

A WHITE PAPER

The Karabakh War of 2020 and Armenia's Future Foreign and Security Policies

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Abbreviations

AF	Armed Forces (of Armenia)
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization (Russian sponsored mutual defense pact)
EU	European Union
GS	(Armed Forces) General Staff
LoC	Line(s) of Contact
NKAO	Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (Soviet era region)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SC	South Caucasus
SOE	State operated enterprises
UN	United Nations

As for individuals or companies, geopolitics is reflected in terms of relative power but also of the capacity of States to take advantage of opportunities in crisis situations: "Machiavellian talents are essential, as is emotional intelligence which determines the capacity to awareness and self-control, and contextual intelligence, which makes it possible to understand a changing environment, to exploit its tendencies and to use the other talents at our disposal accordingly."

Joseph Nye,
Political scientist

Preface

The defeat of the Armenian armed forces in the 2020 Karabakh¹ War, in the trivial sense, was an apocalypse, given the scope and depth of the damage inflicted on so many aspects of statehood and society in Armenia and Karabakh, as well as in the Diaspora. We must admit that, for some, because of the damage to Armenia's sovereignty, speaking of a foreign policy for Armenia is already superfluous.

Another way of looking at an apocalypse is to remember its original meaning: a revelation. What has the 2020 defeat revealed? A number of misconceptions, failures, problems, and dysfunctions within Armenian statehood and peoplehood. This white paper is an attempt to diagnose those ills and to offer possible treatments. As such, it may provide an opportunity to rectify past errors and do things differently in the future, hopefully a better one.

The defeat has engendered a crisis of sovereignty, real and psychological. Every time Armenians face an existential crisis, the eternal dilemma raises its head: The need for saving ourselves vs. achieving sovereignty. Is it possible to break the vicious cycle? Are those the only choices, or are those choices as stark as they appear? Can well thought out foreign and security policies become instruments to break that vicious cycle?

Those are the questions, concerns, and hope shared by the initiators and collaborators, articulated in this report.

Producing a white paper of the kind attempted here, after a national disaster, is a challenging exercise in so far as it calls for a reset. The difficulty is in keeping what is essential to Armenia that can be used to build on; and leaving what may be felt as important (on one level or another) but that is either unfeasible or might create major hardships to what is most essential. May we also point out that the fast-changing circumstances in Armenia may make elements of this paper, between its final editing and release, irrelevant or worse.

The three authors listed below take full responsibility for the contents of this paper and its recommendations. Contributors, listed or otherwise, bear no responsibility for any of its contents.

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¹ For the sake brevity, the term "Karabakh" will frequently be used in this paper for Nagorno-Karabakh or Karabakh.

Executive Summary

This paper is an independent project initiated and authored by three concerned Armenians. The project attempts to answer three questions regarding the aftermath of the 2020 Karabakh war: **How did Armenia reach this very low and dangerous point in its history? What can, and should, be done? On what basis should the government and authorities in general make these determinations?**

By the time this report is released, the authors hope the citizens of Armenia will have chosen new and legitimate leaders capable of conceiving, negotiating, and implementing the smartest possible solutions. The white paper intends to provide those leaders with a set of analyses as well as recommendations drawn from those analyses.

The initiators of the report benefited from the contributions of a wide variety of experts and intellectuals throughout the Armenian world. Those contributors answered a detailed questionnaire or agreed to be interviewed personally; alternatively, they had previously published pertinent subject matter that the authors drew from. The authors of this paper believe that the contributors' answers and opinions cover the entire spectrum of current Armenian thinking. They are synthesized in the first part of the white paper. The second part presents the authors' observations and thoughts on the regional and international contexts in which Armenia is situated. It does so by asking questions and answering them without a predetermined outcome, and by looking at short- and long-term changes and patterns in the perception of interests by relevant states. In the third part of this report, the authors present their own recommendations.

Regardless of their political inclinations and preferences, contributors to the project offered realistic observations on the immediate postwar situation. That realism is premised on a hard look at what they considered the long-term mistakes of leadership in regard to the Karabakh conflict that led to the new war and subsequent defeat. According to these experts, the new context the country finds itself in encourages the questioning of the predominant ideologies, the ways of dealing with the Karabakh conflict, and the conduct of foreign and security policies. Respondents identified the need to develop a comprehensive approach to resolve the multidimensional crisis the country is undergoing—at social, psychological, health, political, and security levels alike.

Additionally, contributors indicated a number of factors that must be taken into consideration when designing future foreign and security policies: (a) the increased military and diplomatic role of Russia; (b) the continuing aggressive policies of Azerbaijan; (c) the wider ambitions of Turkey; (d) the constrained neutrality of Iran and Georgia; (e) the essentially indifferent position of Western nations; and (f) the fluidity and uncertain future of international relations, especially those between major and expanding regional powers.

Structural Military Factors

This paper begins by analyzing the causes of the 2020 defeat, attempting to distinguish conjuncture-related factors from structural shortcomings.

The April 2016 four-day war was a turning point for revealing those structural inadequacies. Among them, the following factors are of particular significance because they were so relevant to the outcome of the 2020 war:

1. The mobilization of the armed forces, in general, and especially of the reserves
2. Shortcomings in, and incomplete enforcement of, approved doctrinal reforms
3. Poor intelligence services and information
4. Lack of honest communication with the public on the real situation within the Armed Forces (AF) revealed after 2016, and their capabilities in relation to the capabilities of the adversary
5. Strategic misconceptions in the long-term military buildup
6. Military education

Political Factors and the Responsibilities of Governments

This white paper discusses problems underlying Armenian (Armenia and Artsakh) policies, including cultural biases that prevented elites and governments from adopting alternative policies.

The paper asks the authorities to recognize the full extent of the losses suffered by Armenia during and after—and as a consequence of—the November 2020 defeat. This disaster must be seen as a call to re-examine dominant approaches and assumptions.

The paper presents an inventory of Armenia's

- Assets and liabilities when formulating foreign and security policies
- Standards by which it decides its priorities
- Foreign and security goals, including sovereignty, independence, and security through reformed armed forces, the building of alliances, and the decrease of security threats (if not their neutralization)

In doing so, this paper touches on the position of various important players (Russia, Turkey, Iran, NATO, the European Union (EU)) the policies and interests of which matter most with regard to Armenia's options.

Geopolitical Context: Russia-Turkey-NATO-EU

This paper discusses more specific issues in relation to major regional and world players.

A. Russia

Russia is now in control of what remains of Armenian Artsakh/Karabakh, and thus it is bringing Armenia more firmly within its orbit. Russia, conceiving itself as a besieged citadel, senses a need to defend itself against the continual advance of the West.

But the temptation to adopt the European model has manifested itself at times during the past 30 years in former Soviet Republics, including Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, and the South Caucasus (SC) republics.

On the one hand, Armenia's reliance on Russia for security and defense purposes is not essentially challenged at the international level. On the other hand, Russia has been most concerned over the Azerbaijani threat to leave the Russian orbit. Rich in hydrocarbon resources, Azerbaijan has worked closely with Western countries and multinational corporations, diversifying its investments abroad; in so doing, it has become, in the eyes of Turkey, the missing link between Asia and Europe. Russia's concerns with Azerbaijani policies and Turkish projections have created the complex situation in which Armenia finds itself, wherein Russia and Turkey work in tandem even as each pursues its separate interests, making them rivals in the region.

B. Turkey

Even before the first Karabakh war ended in 1994, Azerbaijan and Turkey had blockaded Armenia. Turkey made the opening of its border with Armenia and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Yerevan conditional on Armenia's settling of the conflict with Azerbaijan. Attempts to overcome that barrier were unsuccessful. Since the autocratic turn taken by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has engaged in a series of foreign military adventures, eventually making a major contribution to Azerbaijan's victory over Armenia in the 2020 Karabakh war. After Baku's victory, Ankara proposed to normalize relations with Yerevan, but Armenia is not yet ready for such a move because it has major decisions to make in this respect that are constrained by dominant strategic interests and the realities on the ground. The current cooperation between Russia and Turkey might not last long, but it is a factor that weighs heavily in the current context of Armenia's decision-making.

C. NATO/EU–Russia

Russia's current mediating role remains central to solving Armenian existential issues. The Turkish-Azerbaijani alliance has the nonexplicit support of the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as the complacency of NATO and the EU, producing a highly unbalanced

situation detrimental for the Armenians. Could France, in coordination with other assumed European allies, develop a synergy that could help restore a balance in Armenia's relations with Russia? There are yet some serious doubts on that count because that option can only be possible within the framework of a more comprehensive understanding between the West and Russia to resolve the various "frozen conflicts" in their "near abroads." Such an understanding supposes a new European and Eurasian architecture of security.

Recommendations to Address Government's Immediate Concerns

- Redefine its defense concept and the purpose of its armed forces. It would be consistent to assume that the rebuilding of the army would follow.
- Review its security strategy, including the search for new alliances.
- Commission, and pay serious attention to, briefs on real and perceived threats from Azerbaijan and Turkey, free from ideological biases.
- Understand, properly assess, and reduce threats through proper policies and diplomatic initiatives; doing so is as integral to a security system as adequate military defenses and alliances.
- Open a direct, probably discrete, line of communication, preferably in a discreet manner, aimed at understanding and assessing Azerbaijani and Turkish policies.
- Reimagine the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, its diplomacy, and the preparation of diplomats.
- Invite the best possible minds in Armenia and in the Diaspora to participate in all of the above inquiries and studies, including in the fields of cyber and information security.

A proper policy includes not only what should be done but also what should not be done, such as the following:

- Use reflexive and reactive policies and rhetoric in diplomatic discourse—because diplomacy is not lobbying, either by standards or by goals
- Confuse the agenda of the nation (all Armenians around the world) with that of the state
- Read too much into pro-Armenian (whether related to Genocide recognition and Karabakh) statements
- Assume that what is bad for Azerbaijan and Turkey is necessarily good for Armenia and Karabakh, or that what is good for Azerbaijan and Turkey is necessarily bad for Armenia and Karabakh

Long-term foreign policy development

Regarding Karabakh

The trajectories of Karabakh and Armenia have been diverging since the war. Nevertheless, despite any consequent differences between the two Armenian republics and their foreign policies, both should pursue the same objectives:

- To make it possible for the Armenian population to remain on, or return to, their ancestral lands in Karabakh
- The satisfaction of the existential needs of the individuals and communities concerned, safety being paramount

The leadership and most probably the people of Karabakh seem to have tied their future to the presence of the Russian peacekeepers and to Russia. That path remains uncharted, and its future uncertain as a consequence of various factors. The authors do not see the path to independence a likely one after this war, just as it was unlikely before the war.

Meanwhile, therefore, the aim of diplomacy could be to

- Maximize Armenia's input in the determination of the future of Karabakh.
- Secure as many rights for the population of Karabakh as possible within a territorially defined and recognized Armenian entity. That process should include securing the right of Karabakh to participate in the final determination of its future rather than formulating an a priori "ideal" solution as the ultimate and nonnegotiable goal.
- Maximize the security of the population of Karabakh, in part by minimizing the threats to its collective wellbeing through direct discussions and diplomacy.
- The new Armenian government should, therefore, switch to a dual-track approach: (a) opening direct channels of communication with Baku and Ankara, in addition to Moscow, facilitating the opening of economic links within the region and engaging in other issues of mutual interest; and (b) pursuing that policy in the international arena, including through the OSCE Minsk Group.

Nonetheless, the key to the long-term resolution of the conflict may depend on factors such as the formulation and implementation of an effective Armenian foreign policy; a new European and Eurasian security architecture; and the competing/complementary interests of Russia and Turkey in other regional conflicts. It will require a careful balancing act, possibly the coopting of these goals by Russia and other mediators, and their acceptance by the local population.

Regarding Armenia

- It is necessary that Armenia establish and use direct channels for bilateral discussions with all states with a stake in its interests, with a particular emphasis on Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Iran, and Russia, and individual CSTO states separately.
- Armenia should work with the Azerbaijani and Turkish governments to move from a rhetoric of humiliation and subordination toward one of respectful coexistence. In practice, those governments must emphasize the tasks at hand over institutionalized Armenophobia.
- The new Armenian government should make clear to its citizens that the opening of communication lines and roads is an instrument for establishing neighborly relations in the long term, and for forging a path toward regional, even if at first small-scale, cooperation. Proactive diplomacy in this respect can be as effective in dealing with actual threats as the improvement in Armenia's defenses. Armenia also has an opportunity, however, to make war a more costly option in the future for all stakeholders in the region, as well as to diminish real and perceived threats to its security and territorial integrity. (Appendices C and E offer recommendations in both areas.)

The paper also discusses the need to improve the preparation and performance of Armenia's diplomats and relations with the Diaspora, and makes recommendation in both respects.

Conclusions

Any modification of the November 10 Statement should be pursued through negotiations with the other two signatories of that Statement, including direct negotiations with Azerbaijan. Experienced elder statesmen should be involved in those negotiations.

In the coming months, Armenia has critical decisions to make regarding what kind of future it wishes to build, and on what basis, by including young minds with the foresight and imagination to visualize the Armenia of the future, to rebuild its economy, social cohesion, state institutions, educational and health systems, plus a modern defense system.

In defining its new foreign and security policies, Armenia should also understand that it is facing altered regional and international landscapes.

Origin and Methodology of the White Paper

The idea of this paper originated with Robert Aydabirian. Taline Papazian and Jirair Libaridian joined Aydabirian, and the three developed the methodology for the project and brought it to completion.

The initiators first developed a questionnaire on the issues they thought should be raised and examined. (See Annex 1.) The questionnaire was then forwarded to another group of five experts for their critique and suggestions. The revised questionnaire was sent to some 70 potential respondents, of various professions and disciplines, in Armenia, Karabakh, and the Diaspora. The list of potential respondents—limited to colleagues of Armenian origin—was compiled with the assistance of the same group of five experts. The criteria for the selection were professionalism, record of participation in public discourse, projection of a sense of intellectual integrity, and genuine concern regarding issues to be dealt with in the projected report. The initiators believe the list included individuals who represent the full political spectrum of analysts. (See Annex 2.) Forty-two potential contributors responded to the questionnaire.

In addition, the initiators conducted personal interviews with respondents who for whatever reason could not fill out the questionnaires. Finally, throughout the period of gathering responses, lasting from December 2020 to the drafting of the report, the three initiators reviewed the positions of a significant number of experts, analysts, and political leaders articulated in opinion articles and interviews, and even in the published work of a deceased diplomat.

The views of respondents and interviewees, along with views expressed in the published works of other experts, are synthesized in Part I of this white paper. Part II consists of the analyses, views, and conclusions of the initiators/authors.

Although taking full responsibility for the final report, the authors sought to bring the text as close as possible to a collective effort despite the present circumstances of a global pandemic. A first draft of the full report was circulated among the contributors for their comments and suggestions. Respondents/collaborators were offered the opportunity to add their name to this white paper as contributors after reading the pre-final draft.

May we point out as the initiators/authors of this paper that we do not claim to have any special standing. Any other group might have undertaken, or may still undertake, a similar project. In fact, many individuals and groups have published individual and collective studies on various aspects of this paper. Nevertheless, we believe that our transparent methodology, somber approach, and genuine concern for the problems facing Armenia and Karabakh will inspire confidence in the end product among the leaders of the state and political groups, as well as among experts, opinion makers, and the general public, and that they will accordingly consider the contents of this report seriously.

Introduction

Our paper will attempt to address the following questions: How can one explain the September 2020 war? What is the impact of the defeat? What should be the foreign policy priorities of Armenia following its defeat, especially regarding the Karabakh conflict? And what adjustments must Armenia and Karabakh make in their approach to foreign policy?

The disastrous end to the September-November 2020 war has radically changed the situation on the ground in Karabakh; the position of Azerbaijan; and the roles of Russia, Turkey, the OSCE Minsk Group, the EU, and the United States. The war has further inhibited the ability of the leadership of Karabakh to determine its future and narrowed options for Karabakh's future status, while Armenia itself has lost some of its sovereignty and is in danger of losing more.

Furthermore, the trauma caused by this defeat has produced a barrage of charges and countercharges, valid and frivolous alike, regarding responsibility for the loss. It has also inspired self-exculpatory and self-serving revelations that tend to further cloud an already-murky situation. The media is inundated with details real and insignificant, along with fake and credible news items that border on the sensational. The result is that debate is generally unfocused. The people of Armenia and Karabakh, including many of their leaders, seem disoriented because the defeat has shattered too many of the assumptions that underlay the dominant thinking and frameworks of decision makers.

It is unreasonable, possibly also dangerous, to try to impose a cure before knowing the cause of the malady. Many attempts have been made, some useful and thought-provoking, others not so and even harmful. It is unhealthy to try to minimize what happened and say "let's move on" simply because we don't want to feel the weight of the calamity or to assume responsibility. It is equally dangerous to put all the blame on one person and his party when the problems are more complex than a single man or party, and when the disaster has been brewing for more than two decades.

There is great need, in the authors' opinion, for a document that

1. Offers a credible explanation about how we arrived at this point
2. Presents a clear and concise description of the state of current thinking on the Karabakh conflict, including proposals on how we proceed henceforth
3. Offers a glimpse of potential developments and likely outcomes
4. Makes recommendations for future policy

Writing such a report while events continue to unfold, attitudes continue to be shaped, and policies continue to be articulated is neither easy nor simple. Nonetheless, it is important that such studies be conducted in order to provide frameworks within which discussion, debate, and discourse might acquire some logic and consistency. We thought that nine months after the end of the 2020 war was a reasonable inflection point at which insights and perspective might

have sufficiently developed. Inevitably, therefore, this paper can be considered no more than a temporary attempt to account for current trends of thought, and to identify the spectrum of possibilities and paths.

We, the three initiators of this project, are Armenian professionals who have been involved in and committed to the development of Armenia and Karabakh in a variety of ways over the past few decades. We have been engaged in public discourse on many issues. Additionally, we are concerned with and wish to contribute to the resolution of questions still undecided regarding Karabakh and the future direction of Armenia's foreign and security policies.

We recognize the close relationship between domestic and foreign agendas. Obviously, there is a need for similar studies regarding the impact of the war on Armenian society and state institutions. This paper will limit its scope to foreign policy and security issues in light of recent events.

Finally, the main concern of this paper is to offer an analytical perspective. That means the authors are not focusing on disputes, debates, and polemics that are based on political or electoral concerns and which by nature focus on public opinion and popular trends. The authors are aware that many of the observations and subsequent recommendations and conclusions articulated here are not necessarily shared by those who have contributed to this paper or by other analysts and commentators. All the authors can claim is that this is the best they have to offer, and that it is the result of the most stringent efforts to look at issues, and the contexts in which they are raised, in a detached and realistic manner.

PART I. Synopsis of Questionnaire Responses From Contributors

Section 1. Armenia in the 2020 Karabakh War

1.1. Military Factors That Contributed to the Defeat

Conjunctural Military Factors

Effects of the Military Coalition Against Armenia

Assessments by respondents regarding the military coalition against Armenia as a factor cover the entire spectrum, from the least to the most significant:

- Azerbaijan itself was better prepared and better equipped; it had a good plan for the war; and the Armenian side was blind to the Azerbaijani fighting spirit and resolve.
- The fact that the other side comprised a coalition had a multiplier effect against Armenian forces. The other side became demographically and militarily stronger (in terms of equipment, armaments, and intelligence).
- And, for some, it was not Azerbaijan that was fighting but, rather, Turkey, or—even worse—it was drones doing the fighting.

According to respondents, Armenia miscalculated the degree to which it would fight the war alone as it was unable to bring Russia, its ally, to fight on its side. Geography also contributed to logistical issues in bringing outside supplies into Armenia, and also in moving supplies from Armenia to Karabakh.

The Armenian leadership is blamed for making the tactical mistake of limiting military operations to the Armenian-controlled areas of Karabakh, in fact placing the initiative in the hands of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Whether in fact Armenia had a choice in that regard is a subject that a future inquiry should examine.

Problems Within Armenia/Karabakh

Positions regarding this factor range from

- We lost the war because of internal, “treasonous” disagreements (between Karabakh and Armenia; between segments of the Karabakh defense forces and others; and/or among opposing segments within Armenia’s AF).

to

- Armenia used its resources (i.e., armaments and human resources) inefficiently; it failed to complete the mobilization process (see the Prime Minister's call up for volunteer groups on October 21, 2020); and Armenia was generally negligent (e.g., incomplete fortification of defensive areas). Many in this group of experts accuse the government of that time with incompetence, lack of organizational skills, or lack of anticipation of possible war scenarios. A number of those accusations, however, hint at structural problems.

Structural Military Factors

The Four-Day War (April 2016) was a turning point. Some structural problems predated that brief military encounter. Those four days revealed others, yet those problems were not fully addressed, and, in some cases, they were not addressed at all.

In this presentation on the 2020 war, the shortcomings indicated by the experts are listed in descending chronological order (from the most recent to the past):

- A. The previous government inherited conditions within Armenia's AF that were so dire that it would have required years to address them and close the huge gap between the AF and the Azerbaijani military. The previous government made a significant effort, it is argued by some, to rectify the situation during the two years and four months that elapsed between its assumption of power and the outbreak of the war (May 2018 to September 2020).
- B. There were doctrinal shortcomings. After the four-day war, the "Nation-Army" concept (2017) and, under the previous government, the "Visions" of the Minister of Defense (2018 and 2020), were seen as attempts at correcting those shortcomings.
- C. Successive Armenian governments failed to communicate honestly with the public on the real situation and problems within the AF, at least since 2016 (or even since 2008, when the Strategic Defense Review was launched).
- D. Poor intelligence was a factor, particularly in the inability to anticipate the four-day and the 2020 wars.
- E. There were serious problems in mobilization, in general, and of the reserve forces, specifically. Those problems included the inefficiency of military commissariats, incomplete inventories of resources, faulty assessments, and incorrect assignments. Those failures may be the result of years of corruption, hubris, and leniency in the enforcement of military service.

- F. The chain of command was dysfunctional, either as a product of the 2015 Constitution or as a situation made more serious by the implementation of the chain of command system.
- G. Top military leadership displayed serious mental laziness, failing to study and learn from asymmetrical warfare countermeasures from the Syrian, Iraqi, Ukrainian, or Libyan conflicts, to name only the most recent instances.
- H. The education of middle- and low-ranking officers was insufficient, and their psychological readiness was inadequate. Higher-ranking officers lacked professionalism and readiness for the operational level of war.
- I. Low levels of readiness of the reserve units.
- J. Military construction proceeded in the wrong direction for the last 20 years. Failing to adapt to changing realities of warfare, the focus should have been on special/mobile forces, to include a strong special operations forces component. Moreover, the chronic obsession with ground-based air defense, at the cost of neglected air arm, made the chances of challenging the enemy's air superiority all but a hopeless endeavor.
- K. Corruption was endemic in various areas of the AF, coupled with a lack of accountability as a semi-closed and "sacred" institution, seriously hampering the capacity for, and the scope of, reform.
- L. National defense policy lacked robustness (accounting for only 4% of GDP). There are also questions on the way the military budget was spent.
- M. The 1994 victory of Armenians in the first Karabakh war gradually led to a rigid militaristic vision of security and foreign policy. Since 1998, that vision has dominated Armenian strategic thinking.

Those issues are significant, and they must be investigated thoroughly in any future inquiry into the 2020 Karabakh war.

1.2. The Question of Armenia's Responsibility in the Karabakh Conflict, in General, and in the 2020 War, in Particular

Political-Diplomatic Factors

It is of no trivial significance that in the responses of the contributors, political-diplomatic factors appeared repeatedly as primary factors that explain the defeat. It is possible to argue that such consistency reflects an intellectual bias on the part of such a sample. Nonetheless, the

commonly held views articulated in the responses do reflect disapproval in Armenian leaders, over time, for their handling of the Karabakh conflict, and also for the way those leaders misread or ignored the position of the international community toward the conflict.

Vision and Strategy on the Karabakh Issue

The analysis of the overall conflict-resolution strategy, the failure of which led to war, can be summarized in three positions:

- A. Some argued that the 1994 Armenian victory in the first Karabakh war led to an increasingly rigid militaristic vision of security and foreign policy, as indicated earlier in this paper.
- B. Others argued that Armenia should have recognized Karabakh's independence in 1994, immediately following the military victory over Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan was defeated and would have accepted Karabakh's independence, the argument goes, but the problem is that Armenians built their state with "fear in their stomachs" and so they were afraid of being assertive. The strategy of being a "good international partner" made Armenia hostage to the interests and goodwill of the international community, and even more so to the interests of Azerbaijan.
- C. Between those two positions, many stressed that the lack of a clear end goal on the Karabakh problem—and, consequently, the lack of a corresponding strategy—played a role in policy failures. Similarly, there was no clear definition of either possible concessions or red lines. Both sets of shortcomings reflect the confusion of public and official discourse on the issue. The exclusion of Karabakh from the negotiations, for example, was symptomatic of those shortcomings, allowing the Azerbaijani narrative on the conflict—that it is a territorial issue between states—to take the upper hand.

Lack of Willingness to Resolve the Conflict

At one end of the expressed views regarding the significance of this factor, some respondents

- A. Continued the previous argument according to which Armenian strategy to solve the problem was to make the de facto status—a Karabakh independent from Azerbaijan—permanent and accepted by the international community. Although some political leaders clearly stated that "the Karabakh problem is resolved," no government leader with any authority acknowledged it openly to the international community, nor to Armenian society.
- B. Assigned responsibility for the unwillingness to resolve the conflict through negotiations based on mutual compromises to most political parties and forces and to academic and intellectual elites, including those in the Diaspora.

At the opposite end of expressed views, others maintained that

- C. Unwillingness to resolve the conflict itself was a problem. In this context, Armenia's successive leaders since 1998 are accused of a lack of ownership of the problem, of playing the follower instead of being proactive in the negotiation process, and acting as if the Karabakh problem was not Armenia's to solve. Moreover, Armenian leaders had become captive to a maximalist position.

The previous government here is criticized for not

- D. Being able to capitalize on the nonviolence that was the distinguishing mark of the Velvet Revolution.
- E. Seizing the opportunity of the government's solid legitimacy to pursue a peace policy that had started with the Prime Minister's unprecedented positive appeal to take into account the interests of all peoples concerned.
- F. Proactively combatting stereotypical images of the "Turkish enemy."
- G. Preventing the war before it started and stopping it once it started at the earliest opportunity (for example, on October 19th). (In this respect, responsibility is also assigned to the National Assembly and the majority party, the only institution with constitutional authority that could have compelled the Prime Minister to accept an earlier ceasefire with fewer losses or force him out.)

Some respondents pointed out a major area of responsibility that more often than not has escaped the attention of observers:

- H. The failure of intellectual and academic elites to promote serious debate on possible options and developments regarding the Karabakh conflict and the likely scenarios to follow those available options. Critical thinking was similarly stymied in the Diaspora, where intellectual and academic elites failed to show courage, even when they had a more differentiated approach, to battle those who made debate impossible for reasons similar to those prevailing in Armenia.
- I. The absence of debate impacted negatively on civil society that was kept largely out of any decision-making and was subsumed into the intolerant environment.

(See Appendix A for a brief review of Armenia's changing negotiating positions on the conflict since 1991.)

The International Environment and Role of Non-Armenian Actors

During the last two decades or so, successive Armenian leaders at different time periods have not assessed correctly (a) the interests of non-Armenian actors in the Karabakh conflict, (b) the wider regional and international implications of the conflict, and (c) the power imbalance between the Armenian side resulting from the resources Azerbaijan possessed as well as those it commanded internationally.

At one side of the spectrum, some respondents think that

- A. The decision to wage the 2020 Karabakh war was actually made by Turkey and agreed to by Russia.² Some analysts suspect that the democratic nature of Armenia's government, as opposed to those of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Russia, might have played a role in that arrangement.³ Here, the previous government is also guilty of imprudent nationalist rhetoric, provocative military actions (Tavush 2020), and an excessive Western orientation.

In contrast, other respondents think that

- B. Armenian leaders overestimated Armenia's capabilities as well as the degree and kind of support the Armenian side could receive from other countries, near and far, including in case of war; simultaneously, it underestimated the enemy's capacity and willingness to go to war.

Long-Term Sociopolitical Factors

There is a continuum between the two types of long-term sociopolitical factors discussed in this section.

² The speed with which Russia was able to deploy its peacekeeping forces, along with its equipment, may indicate early, prior awareness of the war and preparedness for the mission.

³ Taline Papazian maintains that from her last working mission in Armenia in September 2020, just one week before the war started, Armenian leaders suspected strongly that Turkey would intervene in case of war. They might have realized it too late and also may not have known the extent of that support.

Toward the end of August Turkey's Defense Minister announced that Turkey henceforth considers itself a "party to the conflict." In an article published on September 1, Jirair Libaridian brought that to the attention of leaders and the larger public, maintaining that such a statement meant that Turkey would participate actively in the next war.

Political Culture and the Concept of Nationhood

At one end of the spectrum,

- A. It is argued that national identity was built on an essentialization of the victory of 1994, and reified that victory in absolutist terms. In a general sense, the dominant vision of Armenian nationhood was based on pan-Armenian ethnic terms, using stateless-era mental structures to resolve the problems of an independent state.

In opposition to the above, it is argued that

- B. The defeat was caused by a lack of social preparation (educational and psychological) for war and the lack of a collective will to win. By this explanation, Armenia does not have a strong military because Armenian society does not wish to make the necessary efforts to have one, ultimately because its society is not willing to make the necessary sacrifices that war requires. In essence, then, Armenia lost the war because it did not want to win, and the state has proved unfit to the challenge because the leaders have not kept their society in a state of preparedness requisite for victory.

Factors Related to State-Building

Two types of factors were identified here. First is the external factor, specifically overdependence on Russia not only as the security guarantor against Turkey but also as the primary country of recourse during every major challenge since 2001.

The second, internal factor consists of various aspects of state-building. Some respondents find the following significant:

- A. Internal political divisions: At different time periods, divisions between new and old regimes; divisions between some circles in Karabakh vis à vis the government elected in 2018; and the Stepanakert axis against the Yerevan axis, a divide which weighed heavily on military commanders' decisions and actions
- B. Suspicions of the willful mismanagement in the mobilization of resources during the 2020 war, on the part of a political faction linked to the previous regime that could reap benefits from a defeat under the new government
- C. Internal challenges: limited human/professional resources; incompetent, authoritarian decision-making; and dominance of ethnonationalism in domestic and foreign policies

At the other end of the spectrum, some locate the problem in deeper dysfunctions within the state, such as

- D. A poor educational system
- E. The concentration of eco-financial resources in the hands of those who, up to 2018, were also heavily in control of political processes
- F. The total plundering of state resources up to 2018
- G. The lack of independent state institutions
- H. The absence of meritocracy, the dearth of good governance, poor organizational planning, and lack of accountability

1.3. The Situation Created by the November 10, 2020, Ceasefire Statement

(See Annex 3 for the texts of the statement in English and Russian.)

Demographic Consequences

There is no significant difference of opinion on this issue, as the facts are self-evident and universally acknowledged.

Immediate Casualties

Although a final number of soldiers killed in action has yet to be established, it is estimated to be near 4000, including those missing in action. The heaviest price was paid by young soldiers 18 to 25 years old, especially conscripts and reservists. Total losses in just 45 days amounted to 70% of Armenian losses during the three years of the first Karabakh war, from 1991 to 1994. The comparison gives an idea of the rate of attrition experienced in, and the degree of violence of, the 2020 war; the utilization of new and deadlier weapons; and the unpreparedness that can be presumed. It also helps to explain the psychological shock and distress the war has caused in Armenian society.

A total of 11,000 soldiers and volunteers were wounded or required serious treatment. The number of the disabled are not final, either: As of March 2021, the figure provided by the military medical department of the AF is 885. The issue of their physical and psychological rehabilitation is of crucial significance for the health of families and society in general.

Medium- and Long-Term Consequences

War veterans and the disabled will require economic and social assistance. This need is partly fulfilled by the “Soldiers Insurance Foundation (1000plus.am),” supported by a direct tax on salaries in Armenia and voluntary donations from Armenians worldwide, including Armenia.

Losses will weigh heavily on families, society, and the state budget for decades—demographically (including the AF), sociologically, and generationally (for instance, net losses in natural demographic growth, in turn augmenting the medium- to long-term risks of emigration in young, unmarried women).

The Nature and Consequence of Territorial Losses

Territorial losses in and around the former autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh have major significance in four areas:

- A. The loss of important economic resources, including pastures, agricultural lands, mines, hydroelectric plants, and access to and control of water resources.
- B. Losses of historic Armenian territories and sites of cultural heritage, their extent symbolized foremost by the loss of Shushi, a city that now joins the list of culturally and politically significant places that are no longer inhabited and controlled by Armenians.
- C. Loss of strategic depth in Armenia's own security, placing the territory of Armenia proper at greater risk.
- D. There is now a total of more than 1,300 kilometers of border with hostile neighbors, with varying topography and defensibility, located in an area where physical infrastructure (such as trenches and bunkers), mechanized units and formations, and artillery are increasingly vulnerable to sophisticated and high-precision offensive weaponry.

Humanitarian Consequences

Here, too, the facts are simple and obvious:

- A. There are tens of thousands of refugees, mainly from the regions of Shushi, Hadrut, Kelbajar, and Lachin. The authorities of Karabakh encourage the return of these refugees to territories still under their control, preferring that they settle outside of Stepanakert.
- B. At the time of this writing, Azerbaijan is using some 170 POWs and captured civilians as bargaining chips and hostages, having labeled them as "diversants" (saboteurs), terrorists, or mercenaries.

Security Consequences

Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia

The AF have lost considerable manpower, equipment, and armaments (from one-third to one-half, depending on type), and they are psychologically affected by the defeat.

The economic cost of replenishing the lost equipment and armaments, or possibly of purchasing new kinds of weaponry, has yet to be calculated.

Lines of Contact Between Armenia and Azerbaijan

- A. Except for the northeastern border, the line of contact (LoC) prior to the war was between the Karabakh/Artsakh Republic and Azerbaijan. Today, the de facto LoC between Armenia and Azerbaijan extends southward, all the way to the Iranian border. Additionally, that LoC is distinct from a border, since an interstate international boundary has never been demarcated. Important sections of these new contact lines and border areas are under constant pressure from the Azerbaijani military (Syunik, Tavush).
- B. On the post-November 10 map, Armenia's LoC with Nakhichevan has become more sensitive. At the hourglass sections of Vayots Dzor and the northern Syunik regions, it is only a foot away from Azerbaijan, so to speak. These have become focal points for the security of Armenia's territory, as opposed to the pre-November 10 situation, in which the Kelbajar and Lachin regions provided strategic depth to the defense of the territory. Today, the connection between Karabakh and Armenia is a fragile umbilical cord controlled by Russia.
- C. The process of border demarcation is currently underway. As with all other issues of interest between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the quality and spirit of this process will have long-term consequences on the future prospects of peace or war in the region.
- D. The Russian military base in Armenia has become crucial. Whereas Russia's military presence was necessary to safeguard the Turkish-Armenian border prior to the 2020 war, Russian personnel are now also involved in hot spots of the new LoC on the eastern and southern sectors.

Political and Security Consequences for Karabakh

New Political/Diplomatic Realities

- A. The Artsakh Republic—Karabakh—is neither a signatory nor a party to the November 10 Statement, unlike in the 1994 ceasefire agreements, where the third signatory, alongside Armenia and Azerbaijan, was Karabakh rather than Russia. The view that the Karabakh conflict is an interstate conflict has therefore prevailed.
- B. There is an implicit recognition in the trilateral statement that Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan.
- C. Russian interposition troops are now present in the territory for the first time since 1991.

Security

- D. Karabakh has lost Armenia as its security guarantor.
- E. Karabakh has lost its main bargaining chip and security belt.
- F. A new LoC has been established between Karabakh and Azerbaijan, which presents two challenges: the doubtful defensibility of the LoC, even by a reorganized defense force; and the stationing and use of that force.
- G. The November 10 Statement does not require that the defense forces of the territory be disbanded, thus providing the authorities there some space for maneuvering, at least for the time being.

What Remains of the Karabakh Question?

- H. The Karabakh question—the issue of the rights of Armenians of the territory to live securely and freely on their land, or their right to self-determination—remains acute from an existential point of view. But the problem is not being tackled in any formal forum or negotiation format, despite the attempts by France and the US, as well as Armenia, to revive the OSCE Minsk Group.
- I. The Russian president has declared that Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan, and that the question of sovereignty over Karabakh is resolved. The Russian minister of foreign affairs has variously stated that negotiations regarding status, meaning how Karabakh would be administered, or whether a territorially delineated Armenian Karabakh will exist at all, (a) should be postponed for a long time, to allow the two peoples to learn to live together, (b) that the Minsk Group could be involved in status negotiations, and (c)

but the Minsk Group should limit its activities to supporting Russia's humanitarian projects in Karabakh for now.

- J. The trilateral November 10 Statement does not distinguish between the formerly occupied seven districts around the Soviet-era Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast or region (NKAO), on the one hand, and on the other, the NKAO territory now under Azerbaijani control. Thus, the document nullifies the Soviet-era status of NKAO, as it implicitly recognizes the Azerbaijani jurisdiction and military control of these areas (Hadrut, Shushi).
- K. At present, the authorities of Karabakh have to deal with Russia primarily, and secondarily with Azerbaijan. Russia and Azerbaijan also work with Turkey, each in its own way. Armenia is relegated to a fourth position, with limited room to impact the future, for the time being.

Consequences for the Sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia

The November 10 Statement is an imbalanced inter-state document.

On the one hand, respondents emphasize aspects indicating the near total capitulation of Armenia:

- A. Humiliating and forced provisions.
- B. The retrocession to Azerbaijan of occupied districts that were not involved in the war follows the same agenda as those Azerbaijan took back as a result of fighting.
- C. There is no paragraph or sentence in the November 10 document that provides for the return of Armenian refugees from Shushi, Hadrut, and adjacent villages to their homes.
- D. The humanitarian aspects most essential to Armenia, such as the mandated return of POWs and hostages, have become problematic, as paragraph 8 of the Statement does not offer a deadline and Azerbaijan has linked their release to other, yet-to-be-implemented conditions of the Statement. Along with those other issues, the non-release of POWs and hostages by Azerbaijan has kept a hostile atmosphere based on lack of trust dominant in the region.

On the other hand, regarding states other than Azerbaijan and Armenia, some respondents say the Statement reflects a balance of military and diplomatic aspects, as well as new geopolitical realities:

- E. The influence of regional actors has been redistributed, and their direct involvement in the conflict presents a new picture.

- F. Russia is the main winner in this category, as it extends its influence and control over what remains of Karabakh directly, and over Armenia and Azerbaijan indirectly.
- G. The conflict has now become even more of a pawn, beyond the dynamics of the South Caucasus (SC) and those between Russia and Turkey, such as their rivalries in the Middle East, particularly in Syria.
- H. Western actors previously involved in the Karabakh negotiations, particularly the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, have been effectively excluded from the ongoing processes.
- I. For all practical purposes, the involvement of international institutions is reduced to “humanitarian issues.”
- J. A clause that compels Armenia to serve an international purpose by opening a communications line between Western Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan through Armenia that is the equivalent of a corridor.
- K. The opening of roads and communications to, from, and in Armenia has been mandated.
- L. Security of the communication lines on Armenia’s territory will be ensured by Russia. The degree of oversight Armenia will have on those lines is not clear.

It may be useful to remember that the periods in the history of Karabakh when Armenia had the ability to play a role in the determination of Karabakh’s status were actually rare. In that regard, 1918-1920, 1988-1991, and 1991-1994 constitute exceptions resulting from Russian retreat, when Armenia possessed relative strength in relation to the regional/international dynamics at play, and also in comparison with the situation of Azerbaijan.

There is a pragmatic position that argues that a number of features of the November 10 Ceasefire Statement might have a positive or negative application, depending on how it is approached by Armenian foreign policy decisionmakers. Those include ambiguities and uncertainties concerning a number of issues. This position can be called state-centric. It is based on the premise that there is an Armenian state, and that state has the duty and capacity, even if reduced, to act in order to make a very bad situation somewhat less bad.

Section 2. How Respondents Perceive Policies and Future Options

In this section the authors will be considering foreign relations and security policy options that Armenia has, or might possibly adopt in the short and long run, as perceived by the

contributors. It will be done step by step. The answers, necessarily, should address the following considerations:

- A. The need to deal with current events and rapidly evolving developments that require immediate responses and possible actions.
- B. The steps that need to be taken and projects that need to be undertaken now, in preparation for the formulation and implementation of policies to be adopted in the future.
- C. The formulation of long-term goals for the state of Armenia must, in turn, answer the following sub-questions, not necessarily in this order:
 - a. What assets has Armenia lost that it possessed before its defeat?
 - b. What are the major challenges Armenia is facing?
 - c. What assets does Armenia's inventory include now or must acquire to achieve the goals of the state in foreign and security policies concomitant with the fourth sub-question?
 - d. What is the role of Armenia's 2020 defeat in the formulation of Armenia's long-term foreign and security policies? In other words, what kind of Armenia are those who are to govern Armenia imagining? How will Armenia be situated within the SC, the wider region, and, generally speaking, in the larger international community? By what process do Armenians envision and achieve a new future?

This section, too, will be based on an analysis of the answers of the respondents and of views available in the media.

2.1. Standards and Values by Which to Determine Foreign Policy Goals

Clearly, there is no consensus on the future foreign and security policies of Armenia. It may appear that it should be possible to have a consensus, at least on the standards by which foreign policy must be made.

What standards or values should Armenia use to determine foreign and security policy goals? It is possible to answer that question with expressions such as

- A. National values
- B. International values
- C. National interests

As appealing as those are, they cannot serve as guidelines, since they are too general and widely open to interpretation. Such values, broadly stated, do not offer a path toward the development of strategic thinking.

It is possible to answer the question by listing what foreign policy must achieve. Some goals are generally accepted:

- D. The security of the state
- E. A neighborhood safe for the state and its people
- F. The long-term viability of the state vis à vis the international order
- G. State-building, meaning the development of state and public institutions to avoid becoming a failed state
- H. The economic and social development of the people
- I. The wise and efficient expenditure of resources.

Those are important considerations. Yet, in this case, too, the spectrum of political ideologies and opinions suggest a wide range of interpretations on each of their meanings. In fact, as the following discussion will indicate, the more specific the standards and values, the clearer and deeper the divergences become:

- J. **A strong military** is one component of a secure state, it is possible to posit. In case of an aggression against the state of Armenia, that might mean (a) armed forces capable of providing a defense until Russia, Armenia's ally, can step in; it may also mean that (b) a revamped military should become the central institution of the state, strong enough to defeat an aggressor state, or (c) to attack and retake what was lost in the recent war, and perhaps more.
- K. **A realistic assessment of security risks, factors, and assets, and of power relations**, may also sound reasonable. But according to some, it runs counter to the objection, raised by others, that a realistic assessment sets limits on the state's ability to establish goals based on future realities yet to be created, and precludes the realization of "national visions."
- L. **The highest level of independence**, which could be viewed as a noble purpose and unquestionable value, is rejected by those who think Armenia should cede even more of its independence to Russia in order to be rewarded with the highest possible level of security.

M. **Peace**, one might think, would be a universally accepted aim of a state. Yet for some it is equivalent to defeatism, because a warlike culture and environment, and perhaps even war itself, are better suited to Armenia's needs, even to the character of the Armenian people.

N. **Normal relations with neighbors**, a value that seems to make common sense for some, is either rejected by others as unrealistic, considering some of Armenia's neighbors, or viewed as undesirable because of the unique character of the Armenian people and state.

By the time one gets to significant specificity, one realizes that one is not dealing simply with differences of opinion or even conflicting political programs but, rather, with fundamental differences in value systems and visions of the future.

The significance and depth of those differences will become more obvious in the next two sections.

2.2. What Should Armenia's Main Foreign Policy Goal Be?

The expert contributors we consulted have suggested that the following should be the single most important aim or goal of Armenia's foreign policy. Obviously, they are not listed in order of importance; rather, they have been grouped according to mutual compatibility and complementarity.

Goals that are general enough to be acceptable to all:

- A. The safety and prosperity of the people of Armenia
- B. Improvement in the living conditions of the people, through such programs as the development of networks, infrastructure, and the environment
- C. The long-term viability of the Armenian state
- D. Diversification of economy and foreign investments, to make Armenia a regional hub and an exporting country
- E. Securing the international borders
- F. Robust military, financial, and political systems
- G. Reimagined relations with large states
- H. Increased economic ties with Georgia and Iran

Goals that lean in some way toward seeking more sovereignty, regionalism, and normalcy:

- I. Raising Armenia's profile as a model of stability and peace
- J. Increasing the relevance of Armenia in the international arena so that other countries care more
- K. Improving and normalizing relations with immediate neighbors, including seeking peace and open borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan
- L. Security through regional integration and participation in regional economic development and communications programs, which in turn would help with demography
- M. Integrating into EU and US structures (excepting the military dimension?)
- N. Preserving sovereignty, regaining what is possible, making new alliances
- O. (Re)establishing Armenia's image as a sovereign democratic state
- P. Securing more independence from Russia, without severing relations
- Q. Increasing Armenia's ability to make its own decisions, balancing Russia's influence through multilateral organizations, such as the *Organization internationale de la Francophonie*
- R. Ensuring that Armenia participates in, and benefits from, regional projects being worked out by Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan, which are deciding the larger issues of the region (Karabakh's future is in President Putin's hands.)
- S. Eliminating from the foreign policy agenda demands for the recognition of the Genocide and for Genocide reparations

Goals that lean toward the opposite direction, calling for greater reliance on Russia and expressing fear of Turkey:

- T. Securing closer relations with China, India, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Greece, possibly to form a common front against Turkey
- U. Diplomatic and military security from Turkey through harmonization with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and further integration with Russia (without becoming a garrison state?)

- V. Building a strong military to defend Armenia and Karabakh
- W. Ensuring that Armenia is not used for regional projects because these will only benefit other states
- X. Seeking recognition of the Armenian Genocide

Goals that prioritize Karabakh:

- Y. Karabakh remains at the top of Armenia's agenda, therefore resolve the conflicts between the leaders of Karabakh; prevent charges of war crimes committed by the Armenian side during the last war; prevent Karabakh's escape from Armenia's grip; plan for the possibility of Russian peacekeepers' leaving Karabakh

Goals that focus on method:

- Z. Sending students and interns to Western universities, research centers, think tanks, and institutions
- AA. Making rational and realistic analysis the basis of decision-making, and only then designing foreign policy
- BB. Developing a national school of diplomacy and improving the standards of the School of Administration

In principle, any aim considered the single most important should be the one to which all others are subordinated, and the aim toward which all resources are dedicated. As can be seen, candidates for that position cover a wide spectrum of issues, and they will need to be prioritized. Many aims are contradictory or mutually exclusive. The best that can be said is that Armenian political thought, which was not characterized by coherence before the 2020 war, is in greater disarray at the present. Armenian polity is even lacking well-articulated frameworks within which to debate internal differences.

2.3. What Should Armenia's Foreign Policy Priorities Be?

What should Armenia's foreign policy priorities be? How should Armenia face the challenges those priorities present? And what factors should Armenia consider when making foreign policy in both general and specific cases?

The contributors all made realistic observations on the immediate postwar situation and bitterly took stock of past mistakes. According to them, the new context encourages Armenians to

question the predominant ideologies and manner of conducting the work of the state, and to seek ways out of the crisis at the social, psychological, health, political, and security levels.

Respondents thought the following factors should be seriously considered:

- The military omnipresence of Russia
- The territorial advances of Azerbaijan
- The neo-imperial ambitions of Turkey
- The constrained neutrality of Iran and Georgia
- But also the abandonment on the part of Western nations

Yet not all respondents placed the same emphasis on, and ascribed the same significance to, each of those factors. There was general agreement that Armenia should re-evaluate its relations with other countries, develop new approaches, and look for new partners that share Armenia's interests. Along with an active diplomacy, Armenia should negotiate and install essential defense systems to ensure the long-term presence of Armenians in their homeland.

Most respondents agree also that the inability to analyze past misjudgments and lost opportunities, and the denial of one's own share of responsibility for mistaken policies in the past, have become manifest through the dangerous mentality of revanchism. That dangerous attitude may easily lead to the viewing of critics of past practices and beliefs as "bad" Armenians, even as traitors, and to the securitization of civil society and of progressive groups in Armenia, considering them as threats to national security. There is real danger that embedded conservatism and patriarchalism, coupled with revanchism and anti-Westernism, will contribute to the militarization of society and embody Armenia's worst future. Such a psychological and political atmosphere will leave no room for competitive politics, free public discourse, and dialogue. Should the revanchist mentality dominate, one can expect more disasters.

The following list enumerates the general areas of concern and various options that are possible or proposed as future policy.

The main question is Armenia's relationship with Russia and its impact on the country's ability to make policy. In general, the loss of the 2020 war has increased Armenia's dependence on Russia for its security and thus limited its options.

Can or should Armenia have its own foreign policy?

The possibilities vary, at least theoretically.

The first group of respondents is inclined to think that Armenia should adopt a more "Western orientation" and, hence,

- A. Realign its foreign policy toward the West

- B. Re-establish its ability to make decisions autonomously, with less dependence on Russia
- C. Initiate discussions with Azerbaijan and Turkey for the purpose of exploring the potential for future normalization
- D. Integrate fully in economic, transportation, and security interests within the SC, and benefit from its location in the region
- E. Maximize the advantages its unique geostrategic position offers to achieve security and dominance
- F. Encourage and participate in the opening and further development of communication routes (The fact that the others will benefit, or benefit more, does not negate the fact that Armenia will reap benefits as well. Armenia's policies should not be based on the principle that anything that is good for Armenia should harm others, nor that anything good for others cannot be good for us.)

A group with a different version of the option above would

- G. Strive to balance the significance of Russia in Armenia's decision-making with strong Western—US and European—support
- H. Re-establish its ability to make decisions autonomously, with less dependence on Russia, though keeping in mind its close relationship with, and reliance on, Russia
- I. Seek a collective security agreement with Georgia and Azerbaijan that is guaranteed by Russia, Turkey, and Iran, with possible support from Western powers
- J. Realize that it is the region that has the geostrategic position of importance for the stronger neighbors and major powers; that those powers and the other two states in the region can, and in fact have, resolved their problems without Armenia over the last quarter century, with Armenia having missed on the opportunity to benefit from those processes

A third group offers the opposite advice:

- K. Aim at developing Armenia at its own pace and through its own separate resources, a lone state standing as a bulwark against the nefarious designs of some of its neighbors, and possibly integrated more fully within Russia
- L. Not permit or facilitate the opening of communication routes in the region because it will benefit the others, including Armenia's adversaries, much more

M. Align its decisions completely with those of Russia

2.4. Azerbaijan

With regard to Armenia's relations with Azerbaijan, opinions range from the most accommodating to the most belligerent. Still, it is possible to summarize those opinions in three possible options:

- A. Resolve outstanding issues related to civilians and POWs held by Azerbaijan, delineate Armenia's borders with that country, negotiate an honorable peace that might include demilitarized border areas, and then normalize relations.

This option might begin by ending uncivil, maximalist, and nationalistic rhetoric against Azerbaijan, since that rhetoric has consequences; and establishing programs for the study of Azerbaijan as well as encouraging mutual visits and second-track communications and projects. Admittedly, Azerbaijan's own rhetoric and provocative policies, which appear to be aimed at compelling Armenia to recognize formally Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, make such changes difficult to accept.

The proposed shift in rhetoric is supported by the observation that personal and political attacks against the leaders of Azerbaijan inflicted harm and did not benefit Armenia in any way, including its image as a more democratic state. The regimes of Armenia's neighbors are their business, except for any anti-Armenia or anti-Armenian aspects. The West considers the two other countries closest to Armenia—Russia and Iran—as antagonists and threats, ostensibly because of their dislike of those states' regimes. Yet the US and the West in general have excellent relations with Saudi Arabia, various kingdoms and emirates, and other authoritarian and corrupt states. The Azerbaijani regime has been in place since 1993, and the West has never based its friendly and productive policies with it on the character of the regime.

This option may also envision a more active policy of avoiding war at any cost, initiating a multidimensional dialog, including on security matters, and developing economic relations.

In such a policy it may or may not be assumed that Armenia has lost its ability to impact the future of Karabakh in any fundamental way. But it would have to be assumed for all practical purposes that the goal of obtaining independence for Karabakh is now even more remote a possibility than it was before the 2020 war.

- B. The second option is to attempt to normalize relations with Azerbaijan while focusing on limiting Azerbaijan's appetite, which has grown since its victory in the 2020 war, while avoiding clashes.

This option calls for caution when dealing with Azerbaijan, arguing that it still poses a danger to Armenia and Karabakh, and therefore Armenia should erect maximal defenses against it.

In one version of this option, Armenia and Karabakh should demand that Azerbaijan recognize Karabakh's independence.

This option may also place a premium on preparing files on Azerbaijan's human rights violations and war crimes, then pursuing those cases in international and European courts, thus distinguishing between those Azerbaijanis who may have committed criminal acts and most Azerbaijanis who have not.

The latter possibility would have to be considered keeping in mind two factors: (a) the possibility of losses of such cases, and (b) Armenia's own vulnerability to such charges.

- C. The third option calls for the rearming of Armenia with the newest and best possible weapons, developing a highly advanced economy, even achieving some form of demographic equivalency with Azerbaijan and maybe Turkey, and, at the proper moment, initiating a new war to retake what was lost in the 2020 war, perhaps even more, and compelling it to recognize Karabakh's independence.

It should be noted that the Karabakh leadership does not envision building bridges with Azerbaijan, nor with Turkey for that matter, as it has tied its future to Russia.

2.5. Russia

Russia has always played a significant role in Armenia's foreign policy, especially in the area of national security. That role has become even more marked since the September 2020 war. Formally Armenia's only ally, Russia has also acted as a mediator, i. e., assuming a neutral role in many respects, thus inspiring trust, hope, and even devotion, but also suspicion and concern, among Armenians.

There is general agreement that Russia is a key neighbor and will continue to play an important, indispensable, even dominant role. Opinions vary, however, on how central that role should be in defining Armenia's interests or circumscribing them, how closely should Armenia follow Russian policy, or even whether it should be more closely integrated with Russia and not just as an ally.

Thus, the positions differentiated here parallel the views of three groups among the contributors.

According to the first group, which is disinclined to accept Russian dominance, Armenia should

- A. Reverse its relations with Russia because it is not in vassalage, although Russia does control essential elements in Armenia's infrastructure.
- B. Reset its relations with Russia, based on a new logic that has evolved since the last war. Armenia should reconsider its relations with Russia because it was the Karabakh conflict that led to its dependence on Russia but that dependence did not pay off, and because Russia may have a more differentiated policy between Armenia and Karabakh.

The second group would be more inclined to accept dominant Russian presence, yet would try to mitigate it. For this group, Armenia should

- C. Maintain balanced relations with Russia, which are now ambiguous, even hypocritical
- D. Diversify its economy and investments to decrease Russian influence, since Armenia's economy currently depends heavily on Russia
- E. Realize that it has problems with Russia because Armenia has a democratic system and Russia would prefer otherwise
- F. Make sure it is not left out of discussions when Russia and Turkey make plans for the SC and also for Armenia

Finally, the third group either doubts Armenia can escape Russia's increased significance for Armenian domestic and foreign policies, or considers it a positive development. Thus, for this group, Armenia should

- G. Not overestimate its ability to make its own foreign policy, especially in relation to Russia, which has its own policy goals and so Armenia cannot make moves in radically opposing directions
- H. Have closer relations with Russia to better secure its borders, which are unstable, but can become stable and dependable with Russia's help
- I. Realize that it is totally dependent on Russia for its security and act accordingly
- J. Have a leader who can work with Putin
- K. Keep in mind that Russia has levers to impact domestic politics, as elites cater to Russia

2.6. Turkey

Turkey has presented the most important challenge for Armenia's foreign and security policies. Since 1993, Ankara has linked normalization of relations with Armenia to a resolution of the Karabakh conflict, thus putting an end to the first attempt to establish diplomatic relations. Consequently, it kept its border closed, thus effectively participating in Azerbaijan's blockade of Armenia.

In 2008, President Abdullah Gül of Turkey visited Armenia in what was labeled "football diplomacy." That visit was followed by the signing of two protocols between Armenia and Turkey aimed at the establishment of diplomatic relations and the opening of the border separating the two countries (Zurich, 2009). However, Turkey made the implementation of the protocols conditional upon the resolution of the Karabakh conflict, a position that eventually led both countries to nullify their signatures.⁴

Turkey was instrumental in Azerbaijan's defeat of Armenian forces in the 2020 war, thus complicating the projection of policy toward it.

Nonetheless, options in regard to policy toward Turkey are open wide and parallel the fundamental differences seen on some of the questions discussed above.

Many respondents begin with an assessment of Turkey and its President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan:

- A. Turkey will always be of high significance to the West, no matter what it does or says, because of its geostrategic position as well as its highly developed sense of statehood and skilled foreign policy. Turkey is accustomed to antagonism with the US or Europe and problems with NATO. Turkey knows they will not push it so far that it will leave that camp. Its long history, going back to the Ottoman period, indicates an ability to benefit from such antagonisms and rivalries.
- B. Erdoğan is likely to stay in power for some time, and his successors will not change much in Turkey's policy toward Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- C. Armenia and Armenians must take into consideration that Turkey will remain a powerful state. Whatever its current or future weaknesses, those weaknesses are relative to major powers, not relative to Armenia.

Many respondents advocate a change of policy, considering that antagonism has not produced good results. According to this group, Armenia should

⁴ In addition to the Genocide of the Armenian people committed by the Young Turk government of the Ottoman Empire beginning in 1915, Turkish-Armenian relations carry the heavy historical burden of four treaties, humiliating for Armenia and Armenians, signed between V. I. Lenin and Mustafa Kemal: Batum (1918), Alexandropol (1920), Kars (1921), and Moscow (1921).

- D. Normalize relations with Turkey, possibly without mediation, even if that means shelving the question of the Genocide recognition or possibly work toward a milder form of genocide recognition by Turkey. Armenia should place the interests of the state and its people above other considerations.
- E. Look to the future and create an atmosphere of detente; do not proceed on the basis of past wars.
- F. Avoid anti-Turkish coalitions, which are bound to be ephemeral even if they materialize. Others make compromises and forgive each other. Armenia cannot afford to create additional antagonisms.
- G. Not base policy on anti-Turkish pronouncements or even sanctions by Western or other powers.
- H. Treat the Genocide as a moral, historical issue, not as a precondition for normalization or a political issue that leads to territorial demands.

Although a few would

- I. Normalize relations with Turkey only after it recognizes the Genocide.

However, another group argues that

- J. Turkey should be treated as a hostile country. Armenia should join any anti-Turkish coalitions that may be formed by Greeks, Egyptians, Saudis, etc.
- K. Turkey is weakening and fears territorial losses, and Armenia should aim at contributing to that process.
- L. Armenia should include scoring points against Erdoğan as part of its diplomacy.

or

- M. Regarding the question of relations with Turkey, Armenia should follow Russian policy.

2.7. Iran

Iran, like other states, has supported Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and the return of occupied territories to Azerbaijan. Otherwise, however, Iran has been considered a neutral power in Armenia's conflict with Azerbaijan. Some have even harbored hope that Iran could balance Turkey's influence or would act in full support of Armenian interests, but they often forget that Iran has its own reasons to get along with Azerbaijan.

Iran has also tried to play an active role in the resolution of the conflict, a policy that has not been encouraged or looked upon positively by others. On the other hand, as a major regional player, Iran has had its own conflicts in the international arena, which explains the ambivalence toward Iran in Armenian thinking.

While respondents are more in agreement regarding Iran than in the case of other neighbors, views of Iran in Armenia's future still include the continued hope by some that Iran could be a strategic partner. As far as this group is concerned, Armenia should

- A. Consider Iran its most important partner in the world
- B. Consider Iran as part of the solution to its strategic problems (It could, for example, balance Russia's influence and support Armenia with regard to Meghri.)
- C. Consider Iran as part of the solution to its economic problems, as a market for Armenian products, for example
- D. Work toward having Iran balance Turkey's economic leverage and provide routes to India and China
- E. See Iran as a possible stabilizer in Armenia's security environment
- F. Re-evaluate its relations with Iran and put them on more pragmatic grounds (Armenia could, for example, deepen its relations in economic, communications, energy, and logistics.)

And, therefore, Armenia should make sure that

- G. Its border with Iran does not become a divider
- H. Not allow itself to be used by others against Iran
- I. Remain neutral in case of a confrontation between the West and Iran

A few respondents want to

- J. Work with Iran because Iran could cause domestic problems for Azerbaijan, which would be helpful to Armenia at some level

While some others even think Armenia could

- K. Play the role of a mediator between Iran and the West

Another group of respondents is more cautious. They argue that Armenia should

- L. Understand that Iran has not been and is not now willing to support Armenian maximalism, just as Russia has not, but that Iran could come to Armenia's help if Armenia is threatened
- M. Be friendly with Iran, but there is not much room for political cooperation
- N. Not consider Iran as an answer to its closed borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey
- O. Understand that Iran has moved closer to Azerbaijan
- P. Not expect Iran to counterbalance Turkey's influence, since Iran has a large Azeri/Turkic population
- Q. Not rely on Iran because it is an isolated state and is shunned by Western democracies

2.8. Georgia

Despite being as close and as important a neighbor as the other contiguous neighbors, Georgia appears far less in Armenia's policy debates than Azerbaijan, Iran, or Turkey.

At first glance there should not be much of a question on Armenian policy toward Georgia. Yet suspicions persist, and each country knows very little about, and seems not to be particularly interested in, the other.

To summarize existing views with regard to Georgia, Armenia should

- A. View relations with Georgia as a model for future relations with Azerbaijan
- B. Have normal, good neighborly relations with Georgia
- C. Improve its relations with Georgia, increasing economic and cultural ties
- D. Look for common interests with Georgia
- E. Be more supportive and less suspicious of Georgia
- F. In the future, consider a forum for common security discussion with Georgia and Azerbaijan

- G. Make sure that relations with Georgia are not conditioned by or subordinated to Russia's relations with Georgia
- H. Make sure that Armenians of Javakhk do not enter into a conflictual relationship with the Georgian government, which could create problems in Georgian-Armenian relations
- I. Consider whether Azerbaijan is a better route to Russia, since Georgia is currently the only land route

Yet, suspicions persist, and for a few respondents Georgia could play a negative role, so Armenia should

- J. Keep in mind that Georgia's position during the 2020 war was not a friendly one
- K. Use the Armenians of Javakhk against Georgia should there be need for such an action

2.9. The West (US and Europe)

The US and Europe, whether taken separately or under the more generic umbrella of the term the West, have been an integral part of Armenian history under different names: the Armenian Question, the Armenian Case, Armenian Genocide recognition. At different times, and sometimes all at the same time, the West has been viewed as the magic savior, the source of inspiration, and the imagined ally that hardly ever delivered what Armenians expected. The Karabakh conflict and the wars fought to resolve it have not dampened the hopes of many that the West will act as an ally, while confirming the suspicions of others, all of which raises the question of whether Armenians have learned anything from history. It should not be surprising, then, to see a wide spectrum of views on Armenia's relations with and policy options regarding the West, from continued reliance to disappointment and limited help and even to antagonism.

One group of respondents thinks the West could still be an ally and Armenia should

- A. Consider Europe a model and aspire to become part of it—that Europe must be the guiding light in relations between the state and the public, that Armenia should pay more attention to European values that were harmed during the war and should appreciate Western interests in Armenia
- B. Get closer to NATO
- C. Get closer to the US and integrate or foster bilateral and multilateral relations with Europe as a counterweight to Russian influence
- D. Integrate into European structures in areas such as education, despite close association with Russia; use Western standards to modernize all aspects of life

- E. Seek the re-engagement of the US and the West to help democracy survive in Armenia
- F. See the US as a standalone, unique power that has strong influence in the region
- G. Cater to the US so long as the US is interested in the region
- H. View Russia as a weakening power, and the US as the rising force in the region

Another group is resigned to the fact that there are limits to what Armenia can ask, and also to what the West can deliver. Thus, Armenia should

- I. Overcome the expectation that Europe or the West will come to Armenia's help because "we are Christian" or because "they like us"
- J. Take whatever it can from the West, even though Armenia now has no choice but to be within the Russian sphere
- K. Use the West as a source of investment and technological advancement
- L. View Western countries only as distant and unreliable supporters
- M. Not overestimate the role of the West by attempting to use Western states to oppose Russian influence (The West can contribute only to the extent that its goals do not run counter to Russian interests, as defined by Russia.)
- N. Consider the West as an irrelevant factor now, unless one is talking about a West that is led by Europe
- O. Understand that the West has no interest in Armenia, but it still should get what it can from those states

There are also those who oppose these positions and insist that Armenia should

- P. Realize that the West is ripe for a retreat. And history has shown that Western interventions have brought nothing but catastrophe.
- Q. Not even think about NATO membership. Realize that the West lacks both actionable strategic policies and any resolve regarding this region or to provide security guarantees, although Armenia dreams of the West. Do not forget that Turkey is a member of NATO.

- R. Should not rely on the US. President Biden will not be able to return to US policies of the 1990s. The US cannot constitute a balance for Russia.
- S. Consider that the US asks the question, “Is Armenia with us?” Armenia’s relations with Russia and Iran irritate Western countries, and Armenia will not receive adequate compensation for any Western orientation it may consider.
- T. Understand that a pro-Western orientation and pro-NATO policy can be dangerous for Armenia under the current circumstances.

2.10. Armenia and Karabakh

Karabakh has been the core determinant of Armenia’s domestic and foreign relations since its independence, whether or not public debate has focused on it at any given time. It has defined the outcome of choices in most areas of the republic’s life; it has been the main distinguisher among the philosophies and mentalities of political parties; and it has been manipulated by domestic political forces and foreign actors alike to obtain or increase control over Armenia’s future.

It is possible to argue that the dominant ideology since 1994 has been that of a people who were reborn in the eyes of history, who had obtained a little dignity and justice, and took back a small piece of Armenian land in 1991-1994 after Armenians were driven from their Ottoman-ruled historic homeland between 1915 and 1923.

Thus, it is only proper that special attention be paid to the subject of the conflict and its place in the future of the Republic of Armenia.

Our questionnaire, the responses of contributors, and other available materials can be summarized in the following question-and-answer segment.

How Serious Was the November Defeat?

Some respondents consider the losses temporary or manageable, arguing that

- A. We reject the defeat, there is no finality there.
- B. We survived the Genocide, and we will survive this, too.
- C. We should not view the outcome of the 2020 war a major defeat; Armenia could seek a better solution, militarily or otherwise.

For most respondents, however, the answer to the question was very different:

- D. This loss was a near fatal blow to Karabakh. Armenia is less sovereign, and it has been pushed out as guarantor of Karabakh’s security. This is the most recent in a long series of defeats that have offered nothing but survival by deterritorialization of the nation and the increased role of survival mechanisms, such as the Church. Armenia and Armenians have survived, but the fact remains that the more they have lost, the less capable they have become of defending what is left.
- E. The 2020 defeat became a wakeup call for the sleepwalkers⁵ that Armenians had become, believing that the conflict was resolved or that it would be resolved the way they wanted; that there was no urgency to find a negotiated settlement; that they had time to consolidate what existed and to prepare for the future; that, in sum, time favored the Armenian side or, at the least, it was not working against us.
- F. What happened in the last war was nearly the worst possible outcome because Stepanakert and the rest of Karabakh could also have been emptied of their Armenian populations (see Part I, Section 1.3, Humanitarian Consequences). In addition, Armenia would have risked a civil war similar to “La Commune” that followed the Franco-Prussian war, which ended in the defeat of France that Émile Zola described so realistically in one of his works.⁶ Currently, only Stepanakert and the northern section of the former Autonomous Region remain under Armenian – though, factually, Russian – control.
- G. In addition, the Ceasefire Statement signed on November 10, 2020, has shaken the confidence in the Armenian political and military leadership. Will those leaders ever be able to ensure the security of their populations? The physical proximity of Azerbaijani military forces in Nagorno-Karabakh and in parts of Armenia’s borders is causing new concerns. Karabakh and Armenia now look like a surrounded territory. Their security is suspended at the whim of the Russian interposition forces, which might leave or be forced to leave Karabakh as early as in 2026.

Should Karabakh and Armenia Accept the Outcome of the War and the November 10 Statement, and Determine Future Policy on That Basis?

Predictably, many hold the view that Karabakh and Armenia

- A. Should reject the Ceasefire Statement. Everything should be done to liberate Shushi, Hadrut, and other localities that were part of the Soviet-era autonomous region and are now controlled by Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, housing and other needs of Armenians who have returned to the rest of Karabakh should be secured.

⁵ Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Walked Towards War in 1914*, 2014.

⁶ Émile Zola, *La débâcle*, 1892.

- B. Cannot accept defeat because Karabakh has spiritual value and represents more than just people and historic land.
- C. Formulate reasons for the international community as to why that Statement cannot be accepted, such as (a) Armenia signed it under duress, (b) Turkey's role was critical in producing Armenia's loss and Turkey failed to inform NATO of its participation, or (c) Azerbaijan used "jihadists" to win the war, and more.

The opposing view insists variously that

- D. Armenia should try to revise the new status quo through diplomatic means. There is no reasonable chance that the lost territories can be recaptured in the foreseeable future. Armenia should seek to revise the status quo by other means.

And that

- E. Armenia has signed the November 10, 2020, Statement, which implies Armenia's recognition of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, including the whole of Karabakh. Armenia should work toward securing the survival of a territorially defined Armenian Karabakh within Azerbaijan.

What Is the Most Important Task Ahead?

For some, it simply is

- A. To rearm, then to reverse the losses.

While for others

- B. Regardless of other issues, the basic question in Karabakh now is to increase the size and security of the Armenian presence.

What Are Azerbaijan's Long-Term Intentions?

According to conventional and commonly held views

- A. The question has an easy answer: to see Karabakh cleansed of its Armenian population.

Still, others are not ready to accept that answer and would rather wait until adequate answers are given to sub-questions, such as:

- B. Why did Azerbaijani forces stop at Shushi and not continue their march and take all of Karabakh when they could have done so without much difficulty? Was it because of the Russian intervention? In which case, why did Russia not intervene earlier? Did that depend on Armenia's refusal to accept the terms of a ceasefire offered earlier, which it did have to accept under duress eventually? Can Russian intervention explain that decision? What leverage did Russia have to compel Azerbaijan not to continue its victorious march? Will those levers be still actionable in the future? Did Azerbaijan have its own reasons for not occupying all of NKAO? Was there an agreement between Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan as to how far Azerbaijan would be allowed to proceed? These are important questions, necessary to assess properly Azerbaijan's intentions.

Should Independence or the Less Clearly Expressive 'Self-Determination' Be the Goal of Armenian or Karabakh Diplomacy?

Views of respondents vary on this question, ranging from the very positive to the negative:

- A. Keep recognition high on the agenda by calling for the recognition of the right to self-determination exercised by the people of Karabakh.
- B. Independence needs to be looked at in the context of a new strategy, considering all the pros and cons. It will be hard for Armenia to advocate for Karabakh's independence without first recognizing the same. It should not be an aim a priori. At the same time, the unity of the nation (Armenia-Karabakh-Diaspora) during the war was unique and inspiring. Armenians should have finally learned that one must be strong and secure in order to be able to maintain and enjoy rights. Rights are neither self-executing nor gifted by others.
- C. Independence was a compromise option. It was a tactical maneuver that would have led to reunification with Armenia while, in the process, creating fewer problems for Armenia. Considering the new realities on the ground today, it will depend how a new strategy is formulated.
- D. The ideology of statehood, or understanding the importance of maintaining what remains of it, has been impacted. Among the population in Karabakh, in context of available options (under the protection of Russia, with no clear understanding of its form), the idea of independence appears to be waning in the face of the need for the very physical preservation of an Armenian Karabakh.
- E. For over two decades, Karabakh, Armenia, and the Diaspora have supported a campaign for the recognition of Karabakh's independence. No state has actually done that, nor are any states likely to do because of the interests they have in Azerbaijan and their lack of any real interest in Karabakh. Besides, many states have secessionist movements of their own.

Who Will Decide What Happens to Karabakh?

First, an important fact: the role of the Karabakh leadership in determining its own future began to decrease in 1998; unlike the ceasefire agreement that ended the first major war, the leadership of Karabakh was not a participant in the talks that led to the November 10, 2020, agreement, and it is not a signatory to that Statement.

Nonetheless, the leadership of Karabakh and others believe that

- A. Karabakh is still a geopolitical player. What it says counts, or should count, more than what anyone else has to say. The goal is to remain a geopolitical player, return to its former status as a party to conflict, and seek recognition of its independence through peaceful means. Karabakh, Armenia, and the Diaspora constitute three forces; each should pursue these goals in the manner they can, where they count, all aiming at development, salvation, demographic growth, and a civilized existence.

Others think that

- B. The OSCE Minsk group should be reactivated, with the hope that Western countries can constitute a balancing force to Azerbaijan, Russia, and Turkey—the three countries that have managed both the war and its ceasefire.

Most have serious doubts:

- C. Karabakh is a factor in geopolitical game, but not as a player. Rather, it is as a tool, or as an instrument. Its direct participation in any future talks is highly doubtful. Its voice may be heard indirectly, through Armenia and/or Russia.
- D. It seems that Azerbaijan, Russia, and even Turkey will have more to say on the subject of Karabakh's future than Armenia. This has implications for another question: Should or could the Karabakh problem be considered the first priority of Armenia's foreign and security agenda when Armenia has so little influence on that future? In other words, should all other considerations and resources be directed toward it? Or should that be just part of its priorities?

Will the Uncertainty That Dominates the Current Projection of the Future Lead Some or Many Karabakh Armenians to Opt for Russian Citizenship and Eventually Emigrate to Russia?

This is not a subject that is discussed readily or easily, but many think this is a real possibility. When considering granting citizenship to Karabakh Armenians, Russia appears to be placing

limits on their visits to Russia and does not offer them immediate residency in Russia. Possibly intended to legitimize its extended presence in Azerbaijan—i.e., to protect its citizens—the granting of Russian citizenship to Karabakhtsis may eventually prove tempting for the Armenians who accept it, and they may emigrate.

Should Karabakh Be Armenia's First Foreign and Security Policy Priority?

Opinions vary and cover a wide spectrum here, too:

- A. So long as the future status of Karabakh is still in question, the Karabakh conflict determines almost all of Armenia's foreign policy. The conflict imposes itself on Armenia as the number-one priority.
- B. Armenia should consider Karabakh the first priority in its foreign policy; it should penetrate foreign think tanks and institutions, use the example of Kosovo to advocate for its independence, and focus on rebuilding, repopulating, and rearming it.
- C. In real terms, Karabakh has never been Armenia's first foreign policy priority. It certainly was declared as such, but to some extent attention drifted over time. The November 10 Ceasefire Statement does not resolve the status and future governance of Karabakh, thus leaving this issue open for a future resolution. Both Russia and France emphasized their readiness to assist with the regulation of the future status of Karabakh. The Armenian government should continue supporting Karabakh in every capacity, ensuring that it remains Armenian. Prospects for international recognition of Karabakh's independence, however, are very dim.
- D. Karabakh should not be the first priority in Armenia's foreign policy, but it should remain at the top of an agenda aiming at a peaceful and honorable resolution to the conflict. The local Armenian population should be given a role in future negotiations on the territory's status and the fair distribution of economic benefits. That would provide Armenia the opportunity to maximize its own potential with a competitive economy.
- E. There seems to be a growing divergence in the strategies of Armenia and Karabakh. While Armenia is considering the question of relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan, in view of its own security needs and quest for more sovereignty, Karabakh is tying its future to Russia and has officially made Russian a second official language.
- F. Making Karabakh Armenia's first priority is a risky proposition because it makes Karabakh-related issues, on which Armenia has little control or say, a "make or break" deal during the negotiations that are bound to emerge regarding Armenia's security.

Can Armenia Act as Karabakh's Security Guarantor?

Two simple, yet opposing, views dominate positions on this question:

- A. Armenia is or should still be the guarantor of Karabakh's security.
- B. Armenia no longer has the capability to guarantee the security of the people of Karabakh for many reasons, first among them the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Karabakh, and also the huge losses suffered by Armenia's armed forces during the last war.

Do International Organizations Have a Role to Play in Karabakh's Near- and Long-Term Future?

Generally speaking, respondents and others do not ascribe regional or international organizations a major role in Karabakh's near- and long-term future, but recognize specific areas where they can be helpful. Thus, they expressed hope that,

- A. The OSCE Minsk Group can be reactivated as a platform for the resolution of the conflict.

Most respondents ascribe other institutions secondary or vague roles:

- B. UNESCO could assist in the protection of the Armenian religious sites and historical objects in areas under Azerbaijani control.
- C. Multilateral organizations can contribute to the region's economic reintegration through financial aid to rebuild links and damaged infrastructure.
- D. The International Committee of Red Cross and the OSCE could facilitate dialogue and step-by-step reconciliation between the sides.
- E. Many consider the United Nations (UN) Security Council as useless: If you are a small, unrecognized state, there is essentially no chance that the UN will serve any material interest.
- F. The OSCE Minsk Group has proven itself incapable of bringing about a negotiated peace, and now it has been practically sidelined by Azerbaijan and Russia. It may be helpful, however, for secondary issues.

What Is the position of the Karabakh Leadership?

The leaders of Karabakh have taken a clear position:

- A. They will not accept any status that places them under Azerbaijani sovereignty in any form. No Armenian will live under Azerbaijan, they argue, because it is a racist and anti-Armenian state.
- B. Karabakh now relies on Russia as the guarantor of its security.
- C. Karabakh will accept any solution that provides for continued Russian protection.

It appears that the Karabakh leadership does not have, nor does it intend to have, a Plan B, an alternative solution, in case the Russian military leaves the area.

2.11. *The Diaspora*

The Armenia Diaspora, considered one of the three components of the Armenian nation, is, in fact, many diasporas in terms of geography, subcultures, levels of interest, and political attitudes and ambitions with regard to Armenia and Karabakh. In Armenian politics and strategizing, however, it has usually been treated as a monolithic entity. It has also been assigned a variety of roles, from magic savior to self-serving interloper, from being the mediating mechanism for bringing Western methods and brainpower to Armenia to being a “milking cow” (i.e., source of wealth). The Diaspora has provided valuable assistance in many areas of life since the earthquake of 1988, and it did bring major contributions during the last war, mainly in the form of financial assistance. Yet its lobbying efforts before the war were not successful in convincing any country to recognize Karabakh’s independence or to stop the Azerbaijani-Turkish offensive and to provide the Armenian side with palpable assistance during the war.

Respondents projected the future role of the Diaspora’s through a wide range of opinions, some placing high hopes in it, others expressing doubts in its ability to make a major difference, at least in relation to the Karabakh issue.

Thus, some respondents argue that the Diaspora

- A. Should summon all energies, exert every effort to maximize the utilization of its resources, such as know-how, expertise in various fields, finances, and intellectual input to help Armenia and Karabakh rebound from their loss

- B. Should focus on lobbying for Armenia and Karabakh, including seeking sanctions against Azerbaijan and its leader, lobbying against arms sales to Azerbaijan and Turkey, and emphasizing the European roots of Armenian culture

But others warn that the Diaspora

- C. Should not be expected to be the savior. Armenians have gone through this process every time they have experienced failure or installed a new government: expecting more from the diaspora than it can deliver.
- D. Has not subjected itself to a self-critique on why it has not contributed according to its potential. There have been analyses as well as bemoaning by individuals. But the Diaspora is not set up for a focused debate and it has not established a forum where this could be done. Diasporan organizations and institutions have purposefully precluded criticism and accountability mechanisms. They act in their own institutional interests as opposed defining and bowing to an overriding national and state interests.
- E. Diasporan organizations have supported a nationalistic and maximalist narrative and political program in Armenia. They thus skewed political debate and made it harder for a compromise solution to the conflict.

2.12. The Question of Genocide Recognition

The international recognition of the Armenian Genocide has been on the agenda of the Armenian state and nation for a long time. In the case of the state, contributing to that campaign is one of the articles of the 1990 Declaration on Independence. For the Diaspora, it has been the first item on the agenda of political and other organizations since the 1970s.

Nonetheless, the recognition or nonrecognition of the Genocide has not held the same significance for all concerned. For some, it has had symbolic value as a step to validate the history of a nation, serving as the recording of an inhuman act in the annals of mankind. For others, it has acquired a political significance, in two ways:

1. The recognition of the Genocide by Turkey will constitute the legal and political basis upon which to present demands for reparations from that country, including territorial demands.
2. Nonrecognition by Turkey has been characterized as a sure sign that Turkey is willing, and in fact intends to, commit a new genocide against the Armenian people, this time against the people of the Republic of Armenia, thus moving the issue to the security sphere of the republic.

Consecutive governments of Armenia have sought the normalization of relations with Turkey without any preconditions, arguing that such normalization would provide one of the most effective tools for reducing any threat Turkey represents. Diasporan and some Armenia-based political groups have continued to demand that normalization be linked to Turkey's recognition of the Genocide, and they have done all they could since independence to ensure the failure of the normalization policies of Armenia's governments.

As adamant as successive Turkish governments have been in denying the Genocide, for those governments the obstacle to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Armenia had been the nonresolution of the Karabakh conflict. Since the end of the recent war and withdrawal of Armenia's forces from Karabakh, Turkey has stated that it is ready to proceed with normalization of relations and the opening of the border. However, Turkey's active and significant participation in that war has made it difficult for Armenia to accept Turkey's offer, at least in the immediate future.

The Genocide recognition issue, therefore, is still part of Armenia's domestic politics and remains relevant to its relations with the Diaspora, whereas the international campaign on its behalf comes under scrutiny. As such, it has evoked conflicting responses from the respondents.

For one group, Armenia must

- A. Continue to campaign internationally for the recognition of the Genocide
- B. Encourage serious academic work, involve more scholars and intellectuals from Turkey, and increase pressure on Turkey
- C. Send more students abroad to further the study of and research on the Genocide at the level of higher education

Others caution

- D. Against mistaking Genocide recognition for general support of Armenia's development and success, because recognition of the Genocide by a country or a politician does not signal support for the position of Armenia on other issues
- E. That the Genocide recognition campaign can become an obstacle to Armenia's pursuit of its interests above all other considerations, with the normalization of relations with Turkey among those interests

Section 3. Assessing Foreign and Security Policy Factors

3.1. What Are Armenia's Foreign and Security Assets and Impediments?

Assets

When thinking about developing and implementing Armenia's foreign and security policies, the next step is to make an inventory of its assets.

The following are assets Armenia is thought to possess, according to the respondents:

- A. The image of peace-loving country that seeks cooperation.
- B. A long history and culture and the adoption of universal values.
- C. A state protected by international treaties and charters.
- D. A state governed democratically on the basis of a constitution.
- E. Ethnic homogeneity.
- F. Untapped expertise and human resources, such as in information technology and artificial intelligence.
- G. A strategic geopolitical location. Armenia is essential to regional security and has geostrategic value to both Russia and Iran. It is at the crossroads of East-West and North-South trade and transportation routes.
- H. Huge potential for exports to markets to neighboring countries and Russia.
- I. Proclivities with persecuted non-Armenian minorities living in the Near East who could resettle in Armenia.
- J. The Diaspora, whose communities lobby in other countries in support of Armenia and Karabakh. The Diaspora also has great economic potential (investments, emigrant remittances, and humanitarian assistance) and human resources, including networks of professionals in intellectual and scientific fields.

Nonetheless, many point out that

- K. Those resources and assets existed before the war, but they did not save Armenia from its own mistakes.

- L. Armenians have not found the ways to realize the potential within and outside Armenia.
- M. Remittances indicate emigration. The number of remittances indicates the number of those who have left the country, creating the demographic crisis.
- N. Armenia's location could also be a problem; it is possible for bigger powers with interests in the region to dominate Armenia and make its location a source of insecurity rather than security. Besides, Georgia and Azerbaijan claim the same role and have had more opportunities to play that role.

What Other Resources or Partners Could Armenia Secure?

The September 2020 war has revealed more clearly than ever the weakness of Armenia's position in the region and in the international community. Experts and politicians have offered suggestions on how to improve that position by identifying possible new partners and resources.

Accordingly, Armenia could

- A. Seek better and more strategic and economic relations, alternately or collectively, with China, India, Japan, Pakistan, Israel, Ethiopia, Arab countries, African countries, French speaking countries, and Ukraine (without antagonizing Russia)
- B. Seek partnership with Kurdish forces
- C. Work with Assyrian and Aramaic communities in the diaspora for support of pro-Armenian resolutions in host countries and international forums
- D. Seek a closer association with NATO

Yet others point out that

- E. Armenia could not count on those countries for real assistance, as they all have their own interests and problems and have little real interest in what happens to Karabakh or even to Armenia. Many countries could provide more economic or humanitarian assistance, but in the end they will not make much of a difference in vital areas of Armenia's security interests.
- F. NATO has no interest in assuming responsibilities for Karabakh or Armenia. Besides, it is weak and it proved useless for Georgia, which had been vying for NATO membership since the early 1990s yet lost Abkhazia and South Ossetia during its war with Russia.

What Are the Impediments to Armenia's Ability to Develop and Implement Its Own Foreign Policy?

As Armenia tries to recover from the defeat of the 2020 war, many obstacles to an improvement in its position are evident as far as foreign affairs are concerned:

- A. Noninstitutionalized policymaking.
- B. The psychology of the defeated.
- C. The previous government's impaired ability to make the right decisions, as it carries a large degree of responsibility for the defeat.
- D. Limited input in policymaking.
- E. Limited policy options.
- F. Inadequate diplomats.
- G. The pursuit of impossible policy aims.
- H. Overdependence on Russia.
- I. Near-fatal demographic losses before (emigration) and during the war (military personnel). Losses through emigration are likely to continue once the COVID 19 pandemic is under control and travel is possible and permitted.
- J. The lack of trust that the leadership has shown toward the people especially since the killings in Parliament in October 1999. Regarding the country's capabilities and limitations, the people have been fed patriotic and nationalistic jargon instead of addressing those issues openly and honestly.
- K. The inability to think critically and innovatively, and to commission and use real research.

Obstacles to Formulating an Effective Karabakh Foreign Policy

The four main obstacles to formulating an effective Karabagh foreign policy, according to one group of respondents, are

- A. The absence of strong leadership, including a lack of professionalism and competence

- B. The instability and distrust stemming from such deficiencies in leadership
- C. A lack of proper and effective cooperation and coordination between Karabakh high leadership and its ministry of foreign affairs
- D. The absence of any significant contacts between Baku and the leadership of Karabakh through which the parties could assess each other's positions on the basis of confidential consultations rather than public statements intended perhaps only for domestic consumption

But others also offer the following as obstacles:

- E. The aggressive rhetoric of Azerbaijani leadership that muddles the scene
- F. The arrogant behavior of Azerbaijan's leader toward the OSCE Minsk Group members who visited Baku, which indicates Azerbaijan's changed attitude toward the negotiation process
- G. Baku's unwillingness to offer anything other than extraterritorially based cultural autonomy for Karabakh's Armenians as an ethno-religious minority

3.2. Who Makes and Who Implements Armenia's Foreign Policy?

Who Makes Policy?

The making of foreign policy is an essential function of government and varies from state to state, and even from administration to administration. The degree of institutionalization of policymaking, nonetheless, is a sign of the maturity of a state. In Armenia, it has depended largely on the person heading the government.

In effect, the following are believed to have designed policy in Armenia during the 2018-2021 government:

- A. The prime minister, with a close circle of a few confidants
- B. The dominant party, Civil Contract
- C. The ministry of foreign affairs
- D. Diplomats, academics, and think tanks

Some respondents do not see evidence of real policymaking and think that

- A. No one makes policy in Armenia, and what purports to be policy is merely a series of reactions to statements and events.

But others are not so confident that it is so simple. They think policy is made by

- B. The national security service, as a surrogate of Russia
- C. Russia
- D. The presidents of Russia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey

Who Should Make Policy?

A number of recommendations would expand the circle of those who contribute to policymaking when it is believed that the circle of policymakers is too small:

- A. A revamped national security council, which also involves the ministry of foreign affairs, the AF, and the intelligence agency
- B. The ministry of justice, to ensure compliance with international law
- C. The ministry of foreign affairs, with support from think tanks similar to Chatham House or the Foreign Relations Council
- D. Academics and experts, including from the Diaspora
- E. Political parties, whether or not they are represented in the National Assembly
- F. Civil society
- G. A council of former leaders and senior diplomats, especially during critical moments
- H. Limited-access conferences
- I. Coalition or unity governments
- J. A scientific secretariat of a consultative assembly that includes Diasporans

Who Implements Policy?

By and large, foreign policy is implemented by diplomats and the leaders of the government. The quality of Armenia's diplomats has always been an issue, and perspectives differ on their preparation and capabilities.

Some have a positive assessment of Armenia's diplomats and believe that

- A. Armenia's diplomats are fine; the problem is with the policies they are asked to pursue.
- B. Armenia's diplomats have improved over time.
- C. The quality of diplomats can be improved, but the real problem is with the policies.
- D. the diplomats are fine, but sometimes they are sent to capitals that do not match their expertise.
- E. The diplomats are not allowed to think on their own concerning policy options.

Others do not have a final assessment but believe the training and use of the diplomats could be improved. These views include the following perspectives:

- F. Armenia does not have enough good diplomats.
- G. Diplomats are not well versed in the countries and regions where they are assigned.
- H. The diplomats are prepared in schools abroad and not in an Armenian diplomatic school.
- I. Retired diplomats could be invited to draw on their experience to help train new diplomats.
- J. Ethnic Armenian diplomats in the service of other governments could help train Armenian diplomats.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who think that

- K. Many diplomats see the region through Russia's eyes.
- L. Many diplomats act, in fact, merely as personal representatives of political or government leaders.
- M. Armenia does not have real/adequate diplomats.

There seems to be a consensus on the following points:

- N. The education of Armenia's diplomats should be improved.
- O. The system of assignments must be made more coherent and fully meritocratic.
- P. Diplomats should be steeped in the history, culture, and politics of the country or region to which they are assigned.
- Q. Armenia should establish a national school of diplomacy, sustained through partnerships with other schools, but where state interests are taught.
- R. The ministry of foreign affairs should involve capable former diplomats as guest instructors, including from the Diaspora and other countries.
- S. Diplomats can manifest their maximum potential when they are given clear and systemic instructions aimed at realizing a realistic and well thought out foreign policy.

PART II. Authors' Observations, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The second part of this white paper consists of the authors' observations, recommendations, and conclusions, for which they alone bear responsibility.

Section I. Observations and considerations for long-term policies

Following the synthesis in Part I of the entire spectrum of views on issues of immediate concern, the authors offer in Part II their own observations on the larger environment in which Armenia and Karabakh are functioning, making decisions, and formulating policies. To repeat a paragraph in the Introduction of this paper, the authors' main concern is to offer an analytical perspective. That means that the authors are not focusing on disputes, squabbles between parties and leaders, and debates and polemics that are based on political or electoral concerns and so by their very nature focus on public opinion and popular trends.

The authors are aware that many of the observations and subsequent recommendations and conclusions are not necessarily shared either by the respondents to this paper or by other analysts/commentators.

They are also more than aware of the many legitimate concerns and fears that leaders and officials have with regard to the difficulty these recommendations may face in being accepted by a majority of the people of Armenia or Karabakh.

All that the authors can assert here is that this paper's goal is limited to offering a realistic analysis.

1.1. International Realities Around Armenia

Now, more than ever, Armenia's foreign policy must be developed in the context of regional and international developments, and not be based on wishful thinking and patriotic enthusiasm. The authors understand the difficulty of accepting defeat and the resulting sense of betrayal. They understand, too, the urge to think of a militant policy that promises to recover losses and recover the sense of pride with such rhetoric. It is more important, nonetheless, to understand what has changed in the environment, aside from obvious losses. Above all, Armenia must avoid making policy on the basis of false assumptions and self-deception.

It is evident that Armenia is functioning in a fluid international environment within which it is difficult to predict developments with any degree of confidence. That fluidity can be explained, in part, by the unpredictability and destabilizing effects of recent US policies. Because of the importance of the US in global affairs, that is an important issue to be taken into consideration.

The election in 2020 of Joseph Biden certainly offers opportunities to reverse some of the negative trends. A more professional and national interest-based set of policies in the US may reduce tensions with Russia. The US and Russia may come to an agreement on Ukraine, Iran, and other hot spots around the world. Biden may also correct the serious mistakes of his predecessor in Near East policy. That region will be the main theater where the US, Russia, and other countries claiming leading roles, such as Turkey and Israel, will compete and possibly cooperate. Finally, the Biden administration will certainly reinstate a collegial approach, especially with its allies and Europe, to meeting challenges and resolving international conflicts.

Yet Russia and the US may also find themselves in worse rivalry because of their differing views of a new world order or of their role in one. Existing tensions may be exacerbated. There is no doubt, nonetheless, the New World Order proclaimed by President George H.W. Bush after the collapse of the USSR had a very short lifespan, and that the opportunity to define and implement it was squandered. In part, that was because of the insistence of the West to continue treating Russia as an enemy and expanding NATO all the way to Russia's borders, despite an understanding that NATO would not be expanded.

The return of the US to its hegemonic position of the 1990s is impossible because China is a competing world-class economic and military power. China's challenge is more difficult to contend with since its interests are being advanced through economic penetration and only sparsely by show or use of force. Europe is trying to find ways to keep Chinese capital away from the acquisition of a massive amount of European land and corporations. Africa and South America do not have the resources to resist Chinese advances, even if they wanted to.

It should be clear, then, that Armenia and Karabakh are not the main concerns of any of the pertinent countries, including Russia, Turkey, and Iran. When big countries start their bargaining based on their national interests, small countries are more likely to become pawns—not bishops or knights—in the games the major powers play. The major players are more likely to assign roles to us, rather than the other way around.

Policy- and opinion-makers must, therefore, begin with a clear understanding that Yerevan is not the center of world, nor is Karabakh at the top of the agenda for most countries. In devising policy, whether foreign or security, they must never lose sight of the environment in which they and everyone else is functioning.

1. The International Order

- A. There is no defined world order today. Relations between regional and major powers remain unpredictable and unstable.

- B. Regional powers such as Turkey, Iran, and Israel are asserting themselves, too, in the Near East and in the Mediterranean and Aegean seas, making inroads in what used to be the prerogative of superpowers.
- C. A number of conflicts are being managed by regional powers acting in concert, without the involvement, to any significant degree, of the United States or NATO.
- D. The uncertainties resulting from these shifts in power relations are exacerbated by the retreat of the liberal order—even in Europe and possibly in the US—that constituted a dominant value system by which to assess regimes and governments.
- E. The new US administration and the West have yet to find an effective concept for a new world order that accounts for emerging realities and can regulate international relations in concert with other major powers for the foreseeable future in the new, multipolar international community.
- F. In understanding and analyzing factors that impact the policies, decisions, and behavior of various states, near and far, Armenia’s policymakers must pay attention to factors beyond the obvious geopolitical/geostrategic ones. The reference here is to economic factors—in any field, and beyond hydrocarbon resources—such as profitable investment opportunities that business leaders in all countries seek in other countries and which governments are compelled to take into account.

2. The West and Regional and International Organizations

- A. The European Union is facing unprecedented challenges domestically and in areas around it.
- B. NATO has been weakened because of a loosening of transatlantic ties, the policies of the Trump administration, and the “rogue” behavior (by NATO standards) of Turkey, the organization’s most important member in the south, and its second most important army.
- C. Similarly, international and regional organizations, including the UN and the OSCE, have lost much of their leverage.
- D. The West does not constitute, and does not wish to constitute, a factor in reversing the results of the 2020 Karabakh war, nor does it wish to change the terms of the November 10 Statement. The current results are not too different from what the West, along with the rest of the international community, had always favored. They had hoped, however, that this result would have been achieved through negotiations, without the loss of so many lives and resources, and with their full participation.

- E. Nonetheless, the West realizes that geopolitically it has been left out of the equation, even of the SC region. The Karabakh conflict was one of the issues that the West, especially the US, used in the 1990s as a point of entry into the SC geopolitical equation. The 2020 war and the Russian/Turkish role in its conduct and in its conclusion constituted a loss of position for the West. Even though they may not be ready to antagonize Azerbaijan, and even Turkey, the US and Europe appear to have decided to use the yet-to-be-resolved issues following the ceasefire statement to return as full-fledged partners in the still-dynamic processes. The US and Europe may be helpful if Armenia and Karabakh formulate reasonable policies to achieve realistic goals. Although this new will of the West to be engaged can have benefits to the Armenian side, Armenia should be careful not to see it as a counterweight equivalent to what Russia and Turkey in tandem represent or as a strategy that can lead a fundamental change in the conditions imposed on Armenia by the November 10, 2020, Ceasefire Statement.
- F. Nonetheless, by and large, the US possesses commanding resources and has, in the past, contributed to Armenia's progress and welfare.

3. The United States

- A. The United States may no longer have the will, possibly even the ability, to militarily intervene in regional disputes for long periods as it had in the past. The Afghanistan and Iraq wars made evident the limits of American power. In addition, because of its domestic problems, it has also lost some of its clout to exert soft power.
- B. Beyond a clash of interests and rivalry, an ideological dimension is being added to these rivalries. The US is playing up issues of authoritarianism and human rights, while President Putin has critiqued Western liberal democracies and the Washington consensus as inattentive to the needs of disadvantaged social classes in many parts of the world. Putin has called for the reaffirmation of national economies and the resolution of conflicts through regional ad hoc cooperative alliances.
- C. The United States may be able to bring Turkey back into its camp, although that could not be on the basis of the same formula as before. A new attempt at the stabilization of US and NATO relations with Turkey would have to take into consideration Turkey's interests, as defined by its current leadership.
- D. Government and political leaders in Armenia must think carefully before they give in to the reflexive temptation to assume that worsening of US-Turkey relations is necessarily beneficial to Armenia. The US and Europe will not be adopting Armenia's agenda as their own, and there are limits to how far they may push Turkey toward their own agendas and values. They could be of assistance if what Armenia asks for is within the logic of their own approaches, or if what Armenia requests costs them little or nothing.

- E. The US may still be seeking the long-term objective of imposing its economic, possibly political, model on countries such as Ukraine, Iran, and Russia, which, together with Turkey, represent a market of 350 million consumers. The US will keep using sanctions on their leaders, while its main competitor, China, pursues its interests by offering other countries financial and commercial assistance, including opening its huge market to those nations.

4. Regional Powers and the South Caucasus

- A. Conceiving itself as a besieged citadel, Russia is defending itself against the continual advance of the West. The specter of encirclement by the West, or worst, has been a defining element on Russian strategic thinking that has led Russians to opt for autocratic regimes and more often than not resist the European model. But the temptation to adopt the European model of governance has manifested itself for 30 years among ex-Soviet Republics: Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, and those in the South Caucasus.
- B. In assessing Russian policy, it must be noted that Russia never promised to assist Armenia in case of an Azerbaijani attack on Karabakh. On the contrary, Russia had made it amply clear that it respects Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, which means it considers Karabakh part of Azerbaijan. Moscow also did not intervene during the 2016 and July 2020 intensified hostilities. Russia had offered its compromise solutions more than once, even in the past two years, which Armenia and Karabakh rejected. Being disappointed is not a reasonable reaction when what you hoped for was never promised. Russian behavior could be questioned in other respects, however.
- C. Although there are hard facts that are known, and some which are predictable, regarding Russia's intentions and policies, there are also too many unknowns. Policies and strategies must be built on the best possible understanding of many possible scenarios.
- D. Long-term planning by Armenia and Karabakh must include the possibility that Russia may leave Karabakh, as it did in 1991; it had also intended to leave Armenia in 1992, had it not been for Armenia's request for the continued presence of Russia's military base in Armenia.
- E. One of Russia's goals in the timing and form of involvement in the last war was to secure the opening of communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia considered its own interest as well in the management of the war and the conditions of the ceasefire. One such consideration may have been to create an alternative to Georgian routes to Armenia and Iran, as a form of punishment for Georgia's continuing open and strong association with NATO and the West.

- F. Russia has increased its control of what remains of Armenian Karabakh and thus can bring Armenia more firmly within its orbit, to the extent that Armenian politics depend on Karabakh.
- G. Armenia's attachment to the Russian world, however, has generally not been contested internationally, albeit the West has continued its attempts to offer Armenia an additional option. In the Russian orbit, Armenians hope, as in the days of the USSR, to benefit from the largesse of the Russian Federation and from its influence in the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- H. On the other hand, Russia is most concerned by the Azerbaijani threat to leave Russia's orbit concomitant with its close relations with Turkey, its dependence on Western investments, and its own investments abroad.
- I. Azerbaijan will remain, in the foreseeable future, a force beyond its borders, at least in the area of energy and foreign investments. It can also be expected to maintain military superiority over Armenia at least for some time to come.

It should be noted that, to the extent that Azerbaijan's rise depends on its exportation of hydrocarbon resources, some predict that its reserves of crude oil will be depleted in 10 to 15 years. Nonetheless, one must be careful in concluding from that probability that Azerbaijan will be less dominant, especially relative to Armenia. Azerbaijan will continue to have considerable income from its natural gas reserves, possibly from discovery of new oil and gas fields, and certainly from its investments abroad and attempts to diversify its economy. Also, Azerbaijan benefits and is likely to continue benefitting from the multifaceted support it enjoys from Turkey and other close allies. Finally, aware of its vulnerabilities, Azerbaijan is likely to seek a solution to the remaining issues related to Karabakh before that moment, if it arrives. It is possible that that was one of the reasons for the timing of its most recent war.

The decision as to what Armenia does and becomes in 10 or 15 years must take into account those considerations and factors, which should be subjected to a serious and objective study.

- J. Since the accession to power of its new leader, Turkey left its Anatolian space and launched military offensives abroad in flagrant violation of the Kemalist principles that have guided the governments of Turkey since 1923. Erdoğan can be expected to be in power for some time to come, even contrary to the sentiments of the majority of the people of Turkey.
- K. Despite its crises and difficulties, Turkey may emerge from the current situation as an even stronger geopolitical and economic player. Armenia and Armenians should not count on Turkey's potential weaknesses and economic crises to adopt a less than

rigorous and pragmatic policy toward it. Armenia should also not reflexively think a Turkey in crisis is beneficial to it. The Genocide was perpetrated at the weakest and worst moment in the history of the Ottoman Empire, at the time labeled as the “Sick Man of Europe.” Turkey, like the Ottoman Empire, may be weak compared with some other states, but it is not weak compared with others, including Armenia. The same holds true of Russia.

- L. Unless Azerbaijan declares war on it, Russia is not likely to go to war against Azerbaijan, even though some of their interests do not coincide.
- M. Russia is also not likely to end up in a war with Turkey, even though Russia may be unhappy with Turkey’s neo-imperial designs. The two countries would rather divide up or share the management of objects or areas of contention, for many reasons, including their larger interest of keeping the West out of the region.
- N. The future of the SC will be determined more by the leaders of Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan, and possibly Iran, than any other state or alliance. Although the interactions of these countries and impact on Armenia may not be easily predictable, one can be certain that the leaders of the countries whose attitudes matter most will be in power for some time to come. Even if there is a change of leader or leaders, the general outline of policies currently in place is not likely to change drastically in the foreseeable future in any of those countries. In broad outlines, over the last 30 years, all three of Armenia’s large neighbors have had consistent policies toward the SC, despite changes in leadership.
- O. The cooperation between Russia and Turkey is multilayered, and the Armenian component is only one dimension in that complex relationship. It is also a work in progress: There are areas of disagreement and competition. Nonetheless, it is clear that both countries want to keep the SC within their purview, and they share an interest in keeping the West out of what they consider their area of influence. For that purpose, they are also willing to offer Iran more of a voice. In this respect, the interests of Nagorno-Karabakh and even Armenia come second to the wider interests of these states.
- P. Even if this cooperation between Russia and Turkey is not extended to all issues or does not have a long life, it is sufficient to make the kind of impact on the SC that will limit Armenia’s options for a long time to come.
- Q. The establishment of real and long-term peace, stability, and cooperation in the SC will require for Azerbaijan and Turkey to recognize that although the issues of most concern to them may have been resolved fully or largely, the Armenian side has issues that are as legitimate and are yet to be addressed, and therefore their long-term goals must take those issues into consideration.

1.2. Armenia

- A. It is important to note that post-Soviet Armenia was born from a two-pronged challenge: establishing a sovereign state supported by a democratic system, and taking charge of a national question in need of a solution—the future of Karabakh. Within the trajectory of Armenian statehood, those two dimensions became intensely intertwined. (See Appendix B.)
- B. Armenia’s Velvet Revolution did not produce foreign policy, defense, or security dividends; it was not even an asset in the diplomatic field during the war or after the defeat. Still, Armenia’s citizens chose to reject once more the authoritarian and mostly corrupt regimes of the past two decades, thus belying the calculation of some that the loss to an authoritarian regime would have strengthened their hands in returning to power. Those are the same forces that also argue that Russian suspicions of Armenia’s leader and his democratic credentials caused the delay in Russia’s intervention in the 2020 war.
- C. The foreign and security policies of Armenia were built as a response to a mid-1990s reality, consisting of the following factors:
 - 1. The US held a dominant and proactive role in international relations and often acted as the force of restraint on regional powers.
 - 2. Russia systematically countered NATO-member Turkey.
 - 3. Turkey would not venture into the SC.

Those assumptions are no longer valid, which means that Armenia’s security environment has changed and its policies must now reflect new realities.

- D. A fourth assumption, that Armenia was protected against any Turkish aggression by its 1997 treaty with Russia, is still valid. But Turkey’s significant support to Azerbaijan in the last war against Karabakh has raised concerns and fears. Those concerns must be explored with Russia and those fears must be addressed.
- E. Yet the first task remains: a proper and objective assessment of all threats. Turkey has assisted Azerbaijan in its military campaign; but, despite the loud and persistent alarms and warnings, Turkey has not killed a single citizen of Armenia on the soil of Armenia and it has not taken an inch of territory from it; Armenian soldiers were killed by Turkish drones in the war theater during the last Karabakh war.
- F. When threats are exaggerated and magnified, the country misses opportunities to deal with them diplomatically, as may be the case in regard to Turkey; when threats are underestimated, as was the case with regard to Azerbaijan in the previous 20 or so years,

the country loses wars. Hatred of the two neighbors constitutes neither the essence of a good Armenian nor makes for a good strategy.

- G. Armenia's options in designing and implementing foreign and security options have always been limited; now, they are even more constrained, especially when security is understood in its broadest context.
- H. Armenia and Karabakh cannot ignore the continuing problem of emigration, especially of the young. This trend may intensify in the near future, especially if what is offered to the next generation is uncertainty, instability, and nonresolution of pending issues or, worse, another war, all of which will deter investments and encourage emigration.
- I. Even though this paper does not address the highly complex issues currently roiling the domestic front, it is necessary to point out that for small states, especially states, such as Armenia, that find themselves in precarious security conditions, it is practically impossible to separate domestic politics from foreign policy because of the important role that other countries play in almost every aspect of life in the republic and the minds of policymakers. That interconnectedness places a heavy burden on political forces and governments that must present to the people the real problems and options Armenia has, their proposed solutions, and the strategy they will use to put into effect their solutions.
- J. Government, political, intellectual, and media leaders must address in an intelligent and sensible way the largely unspoken, unstudied, yet evidently real problem that afflicts certain segments of society in Armenia, what might be termed an anti-Karabakh sentiment that has grown for a number of reasons. Such sentiments should be addressed and dealt with in a constructive and nonpoliticized manner. If not addressed, past mistakes will be repeated: Karabakhtsis will be stigmatized and pragmatists will be labeled traitors.

1.3. Karabakh

- A. As indicated earlier, the status of Karabakh comprises not one, but two component questions. The first is under whose sovereignty does it function—its own sovereignty as an independent state or that of another state or mandate? The second is how is it to be governed?
- B. Is the future status of Karabakh determined already, or is it still subject to negotiations? The positions of the various actors are conflicting and in some cases mutually exclusive. That does not bode well for the future:
 - 1. With regard to the first component of the status, the president of Azerbaijan has stated that the problem is solved: that Azerbaijan, which had claimed de jure

sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh, has now established de facto control as well, except for a segment of the once autonomous territory that it has temporarily entrusted to Russian peacekeepers. Neighbors and the rest of the international community agree with Azerbaijan. Some details need to be worked out, admits Baku, but they could be completed in due time. Those details are part of the second component of the status, the kind and degree of autonomy Armenians may have. Will Armenians have a territorially defined, self-governing Armenian Karabakh? No, says Baku. In the long run, it argues, Armenians can live in Karabakh if they want to, but they would do so as Azerbaijani citizens and would be governed as such, and that they will want to be part of the burgeoning economy that is being planned for that region. Prior to the war, the president of Azerbaijan had stated that the former autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh would have autonomy under Azerbaijan. But that was before Azerbaijan had to go to war to reverse the results of the first Karabakh war. It is difficult to say whether that position may change again.

2. The president of Russia, who mediated the Ceasefire Statement, has declared more than once since the end of the war that Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan, that it did not intervene in the war earlier because it considered Karabakh to be Azerbaijan, and that it sent its troops only when asked by Azerbaijan. So it is clear that when Russia refers to the status problem, it is referring to the second component of the status: whether what remains of Karabakh will be a self-governing territory, or the solution envisioned by Baku will prevail, or there will be some other arrangement.
3. The minister of foreign affairs of Russia has referred to the second dimension with two somewhat conflicting statements: (1) The OSCE Minsk Group could busy itself with that question, and (2) the status should be discussed after some years, when Armenians and Azeris have lived together and others can see how they get along, when solutions could be envisioned that do not appear possible today.
4. The Karabakh leadership considers both components unresolved: It does not recognize the sovereignty of Azerbaijan over the territory; it has stated categorically that no Armenian will be left in Karabakh if it finds itself under Azerbaijani suzerainty; it still mentions a campaign for independence; and it has no doubt that under any circumstances it will be self-governing. For that leadership, the single most relevant fact is the presence of the Russian troops, which represent the traditional Russia, the protector of Armenians, to which the Karabakh leadership now ties the territory's future.
5. The November 10, 2020, Ceasefire Statement, which is more than an agreement but less than a treaty, does not address the question of the status explicitly.

However, the first sentence of Paragraph 4 of that document states that Armenian forces will withdraw from Karabakh, parallel to the introduction of Russian peacekeeping forces. The question is, why should they? For some, the implicit answer is because Armenia's forces have no right to be there because Karabakh is Azerbaijani territory. Nonetheless, to date the government of Armenia has not made any statements that agree with that assessment, and there are indications that it still considers Artsakh not a part of Azerbaijan and believes that the Minsk Group should continue to negotiate the future of Karabakh.

6. No country, foreign leader, or regional or international organization has condemned Azerbaijan for initiating a new war and regaining not only the seven occupied districts but also the southern part of the former NKAO and Shushi. There were no condemnations, let alone demands for reversal of results, even though Azerbaijan's campaign had a number of dimensions that defied international norms.
 7. Thus, it can be assumed that at least neighbors and the international community, including "friends of Armenia," have reaffirmed their position that Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan, and Azerbaijan's means of achieving that victory has not and will not make any difference.
 8. Those who insist otherwise may be said to be involved in a new round of self-deception. To pursue any other solution, such as an independent Karabakh, is not only useless but also, under the present circumstances, potentially dangerous.
- C. Uncertainties remain regarding the level and kind of self-government Armenians in Karabakh may be given, while the Russian peacekeepers are still looking for a clearly defined mandate and mutually agreed upon rules of engagement. Karabakh's options will be even more limited than those of Armenia. As long as they are in Karabakh, Russian peacekeepers will likely be the ones to determine whether the Karabakh army exists and, if so, for how long and for what purpose. Baku has stated that it does not see a need for Karabakh to have any soldiers.
- D. Those uncertainties may not be conducive to the return of all Karabakhtsis to their homes and to their long-term commitment to remain there. And neither Russia nor Azerbaijan seems to be in a hurry to remove that uncertainty.
- E. Russia is comfortable with the hybrid nature of the November 10 Statement (neither merely a ceasefire nor a full-fledged international treaty), as the statement suits its interests, except for it attempts to clarify the mandate of its peacekeeping troops. Russia would like to consolidate its presence in Azerbaijan with a clear mandate; Azerbaijan has so far deftly sidestepped those attempts.

- F. From the point of view of the region's future, which is going to be under a kind of Russo-Turkish (and Iranian?) condominium for the next few years at least, and where at the same time the main predicament is uncertainty, one or both of these regional powers may be more assertive or less so in the medium run. Russian peacekeepers may be asked to leave as early as in 2025, at the end of the first five-year term, or at any five-year interval thereafter. Although Russia's footing in Karabakh suggests that it will do its utmost to stay there for a long time, Moscow may decide, at least hypothetically, to pursue a different policy for its own reasons.
- G. Any policy or action that reflects a policy of rejection of the November 10 Statement, or an attempt to reverse by force the outcome of the war consecrated in that document, may constitute a reason for Azerbaijan to restart military hostilities against what remains of Karabakh, and possibly repeat its pressure campaign on the Armenian border.
- H. It should not be forgotten that, although they were not asked to sign the November 10, 2020, Ceasefire Statement, the leaders of Karabakh urged the prime minister of Armenia to agree to any condition and sign the Statement in order to put an end to the Azerbaijani advances. Thus, Karabakh authorities benefited from Armenia's action and bear a responsibility in that regard.
- I. The November Statement has ambiguities, some of which are constructive. Such ambiguities offer windows of opportunity to improve Armenia's position using deft and well-intentioned negotiations with Azerbaijan.
- J. It is with regard to those ambiguities and uncertainties that the West intends to inject itself again actively in discussions and negotiations, for which Azerbaijan, Russia, and Turkey do not see much need. The Armenian side, especially Armenia, may be able to take advantage of a return of the West, provided it does not (a) misinterpret the reasons why it wants to be more involved in the issue and (b) overestimate what the West can and is willing to deliver.
- K. In planning for policies that will connect the international community to the Karabakh conflict, Armenia and Karabakh must realize that the result of the war has (a) reduced the scope of the many dimensions of the conflict, and (b) regionalized it, compared with the more internationalized character it had prior to the war.
- L. The conflict has also now moved to Armenia's borders. Azerbaijan is using aggressive rhetoric, including the threat of a new war, accompanied by military actions on its border with Armenia, in pursuit of two goals: (a) to compel Armenia to open some kind of a special communication/transport link between Western Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan called for in the November 10, 2020, Ceasefire Statement. Baku thinks that

this should be a corridor equivalent to the Lachin one; Armenia thinks it need not be a special arrangement, that open, normal communications would be sufficient; and (b) to compel Armenia to formally recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, which, in turn, would trigger its own recognition of Armenia's territorial integrity and possibly end its postwar destabilizing behavior. These two interrelated matters constitute Armenia's perhaps most difficult policy decision. Their resolution, whether in the form of Armenia's preferred option or Azerbaijan's preferred option, will have significant consequences for the territory of Armenia, its economy, and the local communities affected by it. Therefore, Armenia must consider it a priority of its foreign policy to be among the decisionmakers and stakeholders of that resolution.

1.4. Need for Debate

- A. For a country whose choices have already been limited, the necessity for normal discourse and debate, as opposed to verbal abuses and hysteric noise that make discussion impossible, is crucial.
- B. Debate can begin by answering a few interrelated and immediately relevant questions: Do Armenia and Karabakh accept the November 10, 2020, tripartite Statement? If yes, then what? If not, how would an Armenian government or Karabakh authorities propose to change it? If by negotiations, with whom? If by war, how? Will the rebuilding of Armenia be on the basis of the new realities, or does Armenia aim at changing realities and place Armenia on a constant war footing?
- C. For a fruitful debate on those and other questions, it is important to determine whether differences of opinion are the result of (a) differences based on rational and verifiable analyses, and therefore are a matter of interpretations; (b) strictly political in nature, meaning positions and policies are only convenient tools to achieve power; and (c) philosophical in nature, which means that there are deep chasms in the way different groups see the future of Armenia, Armenians, and their relationship to the region and world.
- D. The next question that should be answered now is what kind of Armenia do its leaders and people envision for the future, considering the nation's capabilities and potential, real assets, and limitations? The answer to that question will, or at least should, determine Armenian short- and long-term policies. Illusions should not be presented as visions. Visions, unlike illusions, must correspond to assets, either currently held or reasonably obtainable with proper and intelligent strategies and investments of resources. Armenia and Armenians should not forget that aiming to create a viable, functional—in a word, normal—state is at least a prerequisite to any other sort of vision they might cherish.

- E. There is no shame in recognizing weaknesses, including those in relation to others. There is harm in not doing so. Harsh rhetoric and maximalism will not redress the imbalance except for domestic political consumption; everyone else sees Armenia's and Karabakh vulnerabilities. One cannot compensate the significance of one's current weakness by projecting to be a superpower tomorrow, which requires keeping citizens in the dark or, worse, blinding them.
- F. It is important to keep in mind that what Armenian leaders say and do are as important in outcomes as what others say and do.
- G. Armenian leaders and citizens could choose to engage in a debate on these questions and to opt for an answer. It is the responsibility of political parties, intellectual elites, and media to present credible choices to citizens as a key in the consolidation of Armenia's aspirations to be a functioning state and more.

Section 2. Recommendations

Before engaging in specific concerns and recommendations, it is most useful to repeat three general areas of fundamental significance for the future of Armenia, formulated in 2018 by the late distinguished diplomat Rouben Shougarian:

- A. Armenia should put its house in order.
- B. Armenia has to reconcile state and national interests, in general, but especially during moments of conflict and war.
- C. Armenia should have a serious discussion on national identity that can lead to a consensus on where Armenia belongs culturally and politically.⁷

There are four ways policy can be designed:

1. By reflex or hubris
2. By thinking about institutional or party interests
3. By simulating analysis: starting with an opinion or belief, presenting it as the conclusion of a serious deliberation, then engineering back to find facts and arguments that justify it
4. By actually posing the right question, analyzing and assessing without predetermined outcomes, and considering short- and long-term changes and patterns that lead to the best possible outcomes

⁷ Rouben Shougarian, *Does Armenia Need a Foreign Policy?* 2nd edition, 2019, pp. 269-270. (See Appendix D for an extended, representative quote from this volume.)

The authors of this report believe that Armenia and Karabakh can no longer afford the luxury of the first three ways, which can lead, and have led to, policies based on illusions, leading to catastrophic consequences.

The authors' recommendations will be for two stages in policymaking and implementation.⁸

The first stage covers immediate concerns. What should be done, and what should **NOT** be done **NOW**? Small states, especially those that find themselves in a dire situation, often bring additional disasters by not having a list of what NOT to do.

2.1. Immediate Concerns

Steps That Should Be Taken Now

- A. The Armenian government and Armenian political forces should recognize the full range and depth of losses that state and people have suffered which impede Armenia's ability to make and implement policy, as well the more limited nature of policy choices now available. Without such an inventory, a government is more likely to make new mistakes.
- B. It is necessary to create an independent commission of inquiry into the processes and steps that led Armenia to war, and the reasons for its defeat, as opposed to the harmful practice of leaks of partial pieces of information. Such a commission should have full authority to investigate, but it must be independent of the government and free from political influence and interference. The investigation should be empirical and nonpolitical.
- C. The government and political forces should assess fully, honestly, and realistically the significance of the policies and positions of other countries near and far; of international organizations; and of the mediators before, during, and immediately after the war in regard to the war itself and also to the positions taken by the parties to the conflict.
- D. The government should weigh very carefully any steps or policies that do not recognize a simple reality: Currently, the fate of Karabakh depends much more on Russia and Azerbaijan, possibly also Turkey, and conceivably Iran as well. Those countries have also much to say on the choices Armenia has and its ability to implement its own policy. The government would be wise, therefore, to look seriously at the most productive way to deal with those states.

⁸ This report will not address imminent issues, such as the return of civilians and POWs still detained by Azerbaijan, and other immediate humanitarian crises emanating from the war and agreed upon in the Statement of November 10, 2020.

- E. The government should start a process of redefinition of the defense concept and the purpose of its armed forces, including the role of its air force, an extremely expensive branch of the AF that did not play a role in the last war; it should reconstitute its armed forces in view of new realities and new technologies and on the basis of the redefinition of its defense concept.
- F. The government should initiate a review of its security strategy, including the search for new alliances.
- G. The government should initiate an in-depth study of its foreign policy, but also reassess its diplomacy, re-evaluate the preparation of diplomats, and reimagine the role of the ministry of foreign affairs.
- H. The government should reduce tensions with Azerbaijan and Turkey and open with them lines of communication—discreet or otherwise—to understand and assess their policies, forthrightly and calmly. Those discussions might evolve into negotiations on matters of current and future mutual concern. Neighbors and the international community are bound to support such initiatives. That includes Russia, which has stated so explicitly.
- I. The government should invite the best possible minds in Armenia and in the Diaspora to assist in all of the above inquires and studies, including experts in the fields of cyber and information technologies.
- J. The government should assess its negotiating and decision-making personnel with particular care.
- K. The new government should act on the premise that entering into a new status quo of neither war nor peace will be too much of a burden because of Armenia’s current multilayered weaknesses, and it would impede progress in many areas of social and economic life. That fact should also be communicated clearly and unequivocally to the people of Armenia.
- L. Armenia can and should have a leading role in nurturing the human resources with a high level of economic and social assistance to Karabakh.
- M. One point of the agreement with Karabakh should be that the best it can do currently is to deescalate the situation with Azerbaijan so that Azerbaijani leaders are encouraged to enter into contacts with the authorities of Karabakh, and vice versa.
- N. Finally, sometime very soon Armenia must make a fundamental, strategic decision regarding what kind of response it will adopt to the new situations that have been

created, the kind of state and society it aims to be, and what role it will assume in the South Caucasus region. Once that choice is made, it should be presented and explained in a comprehensive manner to the people of Armenia and to Armenians. Both deserve to be informed on where they stand and what options they have if Armenia is to avoid becoming a failed state and to instead become relevant in the region and beyond. (See the options described under Conclusions.)

What Should NOT Be Done

- A. The government should not rely on reflexive and reactive policies and rhetoric in its diplomatic discourse. The state's diplomatic options cannot be limited by the reflexive antagonism and hostile rhetoric that some political forces display toward two, even three, of Armenia's four neighbors, and which is readily confused with policy or strategy.
- B. The government should not confuse lobbying with diplomacy, and it should not be influenced by lobbying standards and goals. Diplomacy is the pursuit in the international arena of the interests of large and small nations; lobbying is the task of Diasporan community organizations, which must obey the laws and rules of the host countries; which cannot stray too far from the interests of those countries; and which are also subject to intracommunity rivalries and local considerations. The security interests of the people and state of Armenia and Karabakh cannot be subordinated to the requirements of lobbying organizations.
- C. Similarly, the government and political forces should not confuse the agenda of the nation with that of the state. The "nation" includes all Armenians, no matter where they are in the world or what regimes and governments they live under. The state is a territorially defined entity with a clearly defined population for whose security and welfare it is responsible, in accordance with international rights and obligations. The state has a government that is responsible to and for its people. The vital interests of the state and the people that the state is responsible for should not be diluted, even subverted, by trying to please the Diaspora communities.
- D. The government should resist the temptation to base its current diplomacy on arguments that aim to prove Azerbaijan won the war unfairly, which amounts to diplomacy by justification for defeat and to begging for sympathy. Other governments know better than the Armenian governments of the aid that Turkey and Islamist jihadists provided to Azerbaijan. Those facts do not make Azerbaijani victory less consequential, nor Armenia's defeat less palpable.
- E. The government should not think that the purpose of foreign policy is to find what is wrong with statements and actions by Azerbaijan and Turkey and to advertise them, or base its foreign policy on them. Rather, the government should consider all the words

and actions of those two countries and understand the complex and sometimes contradictory policies of Turkey and Azerbaijan in their entirety, lest Armenia miss openings and opportunities to discuss and possibly to resolve problems through diplomacy.

- F. Armenian diplomacy should avoid, and should be cautious about, any conjectural instrumentalization by major powers of Armenia's current problems with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Other governments do not have permanent "friends" or "foes." Such instrumentalizations are, by definition, possible because of temporary alignments of the interests of other states, and therefore subject to change or reversal at any time. There may be a net benefit of such instrumentalization, but the negative consequences could be much more significant.
- G. The Armenian government should not assign other governments roles these countries cannot assume, and in fact have not assumed and have made clear they will not assume. And so it should not give its diplomats assignments that are impossible to achieve.
- H. Armenia should not count on the "imminent collapse" of any particular enemy country, or the removal or defeat of any particular antagonistic leader. Even at their weakest, most of the countries around Armenia that matter are stronger than Armenia is.
- I. The government should avoid relying on the denigration of antagonistic states and governments as a tool to appear more Western, more democratic, and more respectful of human rights. These are at best mere diversions that seem to cover for the absence of a real policy goal or strategy.
- J. The government and political leaders should not confuse fantasy with political imagination or a visionary program. The first is characterized by its absence of any connection to reality, the second is based on achievable, realistic goals and methods that have not been utilized or conceived.
- K. The government should not assume that what is bad for Azerbaijan and Turkey is necessarily good for Armenia and Karabakh, or that what is good for them is necessarily bad for the Armenian side.
- L. The government and political leaders should realize that slogans, declarations of noble goals, and moral values do not amount to a road map for a long-term, focused recovery.
- M. The government should not assign state institutions and agencies responsibilities and goals they cannot possibly achieve in order to claim authoring lofty plans and ideals.
- N. Considering the current state of Armenia's AF, the Armenian government should do everything possible in its power to avoid renewal of military hostilities, regardless of

what aims are adopted in the long run. Armenia and Karabakh cannot afford new misadventures and miscalculations.

2.2. Recommendations for Long-Term Foreign Policy Development

1. On Karabakh

The following are the hypothetical possibilities regarding the future of Karabakh:

- A. **Independence:** This was the goal before the war and is still on the list of foreign policy goals of Karabakh, although it is no longer the leading one. The campaign was based on the right of a people to self-determination. Even so, independence is less of a possibility after the war than it was before the war, for reasons that were discussed earlier in this report.
- B. **Remedial secession:** This is another path toward independence, used in connection with Kosovo. Yet the reason the West created and used that path was more related to geopolitical interests that do not apply to Karabakh. On the contrary, here geopolitical interests of other states mandate nonrecognition of Karabakh's independence under any circumstance, unless the impossible is made possible and Azerbaijan agrees to it.
- C. **Russian protectorate** of some form or another: This is the current status and applies to the part of Karabakh that is not under direct Azerbaijani control. Can this status, or any version of it, be the solution? The ceasefire statement establishing the peacekeeping force can be renewed in five-year intervals. But the possibility of that happening indefinitely can be ruled out, as Azerbaijan can request that the Russians withdraw at some point in the future or, less likely, Russia decides to withdraw. The uncertainty this situation indicates may be a serious deterrent to the stability and confidence Karabakh Armenians need to return and rebuild. Additionally, just as Azerbaijan lost its patience in waiting for a negotiated solution, it may reach a point in this case, too, where it can no longer tolerate the presence of Russian troops or Karabakh Armenians' rejection of the logic of the outcome of the war. The question that will need to be addressed is, Will Russia insist on remaining in Azerbaijan if Azerbaijan exercises its right to end Russian presence?
- D. **Replacement of Russian peacekeepers with another, possibly non-cochair OSCE country's:** Russia would resist such a move because that would threaten its interests in the region; Azerbaijan may welcome it as less threatening to its sovereignty; Karabakh would certainly oppose such a move because it does not trust others and would feel that it is betraying Russia.

What we have, then, are scenarios that accentuate rather than decrease the gap between the mutually exclusive positions between Karabakh and Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan and Russia, Russia

and the West, and probably Karabakh and Armenia. Such multiple antagonisms do not bode well for the sense of security that Armenians must possess when returning to Karabakh or deciding whether to stay there or leave.

A fifth possibility exists for the future of Karabakh:

- E. **An accommodation between Karabakh and Azerbaijan:** An acceptance by Karabakh of Azerbaijani sovereignty in return for a territorially defined status with a high level of self-government and Russian/international guarantees and some form of Russian/international presence. This option can possibly be considered as a reserve plan, too.

That fifth option is seen by many Karabakhtsis as a certain path to the “Nakhichevanization” of Karabakh: that is, the slow dilution of its Armenian majority and the ultimate loss of the territory. That possibility exists, of course. Yet, there should be a serious and objective analysis before the worst is assumed and considered the most likely. Such an analysis should consider that Karabakh in and by itself is no longer a threat to Azerbaijan, and should answer the following question: Is it possible that Baku has its own reasons to have Armenians remain in Karabakh? Too many assumptions are assumed as truth, and too little is examined in this logic, thus limiting the options that are at least worthy of scrutiny.

It is worth repeating: Aiming at the impossible is likely to leave one with nothing; working toward what is possible and what can be salvaged is more likely to produce results.

- A. Ideally, any differences between the choices Karabakh and Armenia make should still be subjected to the same overall aim: to preserve the Armenian population of Karabakh on their ancestral lands, to ensure it is secure, and to also ensure it is as free as possible; and to sacrifice as small a part of sovereignty as possible for the benefit of enhanced security and the satisfaction of the existential needs of the individuals and communities concerned.
- B. Yet, Armenia may and should conclude that its own long-term security, stability, and wellbeing require normalization of relations with Azerbaijan. Armenia must also accept that (a) Karabakh seems to have made its decision to leave out all options but total reliance on the presence of Russian troops, no matter what Armenia may think, and (b) Yerevan has little leverage on what the future holds for Karabakh. Under the circumstances, Armenia may have to decide whether it is wise to adopt Karabakh’s position on a future that excludes any consideration of other options and any negotiations, but which Stepanakert is urging Armenia to adopt at some peril for the latter.
- C. In Karabakh the goal should be to negotiate the rights of the local population rather than to formulate an ideal-type solution as the ultimate and nonnegotiable goal. Toward this

goal, the local population should participate actively in the negotiations on the territory's status. They are no longer talking about Karabakh's independence or its attachment to Armenia, but rather its non-integration into Azerbaijan and its ultimate right to self-determination. The leaders of Karabakh should have their own serious and objective analysis of real options and risks, and communicate their thought processes with their own people.

- D. The key to the long-term resolution of the conflict may not lie in negotiations limited to the issues of Nagorno-Karabakh; rather, it may be related to the implementation of an effective Armenian foreign policy within a new European and Eurasian security architecture. It will require a careful balancing act, possible cooptation of these goals by Russia and the other mediators, and their acceptance by the local population. Unlike independence, however, it would be an achievable goal given the possibility of a more receptive constellation of interests among the major players.
- E. In the short-term, the main decisions will be taken in Moscow, Ankara, and Baku, but Yerevan's positions should be properly conceived and defended. The future Armenian government should therefore switch to a dual-track approach: opening direct channels of communication with Baku and Ankara, facilitating the opening of economic links within the region, engaging in other issues of mutual interest, and making clear its willingness to construct good-neighborly relations.

In the end, the leaders and people of Karabakh must do an in-depth risk management analysis, keeping in mind the miscalculations they made before the 2020 war. Leaders of Karabakh and Armenia must weigh the risks involved in each available option, since there is no good solution: There is not even a bad solution, in that what is available are very bad and even worst solutions. Which option has a higher probability of securing the long-term and secure life for an Armenian Karabakh? For over two decades, thinking about Karabakh was so rigidly limited that neither Karabakh's nor Armenia's leaders had a reserve plan in case their first plan failed. They should not be in the same position now.

2. On Armenia

- A. Armenia must adopt a clear guide for its foreign and security policies based on multiple possible scenarios. The aim should be the preservation and consolidation of sovereignty not as a slogan or abstract trait but as an essential mechanism for the independent definition and pursuit of national interests and form of government that its people choose to have. The best way to achieve that is to resolve its conflicts with its neighbors, reduce the real threats to its sovereignty and territory, and adopt a peaceful and representative method of selecting leaders who will define and pursue the interests of the state.

- B. Armenia must strive to regain the degree of sovereignty it has lost. But it must seek a path toward recovery by maneuvering within the realm of possibilities, which are now defined by harsh new realities. Exaggerating the West's willingness to help Armenia while subjecting Russia's behavior to moral tests is not that path. Neither in the 1997 Treaty with Russia nor in any other document since has Russia promised to assist Karabakh militarily in case of war with Azerbaijan. On the contrary, Russia has repeatedly said it considers Karabakh to be part of Azerbaijan and would not recognize Karabakh's independence, and insisted that the seven districts around Karabakh under Armenian control should be returned. To further complicate the picture, Russia knew that some of the weapons it sold to Armenia were being transferred to the Karabakh front; and Armenia knew that Russia was selling arms to Azerbaijan as well.
- C. In addition to working closely with Russia and building a robust defense, the best way to achieve its goals is to begin a dialogue with all concerned, even if separately and confidentially at first, in an exploratory and informal setting.
- D. Thus, Armenia should take the initiative to develop a comprehensive framework for a dialog with Azerbaijan, tackling contentious issues one by one, leading to the normalization of relations.
- E. In time. Armenia should make a realistic and unbiased assessment of perceived threats and undertake measures first to ease/eliminate tensions and then work toward normalization of relations as an integral component of a long-term security system.
- F. In that regard, the developments of the intergovernmental working group on the demarcation of the borders with Azerbaijan will be a significant milestone. At any rate, especially given the lackluster allied commitments displayed by Russia thus far, Armenia should also seek other ways to secure its borders.
- G. The institutionalized Armenophobia in both Azerbaijan and Turkey would be one of the areas to be discussed with those two countries. A consolidated peace with them will require a different kind of rhetoric, one that moves from a humiliating insistence on subordination toward one of coexistence, in both theory and practice.
- H. Armenia must make clear to its citizens that the opening of communication lines and roads is an instrument to normalize neighborly relations in the long term, as well as to open a path toward regional small-scale cooperation. Such measures will not by themselves bring peace. But they will offer a chance to make war a more costly option in the future for all stakeholders of the conflict.
- I. As is the case in general with all borders of Armenia, the first and most urgent priority regarding Syunik must be its protection and defense, including through the use of modern surveillance/information technologies. That process of protection and defense,

however, should be made compatible with a medium-term prospect of internationalization of life in the region, involving a variety of international partners, and on the backdrop of the lifting of blockades.

- J. Finally, as a long-term perspective of Armenia's self-projection in its region and beyond, Armenia may and should seriously consider the advantages of developing a foreign and security policy based on neutrality, commonly evolved with Georgia and Azerbaijan over a period of time. Thus, perceived and real threats to its security and the security of its neighbors would diminish. Under the right circumstances, such an approach can also be supported by the three major neighbors of the region—Iran, Turkey, and Russia—as well as the wider international community. In the long run, neutrality, however labeled, may be a safer and more permanent alternative to the options that have dominated discourse on this subject to date: pro-Russian, pro-West, and the policy of complementarity. (See Appendix C.)

3. On Diplomats and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- A. The most important point with regard to Armenian diplomacy and diplomats is the following: Diplomacy should be seen as an integral component of the security system of Armenia, along with armed forces and alliances. That approach is vital especially for a small country with limited resources, such as Armenia. Diplomacy should not be seen solely as a public relations service. When used effectively and thoughtfully, diplomacy is as likely to decrease or neutralize threats and dangers as wars and armies—if not more likely.
- B. The education of diplomats should be improved and made to reflect the position assigned to them in point A, above.
- C. The system of assignments of diplomats to posts must be made more coherent and fully meritocratic.
- D. The system of education of diplomats should include steeping the diplomat in the history, culture, and politics of the country or region where the diplomat is assigned.
- E. The government should establish a national school of diplomacy, sustained through partnerships with other schools but where state interests are taught.
- F. The diplomatic school should benefit from the precious experience and competence of a number of former high-profile officials, for the benefit of both current personnel and the next generation of diplomats; similarly, with diplomats and guest instructors from the Diaspora and other countries, in general.

- G. The government should pay special attention to the strengthening of the foreign ministry as an institution and ensure its involvement in policy development and decision-making, in addition to its traditional role of policy implementation, in order for diplomacy and political considerations to be more in harmony.

2.3. On Security and Defense

1. Recommendations on Military Doctrine and Practice

- A. Establish a commission of inquiry on the doctrine (understood in this paper as ways and methods of conducting military operations, as well as relevant tactics, techniques, and procedures [TTPs]), preparation, and execution of the September 2020 war.
- B. Protecting by itself the entire length of its current borders is impossible for Armenia (1300 km), all the more so because for Azerbaijan those borders are not internationally agreed upon but are, rather, “lines of contact.”
- C. The government needs a complete needs assessment in regard to ensuring the protection of the border with Azerbaijan, and where the government now stands in relation to that capacity.
- D. Assess where fortified areas are necessary and useful, and where other types of defense protection systems (such as patrols and technical surveillance systems) would be more suited.
- E. Armenia’s demography is a ticking time bomb; it is already a major problem. In that sense, the professionalization of a small army should be an option seriously studied. The size of that force would need to be determined, but their numbers would certainly be below what they were before 2020.
- F. Armenia needs to explore non-Russian types of military doctrine and to acknowledge that the Soviet/Russian way of war based on military science (as opposed to art of war) and algorithms had even led Armenia to neglect approaches it could have used from its own studies and experience.
- G. Armenia cannot leave the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) or the Russian mutual defense treaty for the foreseeable future, unless there is major turmoil in Russia; however, that does not mean Russia should be the answer to all of Armenia’s current challenges.

2. Recommendations on Security

- H. Armenia's longstanding problem is that if it does not regain some degree of maneuverability, it will be at the mercy of Russia's willingness to intervene, or not, in each case of military threat or border violation. So, for the long term, Armenia should aim at changing its security system.
- I. Armenia has to develop its own model to minimize threats along with clearly defined goals for Armenia's AF. With that goal in mind, serious thought should be given to the option of neutrality for Armenia. This option requires serious consideration.
- J. Security must be understood in its widest sense possible. Any area that could affect the territorial integrity of the republic and its ability to defend itself and its people, including the essentials for the wellbeing of its people, must be considered part of its security definition and agenda. In this regard, the following are areas that have been identified as integral to Armenia's security:
1. Physical security: threats to Armenia's territorial integrity and the lives of its people
 2. Diplomatic security: adequate alliances that provide diplomatic support in the international arena
 3. Cyber and infrastructure security: prevention of attacks that could cripple the essential branches of the government and its ability to deliver services
 4. Communication security: adequate alternative routes
 5. Transportation security
 6. Water and food security
 7. Energy security
 8. Environmental security, in view of serious impact of climate change
 9. Demographic security, reversing downward trends
 10. Cultural security, protecting national heritage in the region
 11. Economic and financial security
 12. Political security: stability, predictability based on legitimacy of power.⁹
- K. It would also be advisable to consider a new dimension, "intellectual security," which could be defined as the creation and preservation of an atmosphere of free inquiry and discussion into all matters of public policy and national interest can be secured. The absence of such an atmosphere was a factor in the development of a dangerous seeming consensus on how the Karabakh conflict should have been dealt with.

⁹ Many writers have offered definitions and solutions to Armenia's security problem. The authors have benefited in this case from an article by Raffi Kassarian, "12 Imperatives for Armenia's Future," published in EVN Report on December 1, 2020, <https://www.evnreport.com/politics/12-imperatives-for-securing-armenia-s-future>

- L. Threats to security, especially to physical security, should not be politicized or ideologized; Armenia has to develop a reliable, objective, and nonideological framework to assess threats. Any government must define threats as clearly as possible and differentiate between actual and perceived threats. Underestimating a threat can lead to disasters; but overestimating a threat, for whatever reason, would make it impossible to see windows of opportunity to diminish that threat.
- M. Diplomacy, a proactive one, must be seen as an integral part of the solution to Armenia's security challenges. Providing for adequate military defenses and building alliances against threats is only one part of the solution. The other essential part is the proper and targeted use of diplomacy.

3. Recommendations for Reforms on Armenia's Armed Forces

Armenia must undergo deep reforms of its armed forces so as to solve pressing national security issues.

Advocating a new, improved, and more modern army, as a reflexive reaction to the losses in the 2020 war, should not satisfy Armenia and Karabakh. There should be a clear mission assigned to that army. But what would the task assigned to the AF be?

- A. To defend Armenia's borders from incursions or resist long enough against an invader to secure Russia's assistance against the invader?
- B. To be ready to assist what remains of Karabakh if Azerbaijan renews hostilities, in order to bring that territory under its direct control?
- C. To build enough capabilities to go on the offensive and restart the war for the purpose of regaining the lost territories, and possibly more?

(For a detailed set of recommendations regarding the AF, please refer to Appendix E.)

4. Diaspora

- A. The government should not rely excessively on the diplomatic reach of Diasporan organizations that function essentially as lobbying groups when dealing with their governments.
- B. The government should also not overestimate the Diaspora's actual financial and investment capabilities.

- C. The Diaspora can be a valuable source of ideas, analyses, perspectives, and research, more than it has been asked to contribute so far, in addition to the humanitarian and related areas that have dominated the relationship to date.
- D. The government should prepare a businesslike presentation, not just rely on nationalistic and patriotic rhetoric, to draw investments, especially in the south of the republic. Diaspora businessmen have enough experience with the investment environment in Armenia to know to be careful, especially considering the current situation. Many of these businessmen have lost a great deal after investing in Karabakh, Shushi included. Armenia should be able to convince them of future stability and security, which is why it is also important to speak to Turkey and Azerbaijan.
- E. A human resources inventory of the Diaspora should be completed and put to use in as many areas as possible. A good portion of Diaspora resources remain untapped.
- F. The government be transparent regarding the expenditure of funds from the Diaspora in general, but especially those provided during the war, by periodic reports in required detail.
- G. Discussions should be conducted between the government and lobbying groups/political parties in the Diaspora on the direction of lobbying so as to avoid working against one another. Nonetheless, the Armenian government must realize that although the Diaspora can afford to base its politics on illusions, and perhaps even needs such illusions for purposes of survival and mobilization, the Armenian government and the people of Armenia cannot afford any illusions.

Section 3. Conclusions

Armenia's citizens and leaders will face stark choices as to their future. The country confronts major challenges, including a nationalist ideology not suited to ease the problems of a precarious statehood—such as an economy stunted by transportation blockades and military overcommitment, and an overdependence on the good graces of outside powers (notably Russia) that do not share all of Armenia's foreign policy goals.

Armenian political parties and leaders should offer their solutions to the grave domestic and international crises affecting Armenia and Karabakh. Most of those parties and leaders bear a degree of responsibility for those crises, for the unrealistic, often fantasy-based, policies they pursued, and for actively encouraging or complying with policies that led to war and then to defeat.

The authors of this document know that it is difficult for Armenians to accept that their side was defeated and that defense mechanisms to evade responsibility are easily erected. One of the

defenses is to use a rhetoric even more nationalistic than what led the country to disaster in the first place.

Governments and opposition parties are now duty bound to speak frankly and openly with the people. The country and society cannot find their way if the facts, available options, and capabilities are obscured, if they are fed slogans instead of honest assessments, as has been the case in the past. Political and intellectual elites should not turn discourse into a competition as to who can talk the most and say the least, who can curse the loudest and insult the most, and who can promise heaven on earth. The Armenian people deserve better.

Underlying the choices that must be made on so many issues and fronts by the new government will be the vision that government leaders will have promised the people during the campaign, as well as the path the government will take to ensure the recovery of the people and of the state. This promise must include the guarantee that the government will be able to avoid monstrous mistakes that result from relying on illusions, and the sincere desire to achieve peace, stability, and normalcy first, and eventually maybe more.

Whether the question is the future of Karabakh, Armenia's economic and social recovery, its relations with neighbors, or Armenia's place in the region and the world, the possibilities can be summarized in three options:

- A. Armenia rejects the conditions and foundation of the November 10, 2020, Statement and aims at rebuilding a state with the strongest possible army. All resources are then devoted to the building of such a militarized state, for the purpose of initiating a new war to reverse the outcome of the last one. In this option, it pursues a diplomacy aimed at securing independence for Karabakh and achieving military superiority over Azerbaijan, Turkey, and other allies of Baku.
- B. Armenia does not implement the November 10, 2020, Statement, aims at becoming a garrison state with a very strong military that can resist Azerbaijani or Turkish attacks, and refuses to open its communication routes. This is because Armenia does not wish to see its eternal enemies, Azerbaijan and Turkey, benefit from these open routes, although it would not be Armenia's intention to initiate a new war of reconquest. In this situation, the future of Karabakh is entrusted to Russia, and Armenia would be prepared to assist Karabakh militarily should the need arise again.
- C. Armenia accepts the causes, impact, and significance of the defeat as a matter of fact, and it focuses on healing collective and family trauma, and on rebuilding its economy, social cohesion, state institutions, educational and health systems, and a modern defense army with a well-defined, reasonable mission. In this case, with regard to Karabakh it works to secure the best possible status for Armenians by working with Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran, and the international community, using diplomacy to ensure the best possible guarantees. Any modification of the November 10 Statement would be

pursued through negotiations, including direct negotiations with Azerbaijan and Russia. In formulating possible solutions regarding the future status of Karabakh, Armenian policymakers would make contingencies for two scenarios: Russian peacekeepers' remaining in Karabakh, or leaving Karabakh for whatever reason at some point in the future. Eventually, Armenia would normalize diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey and reduce or eliminate real or perceived existential threats. In this, it would certainly have support from all international players.

The first of the options is simply illusory, if not suicidal. The second comes close to what the country had for the last 20 or more years but did not lead to either peace and security or stability and prosperity. The authors of this paper see no real and realistic option but the third.

Those who disagree must prove the assumptions they hold to have a solid base; such assumptions were taken for granted before the war, but were proven to be false, with disastrous consequences. They must prove that there are solid bases and good reasons to believe that what was not possible to achieve in the last 25 years under leaders who assured the people of victory under any circumstance will be possible to achieve now. And that it will be possible to have other countries, friend and foe, to think in terms of Armenia's wishes and not in terms of their interests.

Armenia was not created and independence was not achieved as an arena where leaders compete to show who hates its neighbors most. The people created an independent state by overcoming fear in order to live normally and create the best environment for the people to prosper and develop their own dreams and visions. Those goals cannot be achieved by promises that cannot be kept and fantasies that defy realities.

What other calamity must befall the Armenian people and state before Armenian governments and elites decide to be honest with themselves and act accordingly? They may hide the harsh realities from our people and from themselves, but the rest of the world sees and knows all too well the result of the war, the reasons of that result, and its significance for the future.

Armenia and Armenians must learn to define fundamental values around which agreement is essential if the state is to survive, and agree on how to resolve differences on the rest. That begins with respecting the constitution and the laws of the land and by transcending partisan and party interests and egos.

There was no unity government in the early 1990s, and there was no unity in Armenia or the Diaspora. On the contrary, the government was facing some of the most vehement and fiery opposition. Still, the Armenian side won and achieved progress in many areas while it failed in others.

The voice of the people matters and will matter only if the people are well served by political leaders and parties. No leader or party of Armenia has come to power since the late 1990s by

plainly presenting his approach to the solution of the Karabakh problem, unless it was a maximalist solution. The legitimacy that people invest in a leader through elections is more often than not on the basis of a general sense of the situation rather than on the specific issues raised and solutions proposed. Accordingly, the elected leader has the huge responsibility to translate that trust into wise decisions in specific areas.

What does Armenia want for its future? What kind of polity and what social contract? In the current context, that question may seem futile to some people. The authors admit there is an ideological bias in laying out this question. The bias is the assumption of a state-centric position—i.e., that independent statehood, even with reduced sovereignty as is today, is a value to labor and fight for and to maintain. In a very short period of time of the last three years, Armenian society, with a particular emphasis on those 18-30 years old, has gone through the excitement of a nonviolent change of regime, a series of internal (albeit unfinished) reforms, the depressing facts of a devastating war resulting in a collective trauma and the quasi-loss of Karabakh. When making choices as to a preferred Armenia, leaders should think of the young and of their future.

Whoever assumes leadership in Armenia must govern wisely. A few sage elders should be consulted to bring stability, to answer deeply disturbing questions, and to bring balanced judgment to decisions. Good administrators should be employed to prove the government efficient in resolving urgent problems. And young minds must be introduced to visualize the Armenia of the future. What Armenia needs is a governmental leader who acts with circumspection and wisdom, who can properly manage the country, display a clear mind and coherent strategy, select the best people with whom to govern, and motivate them. The wisdom of such a leader would be confirmed by the people because the people know what the leader is doing as well as how and why the leader is doing it.

Finally, in imagining the future of Armenia, Armenians cannot ignore the threats arising from climate change and natural disasters, pandemics, and manmade crises that destroy lives, systems, and economies. In other words, disasters that require joint international responses and begin with regional cooperation should now be considered as serious and as imminent as other national security threats. Armenia and Armenians are not immune to disasters that are endangering the whole of humanity; preparing for them should be as much on the agenda of the Armenian nation as dealing with conflicts with neighbors, which must now be seen in perspective.

PART III. Annexes

Annex 1. The Questionnaire

English Questionnaire

I. THE WAR

1. What do you think is the primary reasons for the military defeat of the September-November 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war?
2. What would you consider two or three secondary reasons for that defeat?
3. What do you think are the main consequences for the military defeat?
4. What do you think are the most significant—negative and positive—features of the November 9/10 Ceasefire Statement?
5. Do you think there was anything wrong with the policies /strategies pursued by Armenia and Karabakh leading to the September 2020 war?

Please explain what and, if relevant, during what time period?

II. POSTWAR

6. What do you think are the different approaches currently in Armenia and Karabakh—governments, major political players—on how Armenia should think about the future of Karabakh?
7. Which ideology or direction of thought has been weakened or strengthened by the military defeat?
8. What do you think are the three main obstacles to Armenia's ability to formulate and pursue an effective Karabakh/foreign policy?
9. What do you think have been the different approaches/strategies Armenia's leaders and political forces have articulated regarding the Karabakh issue and relations with neighbors?

10. What do you think are the different strains of thought approaches/strategies Karabakh's leaders and political forces have articulated since the recent war regarding the Karabakh issue and relations with neighbors?
11. What role would you assign the OSCE, UN, in Karabakh's near- and long-term future?
12. Do you think Armenia and/or Karabakh should pursue the goal of independence for Karabakh internationally?
13. Do you think that Karabakh has been or should be the first priority in Armenia's foreign policy?

If yes, with what aim?

III. FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICIES IN THE FUTURE

14. What should the main aim of Armenia's foreign policy be?
15. Should Armenia accept the status quo created by the Second Karabakh War or try to revise it? Should Armenia and/or Karabakh undertake any attempts to recapture territories (a) lost from the Soviet era NKAO, and (b) from the seven districts outside NKAO that had been under Armenian control until the recent war?
16. Should Armenia continue to advocate and campaign for Karabakh's independence?
17. What do you think are the three major challenges in Armenia's current foreign policy agenda? What issues should be focused on and resolved?
18. Are there any specific steps Armenia should be taking immediately in the foreign and security policy area?
19. Depending on the most important objective of that policy according to you, what would you be ready to give up or compromise in order to attain it?
20. What are the three main assets Armenia has when pursuing its foreign policy goals?
21. Should Armenia strive to join NATO or should it strive to strengthen its position within the Russian orbit?
22. How would you characterize Armenia's current relations with Russia?
23. What should Armenia's relations be with Russia?

24. What should Armenia's policy be regarding Azerbaijan?
25. What should Armenia's policy be toward Turkey? Should Armenia join/encourage an anti-Turkey alliance with other countries?
26. What role would you assign Iran in Armenia's near- and long-term future?
27. What should Armenia's policy be toward Georgia?
28. What role would you assign the West (Europe, the US) in Armenia's near- and long-term future?
29. Do you think there are countries and organizations other than those considered above that Armenia should spend special effort in pursuit of its foreign policy goals?
30. What should the criteria be for making and prioritizing foreign policy aims?
31. Who, in your opinion, takes part in the formulation of Armenia's foreign policy?
32. Do you think actors other than the one(s) you listed should be involved in the formulation of that policy? If yes, with what mechanisms?
33. Do you think the professional preparation Armenia's diplomats are adequate for the challenges facing the country?

IV. ALSO

34. Any additional thoughts/comments/suggestions you would like to offer?

Armenian Questionnaire

ՀԱՐՑԱՐԱՆ Արտաքին քաղաքականության եւ Անվտանգության «Սպիտակ թղթի»

ՀԱՐՑԵՐ

I. ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԸ

1. Ձեր կարծիքով, որո՞նք են 2020 թ. սեպտեմբեր-նոյեմբեր ամիսների հայադրբեջանական պատերազմի ռազմական պարտության հիմնական պատճառները:
2. Ի՞նչն էք համարում այդ պարտության երկու կամ երեք երկրորդական պատճառները:
3. Ձեր կարծիքով, որո՞նք են ռազմական պարտության հիմնական հետեւանքները:

4. Ձեր կարծիքով, որո՞նք են նոյեմբերի 910ի հրադադարի հայտարարության՝ ամենաւեական բացասական եւ դրական առանձնահատկությունները:

5. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, որեւէ սխալ կա՞ր Հայաստանի եւ Արցախի վարած քաղաքականության եւ ռազմավարության մեջ, որը տարավ դեպի 2020 թ. սեպտեմբերի պատերազմ: Խնդրում ենք բացատրել՝ ի՞նչ եւ ո՞ր ժամանակահատվածում:

II. ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԻՑ ՀԵՏՈ

6. Ձեր կարծիքով, որո՞նք են Հայաստանում եւ Արցախում (կառավարություններ եւ հիմնական քաղաքական դերակատարներ) առկա տարբեր մոտեցումները՝ այն առնչությամբ, թե ինչպես պետք է Հայաստանը մտածի Արցախի ապագայի մասին:

7. Քաղաքական մտածողության ո՞ր գաղափարախոսությունը կամ ուղղությունն է թուլացել կամ ամրապնդվել ռազմական պարտությամբ:

8. Ձեր կարծիքով, որո՞նք են Հայաստանի համար երեք հիմնական խոչընդոտները, որոնք խանգարում են ձեւավորել եւ վարել Ղարաբաղյան եւ արտաքին արդյունավետ քաղաքականություն:

9. Ձեր կարծիքով, որո՞նք են Հայաստանի գործող ղեկավարների եւ առկա քաղաքական ուժերի կողմից Ղարաբաղի խնդրի ու հարեւանների հետ հարաբերությունների վերաբերյալ ձեւակերպված տարբեր մոտեցումները, ռազմավարությունները:

10. Ձեր կարծիքով, որո՞նք են պատերազմից հետո Ղարաբաղյան հիմնախնդրի հետ կապված՝ Ղարաբաղյան առաջնորդների եւ քաղաքական ուժերի կողմից ձեւակերպված մոտեցումներն ու ռազմավարությունները:

11. Ի՞նչ դեր եք կտայիք ԵԱՀԿին, ՄԱԿին՝ Արցախի մոտակա եւ երկարաժամկետ ապագայում:

12. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, Հայաստանը եւ (կամ) Արցախը պե՞տք է հետապնդեն միջազգային ասպարեզում Արցախի անկախության ճանաչման նպատակ:

13. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, Ղարաբաղը եղե՞լ է, կամ պե՞տք է լինի Հայաստանի արտաքին քաղաքականության առաջնահերթ կարեւորություն ունեցող հարցը:

Եթե այո, ապա ի՞նչ նպատակով:

III. ԱՐՏԱՔԻՆ ԵՎ ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐ ԱՊԱԳԱՅՈՒՄ

14. Ի՞նչը պետք է լինի Հայաստանի արտաքին քաղաքականության հիմնական նպատակը:

15. Հայաստանը պե՞տք է ընդունի Ղարաբաղյան երկրորդ պատերազմի արդյունքում ստեղծված ստատուս քվոն, թե՞ պետք է փորձի վերանայել այն: Հայաստանը եւ (կամ) Արցախը պե՞տք է որեւէ փորձ կատարեն՝ հետ վերցնելու համար տարածքները (ա) ԽՍՀՄ ժամանակաշրջանից կորցրած Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի Ինքնավար Մարզը (ԼՂԻՄ), եւ (բ) ԼՂԻՄից դուրս գտնվող յոթ շրջանները, որոնք մինչեւ վերջին պատերազմը գտնվում էին հայկական ուժերի վերահսկողության տակ:

16. Հայաստանը պե՞տք է շարունակի պաշտպանել Արցախի անկախությունը եւ արշավը՝ դրա ճանաչման համար:

17. Ձեր կարծիքով, որո՞նք են Հայաստանի ներկայիս արտաքին քաղաքական օրակարգի երեք հիմնական մարտահրավերները: Իշխանությունները ո՞ր խնդիրների վրա պետք է կենտրոնանան եւ լուծեն:

18. Կա՞ն ինչոր հատուկ քայլեր, որոնք Հայաստանը պետք է անհապաղ ձեռնարկի արտաքին եւ անվտանգության քաղաքականության ոլորտում:

19. Կախված Ձեր կարծիքով՝ այդ քաղաքականության ամենակարելուր նպատակից, ինչի՞ց պատրաստ կլինեք հրաժարվել կամ փոխզիջման գնալ՝ դրան հասնելու համար:

20. Որո՞նք են Հայաստանի երեք հիմնական միջոցները՝ իր արտաքին քաղաքական նպատակները հետապնդելիս:

21. Հայաստանը պե՞տք է ձգտի անդամակցել ՆԱՏՕին, թե՞ պետք է փորձի իր դիրքերը ամրացնել ռուսական ծիրին մեջ:

22. Ինչպե՞ս կբնութագրեք Հայաստանի ներկայիս հարաբերությունները Ռուսաստանի հետ:

23. Ինչպիսի՞ն պետք է լինեն Հայաստանի հարաբերությունները Ռուսաստանի հետ:

24. Ինչպիսի՞ն պետք է լինի Հայաստանի քաղաքականությունը Ադրբեջանի հարցում:

25. Ինչպիսի՞ն պետք է լինի Հայաստանի քաղաքականությունը Թուրքիայի նկատմամբ: Հայաստանը պե՞տք է միանա հակաթուրքական դաշինքին՝ այլ երկրների հետ, կամ խրախուսի նման դաշինքը:

26. Ի՞նչ դեր կտաք Իրանին՝ Հայաստանի մոտակա եւ երկարաժամկետ ապագայում:

27. Ինչպիսի՞ն պետք է լինի Հայաստանի քաղաքականությունը Վրաստանի նկատմամբ:

28. Ի՞նչ դեր կտաք Արեւմուտքին (Եվրոպային, ԱՄՆին) Հայաստանի մոտակա եւ երկարաժամկետ ապագայում:

29. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, վերը նշվածներից բացի կա՞ն այլ երկրներ եւ կազմակերպություններ, որոնց նկատմամբ Հայաստանը պետք է հատուկ ջանքեր գործադրի՝ իր արտաքին քաղաքական նպատակներին հասնելու համար:

30. Ի՞նչ չափանիշներ պետք է օգտագործվեն արտաքին քաղաքական նպատակներ ձեւակերպելու եւ առաջնահերթություններ սահմանելու համար:

31. Ձեր կարծիքով, ո՞վ է մասնակցում Հայաստանի արտաքին քաղաքականության ձեւավորմանը:

32. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, Ձեր թվարկած դերակատարներից բացի այլոք պե՞տք է մասնակցեն այդ քաղաքականության ձեւավորմանը: Եթե այո, ապա ի՞նչ մեխանիզմներով:

33. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, Հայաստանի դիվանագետների մասնագիտական պատրաստվածությունը համարժե՞ք է երկրի առջեւ ծառայած մարտահրավերներին:

IV. ՆԱԵՎ

34. Կա՞ն լրացուցիչ մտքեր, մեկնաբանություններ, առաջարկություններ, որոնք կցանկանայիք ավելացնել:

Annex 2. List of Respondents/Contributors

Each respondent/contributor to this paper was offered the opportunity to review the prefinal draft of the text, to make comments, and to offer suggestions. Respondent/contributors were also asked whether they wanted their names listed below as a respondent/contributor.

Those listed below do not necessarily agree with the conclusions or recommendations. The listing of a name indicates only that they have responded to the Questionnaire and reviewed the pre-final draft.

Contributors, listed below or otherwise, bear no responsibility for the contents of this paper. The three authors listed at the start of this document take full responsibility for its contents.

Name and Affiliation

(Affiliations are included for identification purposes only.)

Zhirayr Amirkhanyan, Colonel, Ministry of Defense, Armenia
Vahram Atanesian, former Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, Artsakh
Gérard Chaliand, geostrategist, armed conflicts specialist, Paris
Vicken Cheterian, Webster University, Geneva
Philip Gamaghelyan, University of San Diego
Anna Gevorgyan, Yerevan State University
Nzhdeh Hovsepyan, Spokesman for Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia
Raymond Kevorkian, historian, genocide specialist, Paris
Asbed Kotchikian, American University of Armenia
Ohannes Geukjian, American University of Beirut
Arman Grigoryan, Lehigh University, Pennsylvania
Tatul Hakobyan, journalist, Yerevan
Michel Marian, philosopher and writer, Paris
Kevork Oskanian, University of Birmingham
Razmik Panossian, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
Tigran Poghosyan, risk management/commerce, volunteer fighter in two Karabakh wars
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Armenian Studies/Washington, DC
Sarkis Shahinian, Parliamentary Group Switzerland-Armenia, Switzerland
Ronald Suny, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Aghasi Tadevosyan, Yerevan State University
Taline Ter Minassian, Institut National des Langues and Civilisations Orientales, Paris
Rafayel Teymurazyan, University of Coimbra, Portugal
Diana Yayloyan, Ph.D. Candidate and the Cofounder at Caucasus Talks
Tigrane Yegavian, journalist

Information on Respondents to Questionnaire

Number of invitations sent	73
Number of questionnaires filled and returned (including 3 through oral interviews)	45

Distribution of Respondents by Geography and Profession

(Please note that boundaries, geographic or professional, are not fixed. There is more fluidity now, especially when defining whether respondent is in Armenia or in the Diaspora. The categories are listed to provide a general idea only.)

Respondents residing in the Old Diaspora	20
Respondents residing in Armenia	12
Respondents from Armenia or former USSR residing permanently in the Diaspora	8
Respondents in Artsakh	3
Armenians residing in countries neighboring Armenia	2
Total	45

Distribution by Socio-Professional Background

University professors and/or researchers, from social sciences and/or hard sciences	27
Civil servants, government officials, diplomats	5
Journalists	5
In business and Management also involved in philanthropic activity in Armenia and/or Artsakh	4
Military and paramilitary	2
Civil society activists residing in the Diaspora	2
Total	45

Annex 3. November 10, 2020, Ceasefire Statement

Ceasefire Statement in English

Source: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384>

Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation

November 10, 2020 11:45

We, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, state the following:

1. A complete ceasefire and termination of all hostilities in the area of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is declared starting 12:00 am (midnight) Moscow time on November 10, 2020. The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, hereinafter referred to as the “Parties,” shall stop in their current positions.
2. The Aghdam District shall be returned to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 20, 2020.
3. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation, namely, 1,960 troops armed with firearms, 90 armored vehicles and 380 motor vehicles and units of special equipment, shall be deployed along the contact line in Nagorno-Karabakh and along
4. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation shall be deployed concurrently with the withdrawal of the Armenian troops. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation will be deployed for five years, a term to be automatically extended for subsequent five-year terms unless either Party notifies about its intention to terminate this clause six months before the expiration of the current term.
5. For more efficient monitoring of the Parties’ fulfillment of the agreements, a peacemaking center shall be established to oversee the ceasefire.
6. The Republic of Armenia shall return the Kelbajar District to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 15, 2020, and the Lachin District by December 1, 2020. The Lachin Corridor (5 km wide), which will provide a connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia while not passing through the territory of Shusha, shall remain under the control of the Russian Federation peacemaking forces.

As agreed by the Parties, within the next three years, a plan will be outlined for the construction of a new route via the Lachin Corridor, to provide a connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, and the Russian peacemaking forces shall be subsequently relocated to protect the route.

The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee the security of persons, vehicles and cargo moving along the Lachin Corridor in both directions.

7. Internally displaced persons and refugees shall return to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

8. The Parties shall exchange prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons, and dead bodies.

9. All economic and transport connections in the region shall be unblocked. The Republic of Armenia shall guarantee the security of transport connections between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to arrange unobstructed movement of persons, vehicles and cargo in both directions. The Border Guard Service of the Russian Federal Security Service shall be responsible for overseeing the transport connections.

As agreed by the Parties, new transport links shall be built to connect the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and the western regions of Azerbaijan.

Ceasefire Statement in Russian

Source: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384>

Заявление Президента Азербайджанской Республики, Премьерминистра Республики Армения и Президента Российской Федерации

10 ноября 2020 года 11:45

Мы, Президент Азербайджанской Республики И.Г.Алиев, Премьерминистр Республики Армения Н.В.Пашинян и Президент Российской Федерации В.В.Путин, заявили о следующем:

1. Объявляется о полном прекращении огня и всех военных действий в зоне нагорнокарабахского конфликта с 00 часов 00 минут по московскому времени 10 ноября 2020 года. Азербайджанская Республика и Республика Армения, далее именуемые Сторонами, останавливаются на занимаемых ими позициях.

2. Агдамский район возвращается Азербайджанской Республике до 20 ноября 2020 года.
 3. Вдоль линии соприкосновения в Нагорном Карабахе и вдоль Лачинского коридора развёртывается миротворческий контингент Российской Федерации в количестве 1960 военнослужащих со стрелковым оружием, 90 бронетранспортёров, 380 единиц автомобильной и специальной техники.
 4. Миротворческий контингент Российской Федерации развёртывается параллельно с выводом армянских вооружённых сил. Срок пребывания миротворческого контингента Российской Федерации – 5 лет с автоматическим продлением на очередные 5-летние периоды, если ни одна из Сторон не заявит за 6 месяцев до истечения срока о намерении прекратить применение данного положения.
 5. В целях повышения эффективности контроля за выполнением Сторонами конфликта договорённостей развёртывается миротворческий центр по контролю за прекращением огня.
 6. Республика Армения до 15 ноября 2020 года возвращает Азербайджанской Республике Кельбаджарский район, а до 1 декабря 2020 года – Лачинский район. Лачинский коридор (шириной 5 км), который будет обеспечивать связь Нагорного Карабаха с Арменией и при этом не будет затрагивать г.Шушу, остаётся под контролем миротворческого контингента Российской Федерации.
- По согласованию Сторон в ближайшие три года будет определён план строительства нового маршрута движения по Лачинскому коридору, обеспечивающий связь между Нагорным Карабахом и Арменией, с последующей передислокацией российского миротворческого контингента для охраны этого маршрута.
- Азербайджанская Республика гарантирует безопасность движения по Лачинскому коридору граждан, транспортных средств и грузов в обоих направлениях.
7. Внутренне перемещённые лица и беженцы возвращаются на территорию Нагорного Карабаха и прилегающие районы под контролем Управления Верховного комиссара ООН по делам беженцев.
 8. Производится обмен военнопленными, заложниками и другими удерживаемыми лицами и телами погибших.
 9. Разблокируются все экономические и транспортные связи в регионе. Республика Армения гарантирует безопасность транспортного сообщения между западными районами Азербайджанской Республики и Нахичеванской Автономной Республикой с целью организации беспрепятственного движения граждан, транспортных средств и

грузов в обоих направлениях. Контроль за транспортным сообщением осуществляют органы Пограничной службы ФСБ России.

По согласованию Сторон будет обеспечено строительство новых транспортных коммуникаций, связывающих Нахичеванскую Автономную Республику с западными районами Азербайджана.

PART IV. Appendices

Appendix A. A Brief Review of Armenia's Negotiating Positions on Karabakh

Below is a synopsis of the various positions Armenia's leaders have adopted with regard to the Karabakh issue and neighboring countries during the past 30 years.

1991 - February 1998: During the administration of the first president, Levon Ter-Petrossian, the establishment of peaceful and normal relations with neighboring countries is crucial for Armenia's national security, economic development, and preservation of sovereignty. The conflict with Azerbaijan should be resolved on the basis of pragmatic and realistic considerations while Armenia is still in a relatively strong position. The longer the Armenian side waits to reach an agreement on the basis of mutual compromises, the less it will receive; the balance of power is more likely to change, and war becomes more likely, with no certainty of another Armenian victory. The question of the status of Karabakh could and should be postponed as it's impossible to come to an agreement on that issue at that time. Armenia and Karabakh should aim for the establishment of peace and concrete security guarantees for Karabakh in return for most of the occupied territories.¹⁰ This approach is eventually rejected by some in the government, and President Levon Ter-Petrossian is compelled to resign.¹¹

April 1998 - 2018: The Armenian position is hardened when the new leader, Robert Kocharyan, argues that Armenia still has time, that Azerbaijan's expected windfall from the export of its hydrocarbon resources can be balanced with investments from the Diaspora if Armenia adopts Diaspora's main political agenda item, the question of Genocide recognition as a prioritized state policy. For the return of most occupied territories, Armenia demands either the immediate recognition of Karabakh's independence or an agreement to ensure a referendum within the foreseeable future. A referendum is seen by all to be the same as an independent status, a status that depends on Azerbaijan's agreement and which the international community, including Armenia's friends and allies, do not support. At one point, the formula of exchange of territories, Meghri for Karabakh, is agreed upon between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan. But that formula is rejected immediately in the higher circles of both countries.

¹⁰ The September 1997 Minsk Group Proposal was the culmination of the international mediation efforts during this period. For the text, see <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/8760bb/pdf/>

¹¹ In 1999 David D. Laitin and Ronald G. Suny published an article that proposed another pragmatic solution to the conflict, in the same spirit as the OSCE Minsk group September 1997 proposal. The proposal did not attract the attention it deserved. See <https://mepec.org/journal/armenia-and-azerbaijan-thinking-way-out-karabakh>

The result is that normalization of relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey become impossible, Armenia is left out of regional projects, it appears in a more hostile regional environment, and its reliance on Russia increases.

In 2016, during the presidency of Serzh Sargsyan, a four-day war exposes vulnerabilities in the defense positions of the Armenia side. Sargsyan then displays a more flexible attitude. Yet he insists on the question of independence, or a referendum for independence, which results in the same outcome: no resolution to the conflict.

The leaders of both Armenia and Karabakh during this period remain confident of the superiority of the defense capabilities of the Armenian side.

2018 - 2020: Following the Velvet revolution led by Nikol Pashinyan, the parties to the conflict agree on confidence-building measures. The expected negotiations on substantive issues do not take place. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan believes the Armenian side has still time before it must enter into such negotiations. He is convinced that he can assemble a strong international alliance in support of Armenia and Karabakh's independence, relying on the success of his Velvet Revolution and the strong steps taken toward the return of democratic governance in Armenia. Eventually the positive atmosphere between Azerbaijan and Armenia degenerates into mutual recriminations. The Armenian side declares that negotiations are useless, and rejects formulas offered for the partial resolution of the conflict based on the step-by-step approach.

Pashinyan does not have the full confidence of Russia. When full scale war arrives, anticipated diplomatic, and possibly military, support from the West does not materialize, and the Armenian side finds itself alone and loses the war.

Appendix B. Observations on the Trajectory of Armenian Statehood in Relation to the Karabakh Question, Along With Some Recommendations on That Subject

These observations are linked to the trajectory of post-Soviet Armenia and the choices made in the process of state-building. The authors will abstain from specific dates in order to avoid personalizing these observations, unless they refer to historical facts.

1. It is possible to argue that post-Soviet Armenia was born from a two-pronged challenge: the establishment of a sovereign democratic state AND a national question in need of a solution, the Karabakh issue

The second issue took precedence over the first, conjecturally, during the first Karabakh war, despite significant advances in the first challenge. But the value of establishing a democratic and sovereign state declined steadily in the second decade of independence.

At some later point, the Karabakh conflict, which remained Armenia's foreign policy priority in theory, actually stopped being a major subject of public discussion or a determinant in electoral campaigns.

On the international stage, the issue came to be perceived as a narrow nationalist problem between two states, marked by various elements of territorial bickering and historical injustice rather than a universal normative issue.

Choosing to preserve the status quo also had an effect on Armenia's diplomacy, rendering Armenia passive in the discussions and reducing its capacity to make even its legitimate points audible.

What was left of the Karabakh issue was a questionable rhetoric aimed for domestic consumption but heard by all, a rhetoric dominated by the "national" ideology of "facts on the ground" and "not-an-inch back" and based on the "rights of the victor." That issue was simply used by and made profitable to the ruling elites.

The government that issued from the 2018 Velvet Revolution tried to reverse the pendulum ("an Armenia-centered foreign policy") and make the democratic vision come true. From the point of view of state-building, Armenia, constrained as it is by the size of its population and by its economic capacities, cannot afford widespread corruption or dysfunctional institutions. At the times when it would have needed time and circumspection for necessary but challenging internal reforms, it ignored the contradictions and problems of the status quo, the shifts in power relations, the changes in the international and regional geopolitical configurations, and the impact of those factors on Armenia's position.

2. Armenians pay a price for the unresolved contradictions and faulty assessments in their political reasoning

A number of state-building tasks were unachieved—both within Armenia’s own positions as well as in relations between Armenia and external actors.

- A military victory in 1994 that, over a period of time, Armenia and Karabakh failed to convert into a political victory
- A diplomatic/rhetorical disconnect between the international campaign for the recognition of Karabakh’s independence and Armenia’s own nonrecognition of Karabakh’s independence, a contradiction Armenia justified on the grounds that such an act would put an end to negotiations
- A territorial/legal/political disconnect between the Karabakh Republic’s being separate from Armenia and unrecognized, and its de facto integration with Armenia (for example, the integrated maps published by state bodies starting in the mid-2000s)
- The provision in the 2006 Constitution of the Karabakh Republic that labeled the occupied districts as a “security belt” for the NKAO territory in a nonetheless unified Karabakh state

Those have backfired. The result is the post-November 10, 2020, situation.

Appendix C. The Concept of an Armed and Internationally Guaranteed Neutrality

The following is a long-term vision for a strategy that Armenia may want to consider as one scenario for its foreign policy doctrine. The authors think it is worth having a conversation on the subject.

Premise: Armenia wishes to be less vulnerable to geopolitical competition among regional great powers. At the same time, Armenia must secure the means to defend its sovereign territory.

Armenia is a very small state—by all standards and definitions—and also an “in-between” state, between formal independence and heavy reliance on others. As such, it is in the permanent security dilemma that the authors have exposed in this paper, and which has been noticed time and again by many commentators. Armenia’s survival as an independent entity is dependent on full acceptance from others. Even though states recognized by the UN and internationally do not “disappear” as such, they run the risk of becoming failed states or being subsumed fully by more powerful countries, a risk that is equally significant for the prosperity of their people.

Neutrality must be taken as an adaptable concept, the ultimate purpose of which is to limit the impact of fluctuating geopolitical competitions and games for Armenia. It is important to insist that neutrality be thought of outside its Cold War context of bipolar confrontation and blocks. What is needed is a mechanism that places Armenia—and other newly decolonized states of the former Soviet Union—in isolation from the imperial and illiberal designs of Russia and Turkey, and also from the undue influences and power games of more distant states. Iran’s imperial reflexes are more defensive than offensive, and at the moment that state may be favorable to such an option.

Armenia and the two other states of the South Caucasus (SC) are faced with two levels of rivalries, if not confrontations. The first level is the two neighboring former empires with new imperial ambitions and mutual suspicions: Turkey and Russia. The second level comprises remnants of the post-Cold War East-West confrontation now applied to this region. This latter prism’s relevance, however, is largely overstated. Moreover, it is less relevant to the SC than it is for Ukraine, for instance, as the West gives precedence to Russia in the SC. And, last, it is decreasing as regional influences become diversified (with China, India, and others). A multipolar balance of power is currently evolving. For realists and neorealists, a global balance of power might mean a return to normal international politics. Yet it might also provide space for some small states to adopt neutrality.¹² Neutrality sets in play a number of constraints for these small states, with the proviso that they would gain a greater sense of security and sovereignty on the long run. Even if Azerbaijan has far better success and assets in balancing its

¹² Archie Simpson, *Realism, Small States and Neutrality*, 2018.

foreign relations with Turkey and Russia than Armenia, and Georgia is a little less exposed than Armenia but is still paying a heavy price for thorny relations with Russia, the three SC states share a common challenge of balancing multiple and competing interests.

The following are some of the premises underlying a process toward achieving neutrality:

- A. Armenia develops a strong defense capacity of its entire territory. It declares and pursues a policy of war with no one. It also acts on the premise that no one will go at war for Armenia's interests alone.
- B. Neutrality must be settled by a political convention and/or by a legal international convention. To be truly acceptable to Russia, this should eventually become part of international law (and not only self-proclaimed, as in the examples of Turkmenistan or Moldova), even if at first it would fall on an individual state's responsibility to opt for that course and to work on it. At this point, foreign military bases would be withdrawn.
- C. The process of achieving neutrality would require withdrawal from CSTO and withdrawal of Russian military base at some point. At the same time, NATO and Armenia would make clear that NATO membership will not happen. Cooperation with NATO, even at a high level, along with cooperation with the CSTO, would be not only possible but also desirable in areas such as countering terrorism, organized crime, new types of threats, and human trafficking, and the protection of natural resources. The status within CSTO would at first be renegotiated, similar to Partnership for Peace with NATO. If needed (e.g., required by Russia), the neutrality could be amended by a bilateral Russo-Armenian security pact, the two issues being formally separate and limited to a definite number of years. That amendment might not be a preferred option for Armenia, but it may be a necessary compromise for some time.
- D. Participation in EU common foreign policy and in crisis management is explicitly permitted. Neutral states are also part of robust deployments such as those within the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) cooperative security bloc (collective security is not aimed against an outside enemy).
- E. Means: defense spending; defense reforms; greater exposure to positive Western democratic values; increased trade with all interested parties, as well as greater utilization of China's Belt & Road Initiative.
- F. There could be defensive bilateral relations with a number of countries, including Russia and other states (China, India, France, for instance), the scope and level of which would have to be thought anew.
- G. Special multilateral relations may be created in the realm of security with neutral states of Europe (Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Austria).

- H. Armenia's national prestige would increase because Armenia would have a perspective for itself, instead of being a troublemaker or not being audible. Considering Armenia's geographic position, there may be room here to go from dead-end to gate and bridge.

If adopted soon enough, this scenario may have positive effect on very pressing current issues:

- I. It might alleviate the nonconstructive and hasty ways the issue of borders demarcation is currently being handled, especially if Armenia establishes direct working discussions with Azerbaijan and/or Turkey.
- J. There might be room for international intervention/supervision with, for instance, a collective security mission in which European neutral states would have a role in securing Armenia's populations through a military-civilian mission focusing on the safety of border inhabitants. The current situation with Azerbaijan, where Russia is acting as the sole mediator between Azerbaijan and Armenia, is not conducive to the easing of relations.

Armenia may start thinking about such an option and initiate preliminary discussion on the subject with its two neighbors. Who would need to have an interest in Armenia's neutrality so this option becomes feasible? First, Russia and Turkey; second, Iran; third, Western partners (US/EU). Negative reactions are to be expected, primarily from Russia. In the middle of competition/cooperation between Russia and Turkey in various regional theaters, it would not be inclined to lose an area of influence in the SC, unless it gains something in return. The new arrangement may have to be a component of a more comprehensive arrangement. Historically, only retreating or democratic empires have accepted the neutrality of a third country. Turkey and Russia are competing for hegemony and are strongly autocratic regimes. However, their geopolitical position and their economic health may lead them to adopt a more flexible attitude at some point. That may be the moment when discussions would accelerate and the option of neutrality becomes more practical.

Preliminary discussions and contacts with European, American, Russian, and other counterparts on that option would be necessary so as to evaluate the feasibility and what kind of support and of economic gains can Armenia expect in the preparation of that move.

If some international partners accept Armenia's goal, then agreements should be obtained to arm Armenia defensively at privileged conditions so as to be in a position to defend this status and its sovereignty. Therefore, the sooner Armenia is able to engage with a variety of partners today, the better it will be positioned to transition from a security alliance to neutrality in the future. There have been overtures from a number of countries, including France, to upgrade levels of cooperation and arms deals with Armenia. It may be worth exploring the possibilities that France, India, China, the US, and Russia may become arms trade partners aimed at defensive means.

The neutrality option gains in relevance and feasibility if it were to become a SC regional option, whereby Georgia would halt its NATO accession policy and Azerbaijan would not engage in further military integration with Turkey. In that case, even for Russia this may be an acceptable tradeoff.

If Armenia were to adopt that orientation, it would therefore discuss that prospect with Georgia and Azerbaijan, arguing that the three SC countries would resolve their independence and peace issues if they were to opt for a common neutral space together. The US and Europe have always looked at the three states as a common package; they would therefore welcome a common proposal of that sort.

Gärtner makes a case for neutrality for a number of Eastern Partnership's states:

The principles of the EU's neighborhood policy, the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and market economy are essential. The Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus) are part of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which focuses on relations with the EU in such areas as trade and investment, finance, energy, and transport, among others. These states are caught in a "geopolitical dilemma" in their foreign and security policy orientation towards Brussels and Moscow: closer political association and economic integration with the EU, on the one hand, versus improved partnership with Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU; comprised of Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan), on the other hand. Neutrality of these countries could facilitate closer economic cooperation between the EU and the EEU and end their in-between status, which is unsustainable and undesirable.¹³

This neutrality option is conditioned by the quality of relationship between the West and Russia. It needs a new *détente* to be feasible, or, in its absence, a gradual or dramatic Russian retreat. In choosing the right moment to start initial consultations, Armenian may also think about a possible moment in time when Turkey-Russia relations acquire more depth and durability and East-West tensions have subsided.

Western nations would have interest in negotiating new security architectures for neutral countries in Eastern Europe in order to stabilize the region and reduce the risks of war with Russia. Permanent neutrality for these states (the entire Eastern Partnership) would be a feature of that new security architecture.

Assessment: the neutrality option is to be looked at in contrast with a scenario of bandwagoning and complete strategic integration with Russia. The Russian scenario is easier, and it is feasible.

¹³ Heinz Gärtner, "Neutrality as a Model for the New Eastern Europe?" 2018
<https://archive.transatlanticrelations.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Neutrality-as-a-Model-for-the-New-Eastern-Europe.pdf>

Its tradeoff is Armenia's geostrategic autonomy, if not outright sovereignty. In addition, nothing says the Armenian people would prosper under Russian domination. If the objective of a foreign policy is to defend national interests by state means, then potential renunciation to that goal is not excluded from that scenario.

The neutrality vision, on the other hand, is uncharted territory for Armenia's political thought, and even more so for its leaders and diplomats. There is no guarantee of feasibility in today's context. But a new government that will have first restored the governability of the country and embarked on the most urgent constitutional reforms may find it worth studying thoroughly.

Appendix D. Legacy of the Late Ambassador Rouben Shougarian

Writing after the Velvet Revolution but before the 2020 War, Ambassador Rouben Shougarian, who passed away at the young age of 57 in early 2020, wrote:

What Armenia had failed to fully accomplish before the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Russia was signed in 1997 can still be fulfilled, provided the same mistakes are not made again. To do that, a number of external and internal prerequisites need to be properly aligned.

Before making a second attempt to create a geopolitical alternative to strengthen its sovereignty twenty-five years after regaining independence, Armenia has to make sure that the following issues are adequately addressed:

1. It should bring its own house in order. This is, no doubt, an arduous task that cannot be accomplished in one day. Yet, there is still hope that its maturing civil society will be reasonably quick to find effective ways to do that, putting a stop to the mass exodus of people and reinstating Armenia's reputation as an island of democracy in the Caucasus. The fight against corruption and social injustice should at least catch up with and reach the level of President Saakashvili's Georgia during his first term in office.
2. It has to reconcile the time and again conflicting state and national interests, giving certain preference to the former. In Armenia's case, despite the fact that it is a homogeneous country, these two notions are not identical or synonymous. The first belongs to the realm of the new, post-independence mindset that has not been fully shaped and absorbed at a national level, the second is claimed by the advocates of traditional thinking. For understandable reasons, the Diaspora is a more natural bearer of the latter, but even within Armenian communities spread over 90 countries, there has to be there will to find the right balance between the two, thus accommodating the so far misperceived and often underestimated state interest. Coming to terms with the new reality means understanding the towering value of sovereignty after long centuries of stateless existence.
3. A serious discussion of national identity that can lead to a consensus on where Armenia belongs culturally and politically and which choices can provide a more prosperous, stable and safe future for the country. Such a discussion must not be ideologized and constrained by the never-changing list of real and perceived national security concerns, which has to be addressed at a different venue. A potential loss of sovereignty must be put at the top of this list as the main security threat. The outcome of this discussion could be the long-due self-awareness, which will eventually outline the ideal goal for Armenia's future in the international community not handicapped by the impossibility to reach it today, but in harmony with the nation's natural and conscious choice.

Rouben Shougarian was among the most accomplished diplomats and engaged intellectuals, which eminently qualified him to make general observations and recommendations. He had vast knowledge of, and experience with, expansionist strategies of global (Russia) and regional (Turkey, Iran) powers, as well as the interests of the West that were aligned with Azerbaijan. In the epilogue of his book, published on April 15, 2018, Shougarian presented diplomatic recipes that could have prevented the coming debacle. He was unfortunately not followed by the leaders of the Velvet Revolution, on which he had based real hopes. History having taught him that it is the small countries that pay the highest price for conflicts linked to the large ones, Shougarian encouraged above all to improve direct partnership relations with its neighbors. Needless to say, his words remained unheeded.

Appendix E. Recommendations for the Reform of Armenia’s Armed Forces¹⁴

1. Commission of Inquiry: The 2020 Karabakh War

A comprehensive inquiry aimed at shedding light on the various aspects of the 2020 war is necessary. That inquiry should produce a report, a version of which should be released to the public, while a state version remains confidential until Armenia settles its current national security issues. The commission should be completely independent in its proceedings, selection of experts, and institutional setting. Although the sensitivities of military secrets should be given due attention, transparency is paramount: Absent the informed pressure from parliament and civil society, the military, as a player in bureaucratic politics with its own parochial interests, will not change of its own choice.

At the same time, that inquiry will serve to offer an ex-post assessment of the 1994 victory. Armenian nationalism has an abnormal relationship with history. Because it is fueled by frustration and disappointment, it translated into an incapacity or unwillingness to assess objectively the reasons of the 1994 victory. That victory came to be perceived as a reparation/restoration for all previous defeats, spoliations, and injustices. Equally dangerous would be to essentialize the 2020 defeat. The 2020 war must be investigated thoroughly so as not to produce victimization and/or impotence.

It is to be noted that a number of voices are being heard in favor of such an initiative in Armenia, including the former chief of the General Staff (GS) Onnik Gasparian and some senior members of the previous government.

There have been successful instances outside of Armenia where such inquiries have helped a society surmount internal trauma and deep polarization. There is also enough international experience in “what not to do” in the service of such an initiative in Armenia.

2. Doctrinal Reform

Armenian preferences, inherited from the Soviet military doctrine (i.e., the ways and methods of fighting a war), are inclined toward attritional warfare: marshaling (massive) human resources, the use of armored vehicles in great numbers, and leaning heavily on air defense and artillery, to the detriment of air superiority and viable infantry.

¹⁴ This section has benefitted from exchanges and consultations with Colonel Zhirayr Amirkhanyan, Ministry of Defense, Armenia, Ph.D. candidate at the Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California; and Nerses Kopalyan, Ph.D., Department of Political Science, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The authors are grateful for their comments while remaining solely responsible for the contents for the views expressed in this paper.

That preference, however, results in turning a blind eye to the mobile and agile self-defense groups that were key in the first Nagorno-Karabakh war. It is as if in the process of building an army, useful aspects of the Armenian military tradition had been lost to the GS. Even well-informed observers were expecting Armenian forces to be able to leverage terrain and defensive posture better than they did in October and November 2020.

The 2020 Karabakh war has not made tanks obsolete, nor has it evidenced that robots alone will lead the next wars. But it has certainly pointed out the lack of mobile, blended combined arms and artillery units as a crucial shortcoming in the supposed order of battle and capabilities. Whereas it is obvious that deterrence capabilities depleted by the war should be rebuilt and enhanced, the question as to whether procurement policies should be reconsidered will depend on doctrinal reform choices.

A doctrinal standoff exists between elements within the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff. Whereas inputs for reforms came from the MOD, the GS accepted them only on the surface (and not practically) or not at all. This problem became visible with the promulgation of the Nation-Army concept after the Four-Day War, and two comprehensive documents laying out the “vision of the Minister of Defense,” issued in 2018 and 2020. Those two documents enumerated important elements of modernization and reform of the armed forces. None of the reforms put into place, however, were sufficient to have an influence on the outcome of the 2020 war. Possibly the GS acted on the assumption that it would rather wait for peace to undertake massive reforms. That predicament proved unwise. Now Armenia needs to institute those reforms urgently.

3. Asymmetrical and Hybrid Warfare

Doctrines of nonlinear warfare must be developed which utilize economic, political, psychological, and cyber effects against enemy threats or targets. The weaponization of information remains a serious deficiency in both the defensive and offensive arsenal of the Armenian state, and the development of a strong asymmetrical and hybrid warfare doctrine is crucial to the security architecture of the Republic.

4. Reforming Armenia’s Military Education System

Armenia military academies remain outdated, limited in resources, insufficient in quality instructors, and lacking in scholarly research and military academics. Similar to the extensive reforms that are required of Armenia’s public education system, such reforms are also necessary for its military education system. The three main military academies that Armenia possesses lack state-of-the-art military facilities, academic training, advanced strategic and tactical training, pre-eminent experts and instructors, and quality research. Because of the relatively low quality of Armenia’s military academies, the junior officer corps, military

planners, and strategists that this education system produces remain inconsistent and deficient to the needs of Armenia's security architecture. Armenia's military education system needs to be reformed and modeled after advanced military academies, including rigor in research and military science, policy development, and enhanced training in strategic command.

5. Command and Control (C2) System

Command and control arrangements under the 2015 Constitution are debilitating. The changes they envision between peacetime and wartime proved a source of failure during times of war.

In principle, the armed forces are subordinate to the government. Hence the MOD follows the main directions of defense policy set up by the security council, then gives them to the armed forces. In times of peace, the chief of the GS, the highest military official, is subordinate to the MOD. In wartime, however, the PM becomes his commander in chief and the AF report to the PM.

Two Strategic Defense Reviews were conducted from 2008 onwards with a particular emphasis on introducing mission command as the main philosophy and guiding principle of the C2 system. That same issue was restated in the ministerial vision of 2018 and 2020.

The advantages of mission command would be to

1. Take an essential step toward a maneuver approach to warfare
2. Cope with the volatility of the battlefield and likely disruption of communications
3. Abridge the orientation-decision-execution loop
4. Give preference to mission-type orders that would be well suited to mountain-woody theater of operations
5. Emphasize understanding commanders' intent and creating mutual trust, hence better counteracting threats and seizing opportunities on the battlefield

6. A Professionalized and Highly Efficient Military

This aim will fundamentally require broad and expansive institutional and infrastructural reforms that jumpstart the modernization of the Armenian armed forces. Those efforts must include, but are not limited to, the following: improving the combat-readiness of the armed forces in which all military units are permanently combat-ready; enhancing mobilization capabilities; restructuring military units, from divisions and regiments to brigades as the standard combat unit; developing rapid-reaction forces at the operational level of war; expanding the size and operational scope of special forces units; and reducing the number of senior officers while increasing the number of junior officers, thus eliminating the problem of "inverted pyramid" that is currently in place in the area of human resource management (HRM).

7. AF Manning System

The mobilization system must be transformed through reforms to conscription and by rethinking the respective proportions and roles of professional soldiers and conscripts. The following considerations are prospective directions for such reforms. The authors of this paper are offering them as general directions to be considered by a future commission of outstanding military and civil-military experts, which would be tasked with studying these issues in depth.

In the 2020 war, the conscription army of 18 to 20 year-olds paid an unbearable price. Avoiding such a thing in the future should be a crucial element of any reform package of the AF.

Conscription could be gradually reduced in duration—to be defined—while improved in quality. It could be for males and females equally, but with gender-adapted differences in the organization of the conscription.

Conditions of military service improved between 2018 and 2020. If the higher command manages to further reduce bad practices, such as bullying and hazing, military service would become more attractive.

After a mandatory conscription period, whoever wishes to continue can become a professional, under contract. It would be necessary to call up former conscripts for regular trainings and updates. Reserve training, as indicated, had been neglected for a long time.

If the professional army system becomes the core of the Armenian AF, a total of three brigades of 5000 people each could be the targeted number. That number is less than what national conscription was providing up to 2020. What can be achieved with this target number—i.e., what mission should be assigned to the AF—is an issue to be studied, and it is dependent on the grand strategy Armenia will choose for itself. However, the previous system, relying on (incompletely) fortified areas of defense, also showed that any number that Armenia could muster in a conscription army, even at the best of times, would be insufficient. If Armenia is aiming at keeping a LoC equaling the entire length of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the long term, any system may prove untenable anyway.

In terms of cost, the proposed system is an expensive one, with minimum yearly cost roughly estimated at one billion dollars. The question of budget would also be addressed in a feasibility study of this system.

8. Creating a Voluntary Contract Reserve Force Based on a Territorial Principle to Back Up the Professional Army

The 2020 war showed Armenia had poorly prepared reservists, with inadequate training and the inability to integrate well with line units of the army. The prime minister's call for volunteers was a blatant indication of that circumstance.

Contract reservists would assemble once weekly for low-level training and periodically for a weekend of training, and for collective field training for a few weeks annually.

Female reserve units can also be created, possibly initially separated from the male units.

There may be legal provisions for Armenians living abroad to enlist as contract reservists. During the 2020 war, a number of diaspora Armenians joined as volunteers without having Armenian citizenship. There is a legal gap for these people, who are in fact unprotected by the Armenia state.

Every reserve unit is affiliated to an active component unit. The active reserve must be integrated into a Total Army concept, with separate but parallel chains of command. There are voluntary groups that have been engaged in training of reservists and pre-conscripts. They may be helpful in the implementation of this type of reform, as well as on the sociological aspects of society-army relations, and also in determining what the citizens want and are ready/not ready to do.

Advantages of a contractual reserve:

- In landlocked countries with rugged terrain and limitations (size, organizational, financial, equipment), the reserve force can back up the active force.
- An active reserve based on a territorial principle would produce complete units with much greater cohesion of personnel in local units. They would have better training and knowledge of the locality.
- Territorial distribution makes them respond much faster than centralized national forces.
- Building connections with the citizens on the local level, which becomes a two-way street: It becomes "our community regiment."
- They provide an opportunity for citizen-soldiers (the major portion of a unit) to serve their country while continuing to live, work, and study in their own community.
- It conveys a greater sense of a fully mobilized country ready to defend itself on every square kilometer of territory.
- It alleviates demographic shortages.
- These forces have utility in peacetime, too.
- This model can be adapted from Armenian historical tradition so as to "ground" it in the national experience.

Again, the authors insist that these various directions need to be studied in depth and cross-sectionally. A number of foreign examples can serve as points of comparison: Finland, Switzerland, and Israel, among others. Long-term societal inclinations of Armenia's citizens, as well as the foreign policy choices made today and in the near future by decisionmakers, are interrelated with the directions that should eventually prevail regarding the defense system of Armenia.

9. Creating a Military Research and Industrial Ecosystem That Has Some Value for External Markets and Is Amply Useful for National Security Needs

- **Research and development:** Utilizing the country's and the Diaspora's scientific and technological experts, along with joint investment ventures in state-operated enterprises (SOE), Armenia must spearhead an expansive military research and development project.
- **Development of a military-industrial complex:** Investing and developing joint SOE ventures through which the infrastructure for production of military hardware and technology is aligned with the state's research and development programs.

Together, these two points would serve the emergence of a competitive and efficient ecosystem in which research and development and industrial production are synchronized. For that, the private sector must strengthen its export-oriented assets so that, when the public sector is subsequently prepared to jump in, efficient junctures can be created between private investors and SOE.

If you want to build a country where its sons and daughters will return, if you want to build the country where they will leave only during the holiday season, if you want a country that will not have a sense of fear for the future, then do just two steps:

- 1. Equate corruption to treason to homeland, and corrupt officials to traitors up to the seventh generation...*
- 2. Make three professions the most highly paid and respected. These are military, teachers, and doctors....*

And most importantly, work, work, and work, because no one else can protect you, no one will feed you but yourself, and only you and no one else needs your country. When it becomes not just words and a simple slogan, but becomes a lifestyle, then you have achieved yours...."

Words ascribed to a prime minister of Israel,
Golda Meir
