar Aliiev.**
- May 19** The CSCE Permanent Council voices its support for the “minor agreement” on the enhancement of the ceasefire regime. **The ceasefire agreement signed on May 12 under Russia’s auspices is slurred over.**
- June 1–6** **The Russian mediation mission travels to Baku, Yerevan, Stepanakert where it meets with Heydar Aliiev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.**
- June 8–9** **The meeting of the IPA CIS Council is held in St Petersburg. The respective speakers of the Azerbaijani and Armenian par**

- liaments and the Nagorno-Karabakh representatives hold a meeting with the participation of the IPA Chairman, the Kyrgyzstani parliament speaker and the special envoy of the Russian president. The Russian mediator meets with the representatives of the CSCE Minsk Group presidium (Jan Eliasson, Mathias Mossberg, Luca Fornari, General Beckman).
- June 10–11** The Minsk Nine meet in Vienna. The focus of the agenda is the relations between Russia and the CSCE.
- June 12** Ambassador Joseph Pressel is appointed the US envoy to the CSCE Minsk Group.
- June 13–14** Consultations with the Azerbaijani experts (their Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh counterparts having declined the invitation) are held on the Russian Foreign Ministry premises in Moscow.
- June 14–18** CSCE Minsk Conference Chairman Jan Eliasson travels to the region of the conflict.
- June 23** A joint appeal by the plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian president and the CSCE Minsk Conference Chairman to the leaders of the conflicting sides.
- June 29–30** The Russian mediation mission travels to Baku, Tehran and Ankara where it meets with Heydar Aliev, Rasul Guliev, Tofiq Zulfugarov, Morteza Bank, Bilgin Unan and Ömer Ersun.
- July 4–8** CSCE Parliamentary Assembly meets in Vienna. A meeting between the respective speakers of the Azerbaijani and the Armenian parliaments.
- Early July** The US President addresses his Russian opposite number with a message concerning the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- July 7–8** Informal consultations of the Minsk Nine are held in Vienna.
- July 13–14** Consultations between Vladimir Kazimirov and Jan Eliasson are held in Stockholm, as are consultations with Margaretha af Ugglas, General Beckman and the military experts of the CSCE monitoring mission.
- July 20–23** Russia's mediation mission travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert. Mathias Mossberg's proposal to "extend" the open-ended ceasefire agreement by 30 days was turned down, accepted instead was Russia's proposal for the conflicting sides to regularly reaffirm their ceasefire commitments.
- July 25–26** Consultations with the Swedish diplomats representing the Minsk Group presidium concerning the draft political agree-



- ment suggested by Russia are held on the Russian Foreign Ministry premises in Moscow.
- July 27 For the first time the three sides sign a document through which they reaffirm their ceasefire commitments up until a political agreement is signed. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes an official statement in this connection. A joint statement in support of these arrangements was made by the head of the Russian mediation mission and the CSCE Minsk Conference Chairman.
- August 5–13 Negotiations between the plenipotentiary representatives of the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh leaders about the draft political agreement suggested by Russia are held in Moscow region.
- August 11 An agreement was reached at the negotiations held under Russia's auspices in Moscow region on mutual release of women and children who had been arrested or held captive in Azerbaijan, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh (they were to be exchanged via the International Committee of the Red Cross).
- August 14–18 A meeting of the Minsk Nine was held in Vienna without the participation of the conflicting sides. An exchange of opinions takes place at the meeting of the CSCE Permanent Council.
- August 23–30 The CSCE Minsk Conference Chairman Jan Eliasson travels to the conflict zone on August 28. Repeated unilateral statements by the three conflicting sides are made in confirmation of the commitments to respect the ceasefire arrangements up until the signing of a political agreement on termination of the military conflict.
- August 31 Consultations with representatives of the Republic of Armenia are held on the Russian Foreign Ministry premises in Moscow.
- September 1 Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev addresses a message about the situation in Karabakh and about the Russian mediation in the Karabakh conflict to the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher.
- September 1–7/  
10–14 The negotiations between the plenipotentiary representatives of the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh leaders about the draft political agreement suggested by Russia are resumed. The observers from the CIS executive secretariat, the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and the CSCE Minsk Group presidium attend.

- September 8–9** Bilateral and general meetings between the supreme leaders of the conflicting sides – the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh leader – are held in Moscow under the auspices of Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and the head of the Russian mediation mission. The agenda includes the discussion of the focal aspects of the political agreement, including the situation in Lachin and Shusha.
- September 7 and 15** The agreed plan on the release of women and children is accomplished (with a total of over 30 people released and mutually exchanged).
- September 12–14** A meeting of the CSCE Minsk Group is held in Vienna (in the absence of the Russian representative due to the sudden change in its date from September 21 to September 12, despite Russia's objections in view of its event schedule in Moscow).
- September 14–16** The 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Senior Officials resolves to examine the possibility to create multinational CSCE peacekeeping forces for Nagorno-Karabakh.
- September 15–16** A meeting of the heads of the journalists' unions and the television companies of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh is held at the initiative of the International TV company *Mir* in Moscow.
- September 18** A statement is made by the Russian president summarising the results of the meetings between the supreme leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in Moscow. The Russian president addresses messages to the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as to the president of the United States.
- September 19–23** The Russian mediation mission travels to Baku and Yerevan where it meets with Heydar Aliev and Levon Ter-Petrosyan.
- September 27–28** In Washington the presidents of the US and Russia discuss the peace process in Nagorno-Karabakh
- September 29** Vice speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament Afiyaddin Dzhililov is assassinated in Baku.
- October 9–11** The Chairman of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation visits Armenia together with the head of Russia's mediation mission.
- October 6–17** The CSCE mission travels to the conflict zone. An exchange of war prisoners takes place (2 exchanged for 2).

- October 14 Russian newspaper *Segodnya* publishes a critical review by the Russian mediator entitled “Russia and the CSCE Minsk Group”. Its text is later disseminated at the CSCE headquarters in Vienna.
- October 21 A meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State is held in Moscow. An exchange of views takes place between the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders.
- October 24 A meeting of the CSCE Permanent Council is held in Vienna. **The head of the Russian mediation mission suggests developing and adopting a CSCE Minsk Group mandate.**
- October 31 Another meeting of the CSCE Permanent Council in Vienna. **The Russian delegation suggests a draft of a CSCE Minsk Group mandate. The US, German and other delegations object.**
- November 3–4 Consultations are held with Swedish diplomats representing the CSCE Minsk Group presidium and the Russian mediation mission in Nagorno-Karabakh (Igor Ivanov – Anders Bjurner, Igor Ivanov – P. Bruni, Vladimir Kazimirov – Andres Bjurner).
- November 11–14 **The negotiations between the plenipotentiary representatives of the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh leaders about the draft political agreement suggested by Russia are resumed and are attended by the observers from the CIS executive secretariat and the CSCE Minsk Group presidium.**
- November 11–15 Acting CSCE Minsk Group Chairman travels to the conflict zone.
- November 15–16 Consultations of the CSCE Minsk Group are held in Moscow without the participation of the conflicting sides.
- November 17 **The Russian and Azerbaijani presidents meet in Moscow.**
- November 18 The 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Senior Officials discusses the draft document on Nagorno-Karabakh and the multinational CSCE peacekeeping forces. The document was not carried.
- November 21 Hungary submits its proposal to hold the upcoming CSCE summit in Budapest.
- November 25 Douglas Hurd writes a letter to Andrei Kozyrev about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- November 29 The US submit their proposals regarding the upcoming CSCE summit.
- Nov 29– Dec 2 Meetings of the CSCE Minsk Group are held in Budapest, some without the participation of the conflicting sides, some in full force.

- November 30** Sweden submits its proposals regarding the upcoming CSCE summit.
- December 1** **The meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia and the Nagorno-Karabakh leader that has been agreed upon earlier is postponed at the request of the Azerbaijani side on the pretext of Heydar Aliev being unwell and in the end never held** (the American side undertake to take care of all the arrangements for a meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia at the CSCE summit in Budapest).  
The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs receives EU's proposals concerning the situation in Karabakh to be discussed at the CSCE summit.
- December 2** **Joint letters by Vladimir Kazimirov and Anders Bjurner to the supreme leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh about the "all for all" exchange of prisoners of war and hostages.**
- December 5–6** It is resolved at the Budapest summit to change the CSCE's name to OSCE. A resolution is carried with regard to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, providing for the concerted mediatory action of Russia and the OSCE, and on the introduction of co-chairmanship for the OSCE Minsk Conference and the OSCE Minsk Group (by Russia and Sweden).
- December 5** Heydar Aliev speaks at the CSCE summit in Budapest.  
A meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia is held under the US auspices.
- December 6** Levon Ter-Petrosyan speaks at the CSCE summit.
- December 13–14** **Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev meets with his Swedish opposite number Lena Elm-Vallen.**
- December 14** **In Moscow the Russian mediator discusses issues related to the Russian-Swedish co-chairmanship with the Swedish ambassador Anders Bjurner.**
- December 27–28** **The Russian mediator travels to Budapest to meet the new OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Hungary László Kovács.**
- 1995**
- January 1** Hungary (in the person of its foreign Minister László Kovács) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Italy.

- January 6** **Vladimir Lozinsky is appointed Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Conference. Head of the Russian mediation mission Vladimir Kazimirov is appointed Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group.**
- January 12–13** Consultations of the Minsk Nine are held in Vienna, with Switzerland participating as the incoming OSCE Chair-in-Office.
- January 18–20** Consultations of the Russian and Swedish diplomats representing the OSCE Minsk Conference and OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship are held in Stockholm. Lozinsky and Kazimirov meet with Jan Eliasson.
- January 26–February 2** **A joint trip by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen Vladimir Kazimirov and Anders Bjurner to Baku, Yerevan, Stepanakert. Meetings with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kochayan.**
- February 4** **At Russia’s suggestion, the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group signed an open-ended agreement between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh for the enhancement of the ceasefire regime, stipulating the procedure for settlement of incidents occurring along the contact line, this agreement was to take effect on February 6, 1995.**
- February 6–9** The first round of talks is held in Moscow under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Sweden.
- February 9** Consultations of the OSCE Minsk Group are held in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part.
- February 10–11** Consultations of the full OSCE Minsk Group are held in Moscow. The Moscow Statement is signed on February 11. An agreement on the release of certain categories of prisoners of war and hostages (the ailing, the wounded, those over 50 years of age) was initialed. An agreement was reached to hold meetings of the conflicting sides’ representatives focusing on humanitarian issues and under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.
- February 11** **Andrei Kozyrev receives the heads of delegations from the OSCE Minsk Group member states in Moscow.**
- February 20** The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen Vladimir Lozinsky and Jan Eliasson address a letter about the negotiations on the political agreement to the leaders of the three conflicting sides.
- February 20–24** **Vladimir Lozinsky and Vladimir Kazimirov travel to the United States. Consultations about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh are held on the US Department of State premises in Washington**

- (the participants are James Collins, Joseph Pressel, Carey Cavanaugh, John Kornblum and others) and at the US Senate.
- March 7–8** An international conference dedicated to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is held in Bonn. The focus of the conference is the report by Vladimir Kazimirov and the participation in it of the members of parliaments from a number of countries and the NGO representatives from Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The suggestion voiced by the Russian envoy to call upon the leaders of the conflicting sides to release all prisoners of war and hostages by the first anniversary of the ceasefire – May 12 – is seconded. Meetings are held with Dietrich Sperling and other members of the Bundestag.
- March 13–14** The OSCE Minsk Group meets in Vienna.
- March 21** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen Vladimir Kazimirov and Anders Bjrner address a joint letter to Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan in which **they suggest releasing all prisoners of war and hostages by May 12 – the first anniversary of the overall ceasefire.**
- March 23–27** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen Vladimir Kazimirov and Anders Bjrner visit Baku and Yerevan where they hold meetings with Heydar Aliev, Safar Abiev, Hasan Hasanov, Vafa Guluzade; Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Vartan Oskanyan, Edward Zulojan, Arkadi Ghukasyan and Edwin Bowe of the International Committee of the Red Cross).
- April 6–7** The OSCE Minsk Group meets in Stockholm without the conflicting sides taking part. The Stockholm statement is signed. Lozinsky and Eliasson hold consultations.
- April 12** **The Federation Council of the Russian Federation launches an appeal to the leaders of state and of the parliaments of the conflicting sides to release all prisoners of war and hostages by the first anniversary of the ceasefire – May 12, 1995.**
- April 20–21** Consultations with the new OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairman, Finnish diplomat Heikki Talvitie, are held in Moscow. Talvitie meets Albert Chernyshev, Andrei Nikolayev, Oleg Lobov, Yuri Baturin, Vladimir Kazimirov.
- April 21** Sweden succeeds Finland as Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group.
- April 26** A statement is made by the President of the UN Security Council.

- April 26–29** The OSCE Chairman-in-Office István Gyarmati and the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen Vladimir Kazimirov and Rene Nyberg visit Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert where they meet with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Arkadi Ghukasyan.
- May 2** **The President of Russia addresses written messages to Heydar Aliev and Levon Ter-Petrosyan and an oral message Robert Kocharyan on the occasion of the first anniversary of the ceasefire.**
- May 3–7** **The joint delegation of the Federation Council and the IPA CIS headed by Vadim Gustov visits Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku. The Special Envoy of the Russian president, who was part of the delegation, passed on the presidential message to the leaders of the conflicting sides.**
- May 6** **Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev addresses a message to the US Secretary of State and to the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE Minsk Group member states and of Iran on the occasion of the first anniversary of the ceasefire.**
- May 10** Levon Ter-Petrosyan makes a statement on the unilateral release of the prisoners of war and hostages held by Armenia.
- May 11** 29 Azeri prisoners of war and hostages released by Armenia are brought to Baku.
- May 12** **Andrei Kozyrev makes a statement on the occasion of the first anniversary of the ceasefire.**  
The OSCE Chair-in-Office László Kovács addresses an appeal to the warring sides on the occasion of the first anniversary of the ceasefire.
- May 15–18** The first round of talks under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland is held in Moscow.
- May 16** **Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev meets with the heads of the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh delegations in Moscow.**
- May 19** The OSCE Minsk Group consultations are held in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part. **The Moscow Declaration II is carried.**
- May 23** The Armenian government makes a statement to the effect that it suspends its participation in the negotiations due to a new pipeline explosion in Georgia's Marneuli district.
- May 26** Heikki Talvitie, Vladimir Kazimirov and Rene Nyberg report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna. The OSCE Chair-

- in-Office and the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen make respective statements in connection with the explosions on the communication lines in the region of the conflict and the above statement made by the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Armenia.
- May 28–June 1** **The Russian mediator travels to Baku and Yerevan where he meets with Heydar Aliiev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.**
- June 12–14** Consultations are held in Helsinki between the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen (taking part are Heikki Talvitie, Rene Nyberg and Vladimir Kazimirov).
- June 15–19** Consultations on the draft agreement suggested by Russia are held in Helsinki under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland.
- June 20** Consultations are held by the full OSCE Minsk Group in Helsinki.
- June 20–21** The OSCE Minsk Group consultations are held in Helsinki without the conflicting sides taking part. The Helsinki declaration is carried.
- June 28** The OSCE Chair-in-Office László Kovács appoints Polish ambassador Stanislaw Przygodzki as his personal representative in that conflict.
- Vladimir Lozinsky and Heikki Talvitie report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.
- July 5** The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen Vladimir Lozinsky and Heikki Talvitie report to the UN Security Council President in New York.
- July 12–17** The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen travel to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert where they meet with Heydar Aliiev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.
- July 23** The Minsk Conference co-chairmen meet with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Hungarian Foreign Minister István Gyarmati in Budapest
- July 24–28** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Baden (Austria) without the conflicting sides taking part. The Baden declaration and a statement on the humanitarian situation are made.
- July 25–27** The full OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Baden, Austria.
- August 20–23** **The Russian mediator visits Baku and Yerevan in the framework of the OSCE Minsk process and meets with Heydar Aliiev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Arkadi Ghukasyan.**



- August 23–25** **Vladimir Lozinsky and Vladimir Kazimirov travel to Ankara to attend consultations with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (First Deputy Prime Minister O. Eimen, Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Tuygan, and presidential envoy Ayhan Kamel).**
- August 28** US envoy to the OSCE Minsk Group Joseph Pressel visits Nagorno-Karabakh.
- September 4–9** Talks between the conflicting sides are held at the Soyuz recreation camp in Moscow region, under the co-chairmanship of Russian and Finland.
- September 11** The full OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow.
- September 12** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part.
- September 14** Vladimir Lozinsky and Rene Nyberg report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.
- September 25–29** The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen visit Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert where they meet with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.
- October 5–7** **Albert Chernyshev visits Baku.**
- October 8–16** The conflicting sides hold negotiations in Mariehamn (the Åland Islands) under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland.
- October 16** The full OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Helsinki.
- October 17** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Helsinki without the conflicting sides taking part.
- October 19** **At Russia's suggestion, a joint message of the presidents of Russia and Finland is addressed to Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.**
- October 20–26** The OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group co-chairmen meet during the UN General Assembly session in New York.
- October 23** Levon Ter-Petrosyan grants an audience to the Russian mediator in New York.
- October 25** Heydar Aliev gives an audience to the Russian mediator in New York.
- November 1** German representative to the OSCE Minsk Group Frank Lambach travels to Nagorno-Karabakh.
- November 6–10** Negotiations are held in Moscow under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland.
- November 10–11** The full OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow.

- November 11** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part.
- November 13–14** **Albert Chernyshev visits Yerevan.**
- November 14** **The Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman makes a statement at a briefing.**
- November 17** **Russian President Boris Yeltsin issues a decree in connection with the developments in the conflict.**
- November 19** **Vladimir Lozinsky travels to Budapest to meet the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Hungary Foreign Minister László Kovács.**
- November 20** **Vladimir Lozinsky travels to Bern, Switzerland, to meet with the incoming OSCE Chair-in-Office Flavio Cotti.**
- November 22** **A meeting dedicated to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia is held on the Russia Foreign Ministry premises. Participating are Andrei Kozyrev, Mikhail Barsukov, Yevgeny Primakov, Valery Serov, Vladimir Zhurbenko, Alexey Scherbakov.**
- November 22–30** **Negotiations are held in Bonn under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland. The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations. The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen's report on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh prepared for the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting to be held on December 7, 1995 and the draft resolution by the Ministerial Council are discussed.**
- December 8** **The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen present their report at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Budapest. The Ministerial Council carries a resolution on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- December 20–25** **The Russian president addresses messages to Heydar Aliiev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan, which are handed to them by his plenipotentiary representative in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert. Compromise solutions for the situation in Lachin and the general security situation in Nagorno-Karabakh are also discussed.**
- 1996**
- January 1** **Switzerland (in the person of its Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti) succeeded Hungary as the OSCE Chair-in-Office.**
- January 9** **Yevgeny Primakov is appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.**
- January 9–12** **Negotiations are held in Moscow under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland.**

- January 13** The full OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow. **The newly appointed Foreign Minister of Russia Yevgeny Primakov receives parties thereto.**
- January 15** The OSCE Minsk Group consultations are held in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part.
- January 16** **Yevgeny Primakov meets with Robert Kocharyan.**
- January 17** **Yevgeny Primakov meets with Heydar Aliev.**
- January 18** **President Boris Yeltsin meets with Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliev.**
- January 19** **In Moscow the Council of CIS Heads of State addresses an appeal to the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the heads of other member states.**  
**President Boris Yeltsin gives a press conference where he makes statements about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- January 21** Robert Kocharyan meets with US envoy to the OSCE Minsk Group Joseph Pressel.
- January 24–27** **The Russian mediator travels to Yerevan and Baku where he holds meetings with Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliev.**
- January 30** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Helsinki without the conflicting sides taking part.
- February 17–19** **First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Boris Pastukhov and the Russian mediator travel together to Yerevan and Baku where they hold meetings with Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliev.**
- February 21–22** Negotiations are held in Helsinki under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland.
- February 23** The full OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Helsinki.
- February 24** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Helsinki without the conflicting sides taking part.
- February 28 – March 2** The OSCE Chair-in-Office Flavio Cotti visits Baku and Yerevan, accompanied by the OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group co-chairmen. They hold meetings with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan during which the document suggested by the OSCE Chair-in-Office – “The framework of a package solution” – is discussed.
- March 6** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Vienna without the conflicting sides taking part.

- March 7** The OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group co-chairmen, Vladimir Kazimirov and Heikki Talvitie, present their report before the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.
- March 12–15** **First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Boris Pastukhov and the Russian mediator travel together to Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku where they meet with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliev.**
- March 15–20** **The Russian mediator continues his visit to Stepanakert, Yerevan and Baku and holds more meetings with Robert Kocharyan, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliev.**
- March 22–28** Negotiations are held in Moscow under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland.
- March 29** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part.
- March 29–30** The full OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow.
- April 7–11** **The Russian mediator travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert and meets with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.**
- April 9** The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen address a letter to the President of the UN Security Council.
- April 16** The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen and the spokesman for the OSCE Chair-in-Office report on the developments in the Karabakh peace process to the UN Security Council members in New York.
- April 21** The presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia meet in Luxembourg. A joint communique is adopted.
- April 25–30** **The Russian mediator travels to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert where he holds meetings with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan. The trip had been coordinated with the Finnish co-chairman.**
- May 5** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Helsinki without the conflicting sides taking part.
- May 6** **The Russian president addresses a message to the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia and to the leader of Nagorno-Karabakh on the occasion of the second anniversary of the ceasefire.**
- May 8–11** **Russian Foreign Yevgeny Primakov travels to the South Caucasus where he makes two visits to Baku, two visits to**

- Yerevan, as well as visits to Stepanakert and Tbilisi. The conflicting sides release 110 prisoners of war and hostages, in accordance with the lists made by the International Committee of the Red Cross (Azerbaijan – 39, Armenia – 11, Nagorno-Karabakh – 60 people). 102 of those were immediately repatriated on the same plane on which Minister Primakov travelled. A joint statement by the three conflicting sides was not adopted due to the stand taken by Azerbaijan.
- May 12** The second anniversary of the ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- May 17** A meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State is held in Moscow. In the framework of that meeting Boris Yeltsin meets with Heydar Aliev and Levon Ter-Petrosyan.
- May 22–26** US envoy to the OSCE Minsk Group Joseph Pressel visits Yerevan and Baku where he meets with Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliev respectively.
- June 3** The leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Russia meet in Kislovodsk and sign the *Declaration For International Accord, Peace and Economic and Cultural Cooperation in the Caucasus*.
- June 5–10** The Russian and Finnish co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group visit Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert and meet with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.
- June 14–18** Negotiations on the draft peace agreement suggested by Russia are held in Moscow under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland.
- June 20** The OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the three OSCE officials: the outgoing, the incumbent and the incoming chairmen at the invitation of OSCE Chair-in-Office Flavio Cotti.
- July 2–3** The peace agreement is negotiated under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland in Stockholm.
- July 4–5** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Stockholm.
- July 15** OSCE Chair-in-Office Flavio Cotti appointed Polish ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk his Personal Representative for a period of three months.
- July** Vladimir Kazimirov is succeeded by Yuri Yukalov as head of the mediation mission to Nagorno-Karabakh.

- July 28–August 3** **Vladimir Kazimirov and Yuri Yukalov travel together to Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku and meet with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Arkadi Ghukasyan and Heydar Aliiev.**
- August 11–13** In Helsinki the Russian and Finnish co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group meet with US, French, Turkish and Swedish envoys in the Minsk Group.
- August 17–22** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel down to the region of the conflict.
- August 30–31** **Yuri Yukalov and Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Tofiq Zulfugarov hold consultations in Moscow.**
- September 3** **Yuri Yukalov is appointed presidential plenipotentiary representative for Nagorno-Karabakh, thus succeeding Vladimir Kazimirov.**
- September 10** **Yuri Yukalov and Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Vartan Oskanyan hold consultations in Moscow.**
- September 13–15** The US and German envoys to the OSCE Minsk Group visit Stepanakert.
- September 18** **Yuri Yukalov and “Foreign Minister” of Nagorno-Karabakh Arkadi Ghukasyan hold consultations in Moscow.**
- September 23** **Yuri Yukalov and Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Tofiq Zulfugarov hold consultations in Moscow.**
- September 26–27** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part.
- October 2–4** The OSCE High-Level Planning Group travels to the region of the conflict.
- October 3–6** The Russian and Finnish OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen visit Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert, accompanied by some of the Minsk Group members (representatives of the US, Switzerland, Denmark and Turkey), and meet with Heydar Aliiev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.
- October 12** **Robert Kocharyan visits Moscow and meets with Yevgeny Primakov, with Yuri Yukalov also present at that meeting.**
- October 16–17** The OSCE Minsk Group consultations are held in Vienna without the conflicting sides taking part. The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen report to the OSCE Permanent Council on the developments in the Karabakh peace process.
- October 26** **Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman in connection with the “presidential elections” in Nagorno-Karabakh.**

- October 28–30** Negotiations are held in Moscow under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland.
- November 1–3** Finland’s Minister of Foreign Affairs visits Baku and Yerevan and meets with Heydar Aliev, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan.
- November 10–12** In Helsinki the OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen hold consultations on the preparation of the outcome document of the OSCE Lisbon Summit.
- November 18–22** Negotiations under the co-chairmanship of Russia and Finland and consultation of the OSCE Minsk Group are held in Helsinki.
- November 24** Robert Kocharyan is elected “President of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic”.
- November 26** **Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman in connection with the “presidential elections” in Nagorno-Karabakh.**
- December 2–3** The OSCE summit in Lisbon. The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh was in the end not mentioned in the outcome document of the summit because Armenia had not given its consent and Azerbaijan threatens to sabotage the adoption of the entire outcome document. It therefore all boiled down to a statement made by the OSCE Chair-in-Office which did not have the validity of resolution.
- December 17** The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen report on the developments in the Karabakh peace process to the UN Security Council in New York.
- December 25–29** The Russian mediator travels to Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku and meets with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliev.
- December 30** OSCE Chair-in-Office Flavio Cotti appoints deputy secretary general of the French Foreign Ministry Jacques Blot OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairman (to take this office over from Finland).
- December 31** The Azerbaijani Foreign Minister protests the appointment of France as co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Conference.
- 1997**
- January 1** Denmark (in the person of Niels Helveg Petersen) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Switzerland, and France succeeds Finland as co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group.

- January 30** The Russian Minsk Group co-chairman holds consultations with the special representative of the new OSCE Chair-in-Office S. Christiansen.
- January 30 – February 4** S. Christiansen travels to Yerevan and Baku.
- February 14** OSCE Chair-in-Office Niels Petersen appoints US Assistant Secretary of State Strobe Talbott Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Conference. The US thus became a third co-chairing member of the OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group (along with Russia and France).
- February 24–25** The Russian, American and French co-chairmen hold consultations in Copenhagen under the auspices of the OSCE Chair-in-Office.
- March 6** In Moscow First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Boris Pastukhov holds consultations with Strobe Talbott who presented his vision in a document entitled “Nagorno-Karabakh: Moving Ahead”.
- March 14** **The Russian mediator and Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Tofiq Zulfugarov hold consultations in Moscow.**
- March 17–18** In Paris the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen, who decided to launch a joint appeal to the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh to exchange prisoners of war and detained persons, hold consultations.
- March 19** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Paris without the conflicting sides taking part.
- March 20** Robert Kocharyan is appointed the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.
- March 26** The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports on the unilateral release of all Azeri prisoners of war.
- March 27** **Meetings of the CIS Council of Foreign Ministers and of the Council of the Heads of Governments are held in Moscow.**
- March 28** **A meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State is held in Moscow.**
- April 1–4** **The final round of negotiations on the draft peace agreement, and the first that was chaired by Russia, the US and France, is held in Moscow. The co-chairmen choose to proceed to “shuttle diplomacy”.**
- April 4** The OSCE Minsk Group consultations are held in Moscow.



- April 27–30** The OSCE Minsk Conference co-chairmen hold consultations in Paris.
- April 28–29** **The Russian OSCE Minsk Group co-chairman travels to Yerevan where he meets with Levon Ter-Petrosyan.**
- May 1** Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov holds consultations with the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Moscow, with Strobe Talbott and Jacques Blot also attending.
- May 29–June 1** The OSCE Minsk Conference and Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert where they meet with Heydar Aliev, Georgy Petrosyan and Levon Ter-Petrosyan.
- June 4** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Vienna without the conflicting sides taking part.
- June 5** A report on the progress in the Karabakh peace process before the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.
- June 12–15** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen visit Stepanakert, Yerevan and Baku and meet with Georgy Petrosyan, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliev.
- June 23** G8 meet in Denver, the US. The presidents of Russia, the US and France make a joint statement about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- June 25–26** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Paris.
- July 3–4** **Heydar Aliev visits Moscow and meets with Boris Yeltsin and Yevgeny Primakov.**
- July 17–20** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen visit Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert and meet with Heydar Aliev, Georgy Petrosyan and Levon Ter-Petrosyan.
- July 21** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part.
- July** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen suggest “Comprehensive agreement for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” as a “package” option.
- Mid–August** The German envoy to the OSCE visits the region of the conflict.
- September 1** Arkadi Ghukasyan elected the “president of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic”.
- September 18–24** The Minsk Group co-chairmen visit Yerevan, Baku and Stepanakert and meet with Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Heydar Aliev and Arkadi Ghukasyan.

- October 7**      **The Foreign Minister of Russia Yevgeny Primakov visits Baku and holds negotiations with Heydar Aliev.**
- October 8**      Azerbaijan and Armenia provide their replies to the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen's proposal concerning phased settlement.
- October 10**     The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan make a joint statement in Strasbourg.  
The Nagorno-Karabakh leaders reject the proposal by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen concerning phased settlement.
- October 15–18**   The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna. The co-chairmen also hold consultations with the High-Level Planning Group.
- October 17**     The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Vienna without the conflicting sides taking part.  
The OSCE High-Level Planning Group representatives visit the region of the conflict where they meet with Safar Abiev, Serzh Sargsyan and Samvel Babayan.
- November 1**     The article by Levon Ter-Petrosyan entitled "War or Peace" is published.
- November 5–10**   The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen visit Baku, Stepanakert and Yerevan and meet with Heydar Aliev, Arkadi Ghukasyan and Levon Ter-Petrosyan.
- December 2–6**   The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen visit Stepanakert, Yerevan and Baku and meet with Arkadi Ghukasyan, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliev.
- December**      The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen propose an "Agreement on termination of the armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh" (a "phased" scenario).
- December 16**    The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Copenhagen without the conflicting sides taking part.
- December 18–19**   The OSCE Ministerial Council meeting is held in Copenhagen. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen report to the Ministerial Council.
- 1998**
- January 1**      Poland (in the person of its Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Denmark.
- February 2–4**     The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Paris.
- February 3**      Levon Ter-Petrosyan steps down as president of Armenia.

- March 3** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek in Warsaw.
- March 5** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part.
- March 16–30** Presidential elections in Armenia (Robert Kocharyan and Stepan Demirchyan made it to the second round). Robert Kocharyan eventually comes out a winner and becomes president of Armenia.
- April 21–24** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Paris.
- April 28–29** **The Council of CIS Heads of State’s meeting is held in Moscow.**
- April 28** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan make a joint declaration in Moscow.
- May 12–17** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Stepanakert, Yerevan and Baku and meet with Arkadi Ghukasyan, Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliev.
- June 10** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with the OSCE Chair-in-Office in Warsaw.
- June 17** Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanyan makes a statement about possible “accession of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia”.
- June 18** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemns Vartan Oskanyan’s statement.**
- June 22** A statement by the US Department of State.
- June 25** The Foreign Ministry of France makes a statement.
- July 16** **The Russian president addressed a message to Robert Kocharyan.**
- August 9** **Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov meets his Armenian opposite number Vartan Oskanyan and suggests the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is determined assuming it is part of Azerbaijan’s territory.**
- August 29** **First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Boris Pastukhov visits Azerbaijan and meets with Heydar Aliev. The concept of “one state” (Nagorno-Karabakh remaining part of Azerbaijan) is discussed among other items on the agenda.**
- September 13–18** The Minsk Group co-chairmen visit Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert and meet with Heydar Aliev, Robert Kocharyan and Naira Melkumyan.
- October 7–8** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Warsaw.

- October 11 Presidential elections are held in Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliiev is re-elected to another term as president.
- October 21 The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Vienna.
- October 22 The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Vienna without the conflicting sides taking part.
- November 8–12 The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen visit Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert and hand to Heydar Aliiev, Robert Kocharyan and Arkadi Ghukasyan a document entitled “The principles of comprehensive settlement of the armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh” (which was based on the concept of “one state”).
- November 18–20** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen report to the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, about the progress in the Karabakh peace process.
- November 19** The Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a formal response to the proposals made by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen on November 9, 1998.
- November 24** Arkadi Ghukasyan meets with the OSCE Chair-in-Office in Yerevan.
- November 25** Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh issue their formal response to the November 9, 1998 proposals.
- November 30** The OSCE Minsk Group holds consultations in Oslo without the conflicting sides taking part.
- December 1–2** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Oslo.
- December 22** **Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Tofiq Zulfugarov visits Moscow and holds negotiations with the Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, in addition to meeting with the Russian Minsk Group co-chairman.**
- December 28** **Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vartan Oskanyan visits Moscow and holds negotiations with his Russian opposite number Igor Ivanov, in addition to meeting with the Russian Minsk Group co-chairman.**
- December 29** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Warsaw at the initiative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office. The possibility of meeting between Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliiev is discussed.
- 1999**
- January 1** Norway (in the person of its Foreign Minister Knut Vollebek) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Poland.

- January 18–19** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Vienna.
- February 16** The OSCE Minsk Group meets in Moscow without the conflicting sides taking part. The suggestion to resume direct negotiations within the Minsk Group structure receives support, and an appeal to establish a bilateral dialogue between the Armenian and the Azerbaijani leaders is voiced.
- March 3** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with OSCE Chair-in-Office, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebek in Oslo.
- March 23–24** **Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Leonid Drachevsky visits Baku and hands to Heydar Aliev a message from the Russian president who suggested holding a meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Moscow.**
- March 26–28** **Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Leonid Drachevsky visits Yerevan and discusses the said suggestion of the Russian president.**
- April 1** **In Moscow Heydar Aliev and Robert Kocharyan hold their first meeting in the capacity of presidents of their respective republics on the eve of the Council of CIS Heads of State meeting. By the end of the meeting they were joined by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. This was the beginning of a long series of meetings between the heads of the two countries.**
- April 26** The Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents meet in Washington following NATO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. The meeting began in the presence of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.
- May 6–7** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Paris where the text of the OSCE Permanent Council statement on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh is adopted.
- May 27** **The Foreign Minister of Armenia arrives on a working visit in Moscow and requests the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen to put on hold further proposals and joint trips to the region of the conflict.**
- July 16** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Geneva on their own initiative.
- August 22** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Geneva on their own initiative. Meetings between the defence ministers of the two countries with a view to adopt a package of measures to enhance the ceasefire regime and a series of consultations

- between the foreign ministers with a view to resume direct negotiations in the framework of OSCE Minsk Group are arranged.
- September 2–3** **Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov visits Baku and Yerevan.**
- September 7** In Oslo the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebek, as part of the preparation arrangements for his trip to the South Caucasus. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations.
- September 9** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the Baltic and Black Sea Forum in Yalta.
- September 10** The presidents of Azerbaijani and Armenian meet on their own initiative at the Baltic and Black Sea Forum in Yalta.
- September 15–18** OSCE Chair-in-Office Knut Vollebek travels to the South Caucasus republics where he meets with Robert Kocharyan, Arkadi Ghukasyan and Heydar Aliev. The Armenian side releases three prisoners of war, the Azerbaijani – four.
- September 29** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the session of the UN General Assembly in New York.
- October 7** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with OSCE Chair-in-Office Knut Vollebek in Oslo to discuss the results of his trip to the South Caucasus.
- October 8** The OSCE Minsk Group meets in Vienna without the conflicting sides taking part.
- October 11** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet on their own initiative in Yeraskh-Sadarak at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. In Vienna the OSCE Permanent Council holds an enlarged meeting with the participation of the Minsk Group co-chairmen in Vienna, dedicated to the conflict situations on the territory of the OSCE member states.
- October 27** A shoot-out in the Armenian parliament claims 8 lives, among them, Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan and speaker of parliament Karen Demirchyan.
- November 17** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet on the eve of the OSCE summit in Istanbul.
- November 18–19** OSCE summit in Istanbul. The final declaration welcomes the intensification of the dialogue between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, expressing hope that negotiations within the OSCE Minsk Group framework will be resumed.

**December 11–15** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku where they meet with the leaders of the conflicting sides.

**2000**

**January 1** Austria (in the person of its foreign minister Wolfgang Schäussel and later Benita Ferrero-Waldner) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Norway.

**January 24** **A meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State is held in Moscow. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the initiative of Russia. They are later joined by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.**

**January 28** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet on their own initiative in Davos.

**March 22** An assassination attempt against Arkadi Ghukasyan in Stepanakert.

**June 20** **A meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State is held in Moscow. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the initiative of Russia and are later joined by Vladimir Putin.**

**August 18** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet on their own initiative in Yalta.

**September 7** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet on their own initiative in New York.

**November 27–28** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Vienna.

**December 1** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet on their own initiative in Minsk.

**December** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to the region of the conflict.

**2001**

**January 1** Romania (in the person of its foreign minister Mircea Geoană) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Austria.

**January 26** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the initiative of France in Paris. By the end of the meeting they were joined by the French president Jacques Chirac.

**February** The three proposals made by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen handed to the conflicting sides in July and December 1997 and in November 1993 are made public. Yerevan follows Baku's suit in publishing all three drafts.

- February 27–28** The OSCE Chair-in-Office visits Armenia.
- March 1–2** The OSCE Chair-in-Office visits Azerbaijan.
- March 4–5** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the initiative of France in Paris. By the end of the meeting they were joined by the French president Jacques Chirac.
- April 3–7** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the initiative of the US in Key West, Florida. US Secretary of State Colin Powell also takes part in their meeting.
- April 9** The US president holds two meetings – one with the president of Armenia, the other one – with the president of Azerbaijan.
- May 18–21** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to the region of the conflict.
- May 31** The Council of CIS Heads of State meets in Minsk. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the initiative of Russia. Vladimir Putin also takes part in that meeting.
- June 22–24** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in La Vallette, Malta, with the involvement of guest experts.
- July 9–13** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to the region of the conflict. Russia was represented by its First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov.
- August 1–3** **An informal CIS summit is held in Sochi. Vladimir Putin meets with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. He also takes part in the meeting between the two presidents on August 1.**
- September** The Minsk Group co-chairmen present their report before the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.
- November** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to the region of the conflict.
- November 30** **The Council of CIS Heads of State meets in Moscow. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet, with Vladimir Putin attending part of that meeting.**
- December 3–4** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Budapest.
- 2002**
- January 1** Portugal (in the person of its foreign minister Jaime Gama and later António Martins da Cruz) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Romania.
- January 25–26** **The president of Azerbaijan arrives in Moscow on an official visit.**



- January 29 – February 6** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in New York and hand to the Azerbaijani president and the Armenian Foreign Minister proposals for resumption of the negotiations in the framework of the Karabakh peace process.
- March 7–11** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert (Russia was represented by Vyacheslav Trubnikov) and meet with Heydar Aliev, Robert Kocharyan and Arkadi Ghukasyan. On Heydar Aliev's insistence and with Robert Kocharyan's consent, but in spite of Arkadi Ghukasyan's protests, the Minsk Group co-chairmen helped to create the so-called "Prague Process" (which term denoted meetings between the special envoys of the two presidents – Azerbaijani Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Araz Azimov and his Armenian opposite number Tatoul Markaryan – once every 2-3 months to discuss a rather narrow agenda). This process was sometimes referred to as second-level talks.
- March 15** The OSCE Minsk Group meets in Vienna to discuss the Prague Process.
- April 8–11** Organisational issues are settled in Prague in the run-up to the launch of the Prague Process.
- May 8** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Paris.
- May 12–15** Deputy foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia hold the first meeting in the framework of the Prague Process. Vyacheslav Trubnikov attends the opening.
- June 18–19** The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the new OSCE Chair-in-Office, Portuguese Foreign Minister António Martins da Cruz, in Lisbon and hold internal consultations there.
- June 23–26** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Azerbaijani president, the Armenian Foreign Minister and Turkish Foreign Minister İsmail Cem in Istanbul.
- June 27–30** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Armenian president in Tallinn.
- July 26** The OSCE Minsk Group meets without the conflicting sides taking part.
- July 29–30** A second meeting of the personal representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending (Russia was represented by Vyacheslav Trubnikov).

- August 11** Arkadi Ghukasyan once again wins the "presidential election" in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- August 14** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet on their own initiative in Sadarak at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.
- September 25–29** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku. Russia is represented by Vyacheslav Trubnikov. It was suggested that the conflicting sides develop a "code of conduct" in the run-up to the presidential elections in both countries in 2003.
- October 6** The Council of CIS Heads of State meets in Chisinau. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen joining them later.
- October 15** A third meeting of the personal representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents.
- November 21–22** A NATO summit is held in Prague. In its framework the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan hold a meeting, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen joining them later.
- December 6–7** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Porto (Portugal).
- 2003**
- January 1** The Netherlands (in the person of its foreign minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer) take over the OSCE chairmanship from Portugal.
- January 13** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attend the inauguration ceremony of the new OSCE Chair-in-Office Jaap Scheffer in Vienna.
- January 16–17** Robert Kocharyan arrives in Moscow on an official visit and meets with Vladimir Putin. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold a meeting with the Armenian president.
- January 19–21** In Prague, on the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs premises, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations on the functioning of the Prague Process.
- January 22–25** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen take part in the meeting of the Bureau of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg whose agenda includes the issues with which the Karabakh peace process is attended. Separate consultations are held with the special envoys of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents, Araz Azimov and Tatoul Markaryan.

- January 27–29** An informal CIS summit is held in Kyiv; in its framework the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with Azerbaijani president Heydar Aliiev on January 28 at the initiative of the latter.
- February 19 – March 5** The first and the second rounds of the presidential elections are held in Armenia. Robert Kocharyan comes out as winner in the second round.
- February 20–22** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Warsaw with Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk attending to prepare for possible escalation of tensions in the region of the conflict.
- March 4–6** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Washington in the lead-up to their trip to the South Caucasus.
- April 14–15** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold internal consultations in Paris.
- May 6–7** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Paris in the lead-up to their trip to the conflict region. Vyacheslav Trubnikov takes part on behalf of Russia.
- May 29–30** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara.
- June 2–3** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Madrid.
- June 5–6** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations and meet with Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council Justus de Visser in Vienna.
- June 10–12** Consultations with special PACE Rapporteur on Nagorno-Karabakh Terri Davis are held in Hague.
- June 13–15** In Prague the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the resumption of negotiations in the framework of the Prague Process.
- July 8** The defence ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet at the border of the two countries to prevent further incidents along the contact line.
- July 23–24** In Brussels the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Heikki Talvitie.
- August 4** Ilham Aliiev is appointed prime minister of Azerbaijan.
- September** **Yuri Merzlyakov succeeded Nikolay Gribkov as OSCE Minsk Group co-chairman on behalf of Russia.**

- September 15–16** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold working consultations in Vienna and meet with Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council Justus de Visser and Head of the OSCE High-Level Planning Group Col. Block.
- September 30 – October 1** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with OSCE Chair-in-Office Jaap Scheffer in the lead-up to his trip to the region of the conflict.
- October 2–4** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- October 15** Ilham Aliev is elected president of Azerbaijan.
- November 6** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Moscow before leaving for the conflict zone.
- November 7–12** The Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku and Yerevan. Russia is represented by Vyacheslav Trubnikov.
- November 11–14** The Minsk Group co-chairmen report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna. A briefing is held for the OSCE Minsk Group members, as is a meeting with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Special Rapporteur on Nagorno-Karabakh Goran Lennmaker.
- December 1–2** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Maastricht.
- December 4–7** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku and Yerevan and meet with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- December 10–14** The United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is held in Geneva. In its framework the first, mainly introductory, meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Ilham Aliev and Robert Kocharyan, took place with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen joining them later.
- December 12** Heydar Aliev dies.
- 2004**
- January 1** Bulgaria (in the person of its foreign minister Solomon Passy) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from the Netherlands.
- January 15–16** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with the new OSCE Chair-in-Office Solomon Passy and the OSCE Secretary General Ambassador Ján Kubiš.
- January 21–23** Consultations are held on the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs premises in Ankara (Russia is represented by Yuri Merzlyakov and Alexander Chepurin).

- February 5**      **The Azerbaijani president visits Moscow and meets with Russian president Vladimir Putin.**
- February 11–15**      The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold internal consultations and consultations with the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris.
- February 19**      In Budapest an officer of the Armenian army participating in a three-month English language course (which was part of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme) is brutally murdered by a fellow Azerbaijani participant.
- February 25–29**      The Minsk Group co-chairmen take part in a seminar dedicated to Nagorno-Karabakh held at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.
- March 4–5**      The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Prague.
- March 7–9**      The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with OSCE Chair-in-Office Solomon Passy in Sofia.
- March 14–17**      The OSCE Chair-in-Office, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, travels to the South Caucasus.
- March 17–21**      An informal meeting between the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen and the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and a meeting with OSCE Chair-in-Office Solomon Passy are held in Bratislava.
- April 16**      The Armenian foreign minister meets with the newly appointed foreign minister of Azerbaijan in Prague, the meeting is attended by the Minsk Group co-chairmen.
- April 27–30**      The World Economic Forum meets in Warsaw. In its framework, a second meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan takes place on April 28, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending.
- May 12–13**      The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Strasbourg, the meeting is attended by the Minsk Group co-chairmen.
- May 14**      **The presidents of Russia and Armenia meet in Moscow.**
- May 14–15**      A briefing is organized in Vienna by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen for the Minsk Group members and the OSCE Chair-in-Office representative.
- June 21**      The foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia meet in Prague, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending the meeting.

- July 7-9** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Moscow in the lead-up to their trip to the region of the conflict (Russia was represented by Vyacheslav Trubnikov).
- July 11-17** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Yerevan, Baku and Stepanakert and meet with the presidents and the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Nagorno-Karabakh leaders.
- July 20-22** In Moscow Vyacheslav Trubnikov, Yuri Merzkyakov and Andrzej Kasprzyk discuss the variety of issues with which the Karabakh peace process is attended.
- August 29-30** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Prague, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending the meeting. The meeting agenda covers preparations for the meeting of the two countries' presidents in Astana.
- September 15-17** A CIS summit is held in Astana. In its framework a meeting between the president of Armenia and his Azerbaijani counterpart takes place. They are later joined by the president of Russia, meeting also with their respective foreign ministers and with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen.
- September 19-21** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Special Envoy of the OSCE Chair-in-Office Philip Dimitrov in the lead-up to his trip to the South Caucasus.
- October 19-22** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with OSCE Chair-in-Office Solomon Passy in Sofia.
- November 2-5** The Minsk Group co-chairmen report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.
- November 19** The foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia meet in Berlin, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending.
- November 23-29** In New York the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with the Azerbaijani foreign minister in connection with Azerbaijan's motion to place the question of Armenians settling in its occupied territories on the agenda of the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.
- December 6-7** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Sofia. The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in its framework, with this meeting being attended by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen.
- December 9** A NATO summit is held in Brussels (Nov 8-11). In its framework a meeting between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan takes place, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending.

**December 15–18** A briefing is organised in Vienna by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen for the Minsk Group members.

**2005**

**January 1** Slovenia (in the person of its foreign minister Dimitrij Rupel) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Bulgaria.

**January 12** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Prague, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen also attend that meeting.

**January 31–February 6** Under the Minsk Group co-chairmen's mandate the OSCE fact-finding mission visits 7 occupied districts of Azerbaijan, all adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh territory, to clarify the issue of the Armenian settlements in that area. The Minsk Group co-chairmen also visit Nagorno-Karabakh proper.

**March 1–2** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Azerbaijani foreign minister in Prague.

**April 15** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in London, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending the meeting.

**April 28** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet the Azerbaijani foreign minister in Frankfurt.

**May 14** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet the Armenian foreign minister in Krakow.

**May 15** The fourth meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan was held in the framework of the Council of Europe summit in Warsaw, with the foreign ministers of both countries and the Minsk Group co-chairmen attending. The meeting was opened by the foreign ministers of Russia and France and by the US Department of State representative.

**May 22–27** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku and meet with the president and the foreign minister of Azerbaijan.

**June 8** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Azerbaijani foreign minister in Vienna.

**June 17** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Paris.

**June 21** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in the framework of the International Conference on Iraq held in Brussels.

- July 12–15** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Yerevan and Baku and meet with the presidents and the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- August 24** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Moscow in the framework of preparations for the meeting between the presidents of the two countries to be held in Kazan. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen also take part in that meeting.
- August 27** The fifth meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in the framework of the CIS summit held in Kazan, with the foreign ministers of both countries and the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen taking part in that meeting.
- September 17–18** The American co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group holds meetings with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in New York.
- December 5–6** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Ljubljana.
- December 11–17** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku and Yerevan and meet with the presidents and foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- 2006**
- January 1** Belgium (in the person of its foreign minister Karel De Gucht) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Slovenia.
- January 17–19** The Minsk Group co-chairmen and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office hold consultations in London, followed by meetings with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- January 20–23** The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with OSCE Chair-in-Office Karel de Gucht in Brussels.
- January 31 – February 3** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku and Yerevan and meet with the presidents and foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- February 10–11** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Rambouillet, France, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen taking part in that meeting.
- March 7–8** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold working consultations in Washington.
- March 10–14** The Minsk Group co-chairmen make contact with the UN Machinery.



- March 20** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold working consultations in Istanbul.
- May 24–25** **A special mission of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries, which was organised at the initiative of Russia and consisted of deputy foreign ministers (Grigory Karasin, Daniel Fried, Pierre Morel) and the Minsk Group co-chairmen, travels to Baku and Yerevan.**
- May 26–30** A NATO summit is held in Paris. In its framework the French president meets with his Azerbaijani counterpart.
- June 2–9** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet on June 5 in the framework of the Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue. The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with OSCE Chair-in-Office Karel de Gucht in Brussels.
- June 14** The foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia meet in Paris, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen taking part in that meeting.
- June 22–23** The Minsk Group co-chairmen report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna (the text of that report was subsequently released). Another quarterly briefing is held by the co-chairmen for the OSCE Minsk Group member states.
- June 30** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold working consultations in Moscow.
- July 17** In St Petersburg the chairman of the Group of Eight makes a statement in which the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is mentioned. Namely, G8 expressed its support for the efforts of the Minsk Group co-chairmen (Russia, the US, France), emphasising the necessity of reaching consensus with regard to the principles of peaceful settlement as early as by 2006 and calling upon Azerbaijan and Armenia to demonstrate political will by reaching agreements and promoting peace, not war, among their people.
- August 4** Azerbaijan, for a third time since 2004, suggests placing the discussion of the issue of its occupied territories on the agenda of a UN General Assembly session in New York.
- September 7** The 60<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly adopts a non-confrontational resolution on the wide-scale fires in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. In early October the region of the conflict is visited by a joint UN/UNEP Environmental Assessment Mission which included representatives of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

- September 12** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Armenian minister of foreign affairs in Paris.
- September 13** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Azerbaijani minister of foreign affairs in London.
- September 24–26** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in New York.
- October 2–5** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku and Yerevan and meet with the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders.
- October 6** The Russian minister of foreign affairs holds separate meetings with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow.
- October 24** The foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia meet in Paris, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen taking part in that meeting.
- October 25** The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with OSCE Chair-in-Office Karel de Gucht in Brussels.
- November 16** The Minsk Group co-chairmen report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.
- November 20–24** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku and Yerevan and meet with the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders.
- December 2–6** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Brussels. In the framework of such, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- December 12–16** Meeting with incoming OSCE Chair-in-Office, Spanish foreign minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, and officers of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## 2007

- January 1** Spain (in the person of its foreign minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Belgium.
- January 23** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow. In the framework of such the Russian foreign minister meets with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts (with Russian State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Grigory Karasin attending) and with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen.
- January 24–26** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert and meet with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the foreign ministers of the two countries, and

- with the Nagorno-Karabakh leaders. They also hold internal working consultations.
- February 2** The Russian co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group meets with the Nagorno-Karabakh leader Arkadi Ghukasyan in Moscow.
- February 14** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold working consultations in Paris, in the framework of which they meet with Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanyan.
- March 13–14** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in Geneva. The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and also hold internal working consultations.
- March 29–30** The Minsk Group co-chairmen hold another briefing for the OSCE Minsk Group members in Vienna.
- April 19** The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in the framework of the meeting of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation's Council of Ministers meeting held in Belgrade.
- May 10** Meeting with OSCE Chair-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, in Madrid in the lead-up to his trip to the South Caucasus.
- May 10–11** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold separate meetings with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Strasbourg.
- May 22–26** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Yerevan and Baku and meet with the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders.
- June 5–7** **The Russian Minsk Group co-chairman travels to Baku and meets with the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders.**
- June 7–8** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Yerevan and meet with the Armenian leaders.
- June 9** The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet in St Petersburg.
- June 12** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold working consultations in Moscow.
- July 10** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Armenian foreign minister in Paris.
- July 13** The Minsk Group co-chairmen hold a briefing for the OSCE Minsk Group members and meet with the OSCE Chair-in-Office and with the OSCE High-Level Planning Group.

- July 31–August 1** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Moscow and meet with the Russian Foreign Minister's deputies Grigory Karasin and Alexander Glushko.
- September 3** The Minsk Group co-chairmen hold separate meetings with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Brussels.
- September 15–19** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku and meet with the Armenian and Azerbaijani political leaders and the new Nagorno-Karabakh president Bako Saakyan.
- October 4** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Armenian foreign minister in New York.
- October 5** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried in Washington.
- October 17** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Paris.
- October 22** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with J. Arnaud, the Political Director of the Foreign Ministry of France.
- October 24–27** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Yerevan and Baku and meet with the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders.
- November 8** The Minsk Group co-chairmen report to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.
- November 13–16** The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, and hold working consultations in Madrid.
- November 16–19** The Minsk Group co-chairmen hold separate meetings with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and working consultations in Paris.
- November 29–30** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Madrid. In its framework the foreign ministers of Russia, France and the US Assistant Secretary of State (Sergei Lavrov, Bernard Kouchner, and William J. Burns) hand to the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan the basic principles of the peaceful settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- December 10–13** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the incoming OSCE Chair-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Illka Kanerva, in Helsinki and hold consultations on the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs premises. They also hold working consultations there.

**2008**

- January 1** Finland (in the person of its foreign minister Illka Kanerva, and later Alexander Stubb) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Spain.
- January 13–19** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku, Yerevan, Stepanakert and again to Baku to identify the attitude and response of the conflicting sides to the basic principles of peaceful settlement received by them in Madrid.
- February 8** **The Russian co-chairman of the Minsk Group and Director of the Fourth CIS States Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry Andrey Kelin meet with the leaders of the International Crisis Group.**
- February 12** **The Russian co-chairman of the Minsk Group and Director of the Fourth CIS States Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry Andrey Kelin meet with EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby.**
- February 19** Serzh Sargsyan wins the first round of presidential elections in Armenia.
- February 20 Azerbaijan circulates the draft resolution title “The Situation in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan” among the UN General Assembly members.
- March 1** An outbreak of violence on Yerevan streets results in casualties.
- March 3–4** A major incident occurs on the contact line, resulting in several dead on the Azerbaijani side.
- March 4–6** In Moscow, Paris and Washington respective OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen prepare their statement in connection with the said incident.
- March 5** **The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement in connection with the clashes on the contact line.**
- March 7** The Minsk Group co-chairmen make a statement in that connection.  
**The Director of the Fourth CIS States Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry makes a statement in that connection.**
- March 11–14** The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Armenian Foreign Minister in Vienna. They also hold working consultations and a briefing for the Minsk Group members.
- March 14–16** The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister in Paris and hold internal working consultations.

- April 1–4** In Bucharest the Minsk Group co-chairmen hold separate meetings with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as with the foreign ministers of the two countries, and their own working consultations.
- April 14–18** The OSCE Minsk Group holds an extraordinary meeting in Vienna. The Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations with the OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambeau.
- May 4–6** In Paris and Strasbourg the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the Azerbaijani foreign minister and the new Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandyan. They also hold working consultations.
- June 5** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen hold consultations in Moscow, in the run-up to the meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in St Petersburg. A Minsk Group co-chairmen's address to them is prepared.
- June 6–8** An informal CIS summit is held in St Petersburg. The first one-on-one meeting between the Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev and his Armenian opposite number Serzh Sargsyan, and the meeting between them with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending. The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and hold consultations.
- June 9–10** The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, and with Special Envoy of the OSCE Chair-in-Office for the South Caucasus Heikki Talvitie in Helsinki.
- June 26–29** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert and meet with the presidents and the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as with the leader of Nagorno-Karabakh and with its "foreign minister" Georgy Petrosyan.
- June 30–July 3** The OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, a briefing for the OSCE Minsk Group members and the working consultations of the Minsk Group co-chairmen are held in Vienna.
- July 31–August 1** The foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia meet in Moscow, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen attending. First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Andrei Denisov holds talks with both ministers, with the Minsk Group co-chairmen taking part. The Minsk Group co-chairmen hold working consultations.

- September 24–27** Consultations of their representatives of the Minsk Group member states, talks between the Minsk Group co-chairmen and the Armenian president and meetings with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia are held in New York, as are working consultations of the Minsk Group co-chairmen.
- October 31 – November 1** The meeting of the foreign ministers of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia and the consultations of the Minsk Group co-chairmen are held in Moscow in the run-up to the meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia. Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin and the Minsk Group co-chairmen hold talks with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- November 2** **The Moscow Declaration on Nagorno-Karabakh is signed by the presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia at the Meyendorff Castle in Moscow region.**
- November 4–8** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen present their annual report before the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna and hold a briefing for the OSCE Minsk Group members and consultations with the OSCE Chair-in-Office.
- November 12–18** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert and meet with the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the foreign ministers of the two countries, and the Nagorno-Karabakh leader.
- December 2–5** The OSCE Ministerial Council meets in Helsinki. In its framework the foreign ministers of the co-chairing members (Sergei Lavrov, Bernard Kouchner), as well as US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried, meet with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia and make a joint statement concerning the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh on the basis of the Moscow Declaration. The Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, who also hold consultations with each other. The Minsk Group co-chairmen hold working consultations and meetings with the incoming OSCE Chair-in-Office, Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, and with Special Envoy of the OSCE Chair-in-Office for the South Caucasus Heikki Talvitie.

**2009**

- January 1** Greece (in the person of its foreign minister Dora Bakoyannis) takes over the OSCE chairmanship from Finland.

- January 19–22** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku and Yerevan and meet with the presidents and the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- January 27–31** In Zurich and Geneva the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia hold consultations with the Minsk Group co-chairmen taking part, the latter also hold internal consultations.
- January 28** The third meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan takes place in Zurich, with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen joining them for the beginning and the end of the meeting.
- February 27 –  
March 4** The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen travel to Baku, Yerevan, Stepanakert and again to Baku and meet with the presidents and the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh leader and civil society representatives.
- March 12** A briefing is held for the OSCE Minsk Group representatives in Vienna.
- March 22–25** In Vienna the Minsk Group co-chairmen meet with the civil society representatives from Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armenian-Azerbaijani Public Peace Forum initiated by UK-based charity non-governmental organisation *International Alert*.

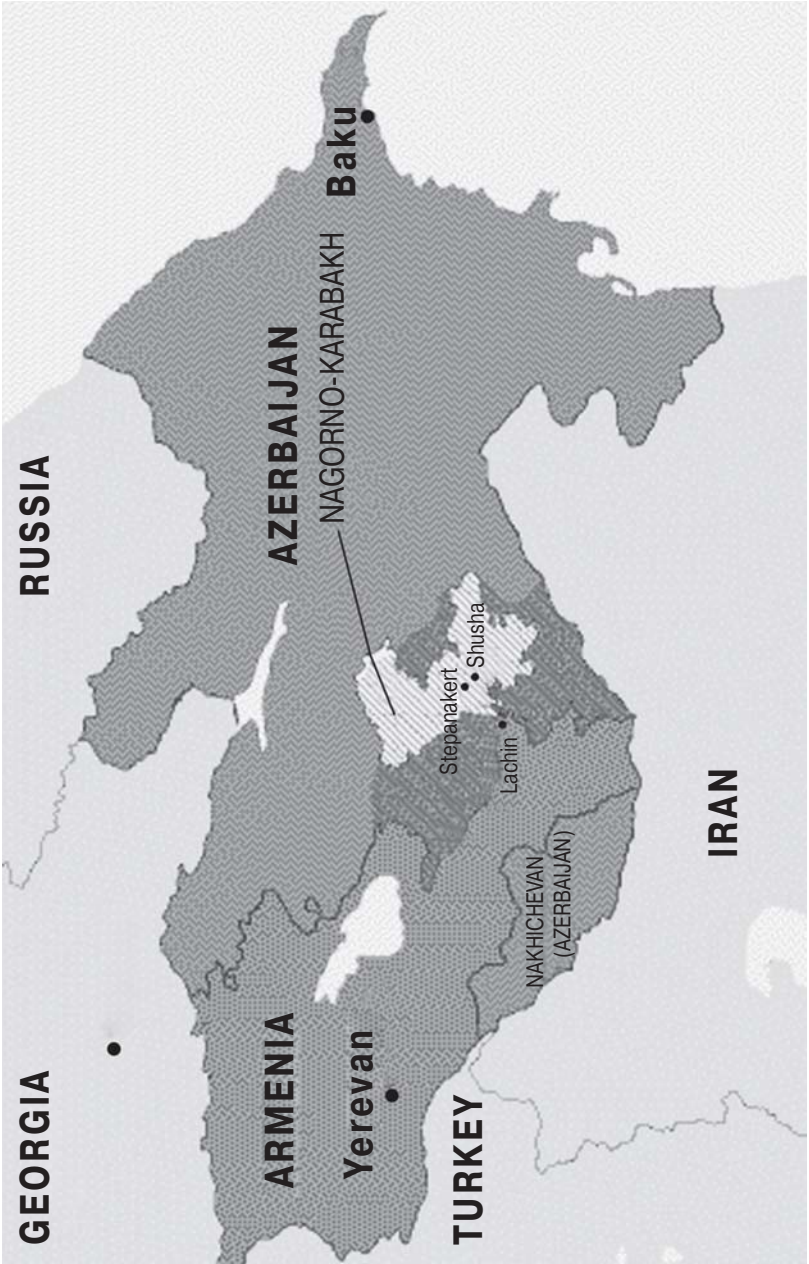
By hypocritically kicking up a fuss around the UN Security Council resolutions after effectively wrecking on its part, Baku is vainly seeking to bury in oblivion the documents on the basis of which the armistice in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was in actual reality achieved, that is to say, primarily the statement by the Council of CIS Heads of State dated April 15, 1994. The reason for this is obvious. This statement makes the transition to mitigation of the aftermath of the conflict (including the withdrawal of the troops and liberation of the occupied territories) directly dependent on the effective confirmation of the termination of hostilities. This statement is naturally not a legal but rather a political document; still, it was adopted at the highest level, with the personal participation of the Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents (it is to be remembered that the conflicting sides had no vote in the UN Security Council). This statement was furthermore reaffirmed by the respective heads of the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh legislative powers by way of signing the Bishkek Protocol, whereas the signing of an open-ended ceasefire agreement, for



which this statement was a direct basis, was already a legally binding document; that in addition to its tremendous political significance.

The plan to proceed to mitigating the aftermath of the conflict only once resumption of military operations is safely excluded, to which Heydar Aliev committed himself in that statement, goes absolutely against the grain with his son and successor Ilham Aliev. He seeks, by fair means or foul, to reverse these quence of the achieved arrangements: first comes the liberation of territories, and only then, and on that condition, exclusion of military operations might be considered. This liberal manipulation with the structure of agreements reached, in defiance of the essence of the statement by the Council of CIS Heads of State and the UN Security Council resolutions – anything for the sake of retaining the possibility of one day resuming the military gamble.

Still Baku keeps remarkably quiet when it comes to the fact that none of the 4 resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council – not even indirectly, with not a single word and no single clause – provide for even a remotest possibility of resuming military operations. How on earth do they reconcile their glorification and praises of these resolutions with simultaneous preparations to act in stark contradiction with their provisions? False propaganda inevitably conflicts healthy logic.





November 2, 2008. President of Azerbaijan Ilham G. Aliyev, President of Armenia Serge A. Sargsian and President of Russia Dmitry A. Medvedev signing the Moscow Declaration. It was the most important landmark in course of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement since the armistice took effect on May 12, 1994. Both landmarks of the peace process came as a result of the Russia's mediation efforts.



President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliev and President of Armenia Robert Kocharian had held more than twenty face-to-face meetings in search of a solution to extremely complicated problems.  
(Photo: France-Press)



**Anatolii Leonidovich Adamishin**  
First deputy minister for foreign affairs  
of the Russian Federation. (October  
1992 – September 1990)



**Boris Nikolaevich Pastukhov**  
Deputy minister, First deputy minister for  
foreign affairs of the Russian Federation.  
(February 1992 – September 1998)



**Valentin Vadimovich Lozinsky**  
Co-chairman of the Minsk conference.  
(January 1995 – June 2000)



**Yuriy Yukalov**  
Co-chairman of the Minsk Group.  
(July 1995 – July 1999)



**Vyacheslav Ivanovich Trubnikov**  
First deputy minister for foreign affairs of the Russian Federation (June 2000 – July 2004), Co-chairman of OSCE Minsk conference.



**Grigori Borisovich Karasin**  
State-secretary – deputy minister for foreign affairs of the Russian Federation. (June 2005 – in office)



**Nikolai Ivanovich Gribkov**  
Co-chairman of OSCE Minsk Group. (July 1999 – August 2003)



**Yuri Nikolaevich Merzliakov**  
Co-chairman of OSCE Minsk Group. (September 2003 – in office)



Delegation of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR during the flight to Mexico (April 1982). On the plane together with the delegation members and its head – the Azerbaijani leader Heydar Aliev.



H. Lopez Portillo, the President of Mexico, meeting with the Soviet parliamentary delegation under the leadership of Heydar A. Aliev. (1982, April)



Yerevan, Zvartnots Airport, March 1, 1994. Arrival of Deputy minister of defence of the Russian Federation G.G. Kondratiev and plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian president V.N. Kazimirov (to the left and in the centre). To the right – welcomees: minister of defence, now the President of Armenia Serge Sargsian and the ambassador-at-large David Shakhnazarian.



Bonn, March 8, 1995. Participants in the round-table discussion on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. On first after the armistice International Women's Day together with Azerbaijani Arzu Abdullaeva and Armenian Eugenia Nersesyanz, both representing Helsinki Initiative – 92.



Russian and Finnish co-chairmen of the Minsk conference and the Minsk group at the local parliament – langting – building in Aland islands (Finland). From right to left – Rene Nyberg, Valentin Lozinski, Heikki Talvitie, Vladimir Kazimirov.



Negotiations between the three conflicting sides were conducted by Co-chairmen of OSCE Minsk Group Vladimir Kazimirov and Rene Nyberg.





Mediation first of all means work with the parties and with the text to find balance of their legitimite interests.



During Karabakh negotiations reaching mutual agreement on every single word was already a success!



A Party at the Russian embassy in Finland. Together with the Russian ambassador Yury Deryabin (to the right) and deputy minister for foreign affairs of Azerbaijan Tofic Zulfugarov (in the centre).



The head of Nagorno-Karabakh delegation Arkady Gukasian (now the ambassador-at-large of Armenia) continue working even on the sidelines. To his left – Ashot Gulian (he is now the head of the parliamentary structure of Nagorno Karabakh).



New-York, 1995, October. With Heydar Aliiev at the 50th anniversary session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.



Russian-Finnish mediation team in New York during the days of the UN 50th anniversary. From right to left : Rene Nyberg, Valentin Lozinsky, Terhi Hakala and the author of this book.



In front of the Russian ministry for foreign affairs premises. After the consultations of Russian deputy minister and OSCE MG co-chairmen with both Armenian delegations.



With Turkish colleagues in Ankara.



Yerevan, July 1996. Yerevan visiting President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosian on the eve of departure for Latin America. In the centre – my successor in Karabakh affairs Ambassador Yuri Yukalov.



This picture, which was taken at Armenian restaurant *The Silver Age* in Moscow was given to the author of this book by Heydar Aliev with a direct reproach. To the right – Arkady Gukasian, to the left – Zorii Balaian. The picture was taken by agents sitting behind us and pretending to be taking photos of one another.



Shusha – Lachin road near Lisogor. Examination of a literally heaven-sent car accident. The slippery road had thrown ‘Volga’, in which the mediators were travelling into a ditch but not into a bottomless pit.



One of the many villages in Karabakh mountains which need peace (George Gazarian photo).



**Vladimir Nikolaevich KAZIMIROV** (1929) is an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the Foreign Ministry Council of War and Labour Veterans, Deputy Chairman of the Association of Russian Diplomats.

Graduated from the Institute for International Relations (MGIMO) in Moscow in 1953 V. Kazimirov began his diplomatic career in Hungary and Brazil. He was the first ambassador to present his Letters of Credence to Costa Rica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guatemala. He was an ambassador to Venezuela, Angola, again to Costa Rica, ambassador at large and headed some units of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Vladimir Kazimirov was heading Russia's intermediary mission to Nagorno-Karabakh in 1992–1996, and was Russian presidential plenipotentiary representative for Nagorno-Karabakh, participant and co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group. He brokered the ceasefire agreement in Nagorno-Karabakh in May, 1994.