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**WESTERN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE  
NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT  
IN  
1988-1990**

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1988-1990.**

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## ACRONYMS

AFP	Agence France Presse
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEU	Central European University
CMIA	Caucasus Media Institute Archives
CPSS	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKAO	Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
NSC	National Security Council
OSA	Open Society Archives
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
TASS	Soviet Telegraph Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VOA	Voice of America

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## INTRODUCTION

*For Azerbaijan the issue of Karabakh is a matter of ambition,  
for Armenians of Karabakh it is a matter of life and death*

**Andrey Sakharov**  
Nobel Prize winner

The coverage of an interethnic conflict by mass media has a dynamics of its own that constantly affects developments within the actual conflict, either positively or negatively. In the modern world, it is by no means surprising that media coverage of a conflict should impact events on the ground. The role of the media industry, especially in countries where multiethnic populations are governed by authoritarian political systems, is undoubtedly very complicated. There are well documented cases when violence was either provoked by media publications or broadcasts, or came as a byproduct of reports streaming out of the region of conflict.

Unfortunately, few things in our world are as newsworthy as war and conflict. Analysis of the media coverage of the war in Iraq shows that media both are important and are perceived as an important player in conflicts and wars. The employment of special reporting techniques used to relay information about the conflict, particularly under the watchful conditions of the State's 'Argus eye,' validates the importance of researching and evaluating media reports.

The role played by mass media in interethnic conflicts in the former Soviet Union has been researched very little. Meanwhile such research could be very valuable in terms of shedding light on the use of news media as a tool for shaping public opinion. Important lessons are to be learned from cases when media reports from post-Soviet conflict zones provoked new waves of escalation and violence.

Although interesting studies of the media coverage of ethnic conflicts and wars saw light in recent years, most of them focus on the Balkan case.<sup>1</sup> Of the numerous publications about Nagorno-Karabakh, only a few touch on the media coverage of the conflict. So far, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been reviewed from various perspectives, including history, law and conflict resolution. One recent study even regards the conflict as a psychological war in which historical

arguments were used to corroborate the parties' points of view.<sup>2</sup>

One of the reasons why the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh deserves further research is that had represented one of the first major challenges to Soviet ethnic policy. As soon as the conflict emerged, it revealed both lingering Stalinist legacies and the overall deficiency of the Soviet administrative system, stemming from a vulnerable political infrastructure and general inability to deal with conflict.

For the purposes of this study, it is essential to understand the nature of interethnic relations in the former USSR and ethnic mobilizations on its territories, leading to the disintegration of the USSR. We must realize that Soviet media coverage of ethnic conflicts was an integral part of the Soviet conflict resolution policy.

This study follows Western media reports at the first stage of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I tried to show how the parties in conflict were presented by the media, and to analyze both the Soviet and the Western propaganda-and-counterpropaganda discourses about the conflict. For this purpose, I also studied the techniques used by Soviet mass media while reporting news that concerned the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which was the first popular movement inside Soviet borders.

The method used here to study Western media coverage of the Karabakh conflict was content analysis of Western articles, mainly ones from US media, showing the unfolding of the first violent ethnic conflict in the Soviet Union. Chronologically, the study covers sample publications and broadcasts from the early 1988 until 1990. Selected publications from American and European print media, and printed reports of RFE broadcasts, were subjected to qualitative analysis. All printed media reports, news reports and analytical articles in the sample were subjected to content analysis, and the results were presented against a historical background.

Another important aspect of the study was to reveal the keywords and phrases most commonly used to describe the parties in conflict, as well as popular clichés and stereotypes reflected in Western and Soviet media samples.

One of the objects of this study has been the interplay between Soviet and Western mass media with regard to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. From the very beginning of the conflict, the peculiarities of a totalitarian system were clearly manifest in the way the Soviets rigidly controlled all media publications on the topic, and the way they reacted to Western «interventions». In Communist society, control over mass media had two main goals: to ensure that the media publish the right things and to make sure they do not publish any wrong things that contradict official propaganda. The two tasks were so closely interlocked

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my colleague Mark Grigoryan for providing some books and references on the topic such as: McCormack, Gillian (ed.). *Media and Conflict in Transcaucasia*. Düsseldorf, 1999; Thomson, Mark. *Forging War*. Luton: 1999; Mursaliyev, Azer. "Azerbaijan in the Russian Press (1988-2000). Subjective View of the Object". *Russia and Azerbaijan: Societies and States*. Ed. Dmitri E. Furman Moscow: 2001, pp. 478-489; (in Russian) Jusić, Tarik. "Media Policies and the Settlement of Ethnic Conflicts". *Managing Multiethnic Local Communities in the Countries of the Former Yugoslavia*. Ed. Nenad Dimitrijević, Budapest: LGI Books, 2000, pp. 231-249.

<sup>2</sup> Lisichkin, V and L. Shelepin. *Third Informational-Psychological World War*. Moscow: 1994, p. 40.

that they were of equal importance for Communist propaganda. The task of supervising the mass media could not be narrowed down to one of censorship alone, as is the case in dictatorships or countries with a different social order.<sup>3</sup>

The relative peace of interethnic relations within the history of the Soviet Union was always secured by the Soviet Communist Party's propaganda of 'internationalism' and a policy of suppressing manifestations that had nationalistic aspirations. But this does not imply that interethnic problems were resolved. Most of the festering ethnic conflicts and ethnic animosities were frozen for a while, as a direct result of being under the strict control of Soviet power structures such as the KGB.

The authoritarian Soviet regime created a facade of harmonious interethnic relationships and then went to great lengths to conceal the root causes of ethnic conflicts and problems surrounding ethnic concerns. The rosy image of interethnic relations created in the oeuvre of Soviet scholars prevailed for a long time after the collapse of the USSR.<sup>4</sup> As far as Soviet scholars were concerned, the problem of ethnic nationalism in the USSR had been resolved once and for all. The same ideological and psychological trends ran rampant within the Soviet mass media.

As Tashkent-based researcher F. Muminova wrote, "...journalism is huge instrument of forming appropriate national identity and though it means for creating of new statehood. If journalists serve to state apparatus and are not independent, thus the world of values and symbols created by them help the leaders to establish in the society wondered for them national identity, which could be non-adequate to the real identity."<sup>5</sup>

\*\*\*\*

The sources for this study were found in the superbly organized Open Society Archives based at the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary. My main sources were reports from print media and printed versions of broadcast news from the archives of *RFE/RL*.

Part 1 of the book provides a general outline of the situation with information and propaganda warfare during the Cold War. This outline is necessary as the background for the situation with media coverage of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in its first stage. Part 1 opens with a chapter on information and propaganda warfare and ends with a description of the Cold War discourse over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The necessity for such a structure came

from the need to describe the atmosphere of psychological and informational warfare between the Eastern and Western blocks at the inception of the popular movements in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.

Part 2 contains a brief historical survey, a chronological description, and an analysis of conflict dynamics in Nagorno-Karabakh in 1988-1990. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the movement for reuniting the Armenian enclave with Armenia created big cracks in the Great Wall of the Soviet system.

Part 3 focuses on the propaganda surrounding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, specifically, the methods and tactics employed in the media coverage of the conflict within the context of Gorbachev's *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* policies. With very few exceptions, from the very start of the conflict, Soviet print and electronic media reports of events on the other side of the Caucasus mountain range were brimming with stereotypes and ideological clichés.

Part 4 reveals the stereotypes used by Western media to report about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. These stereotypes were analyzed here against a political background of the final stages of the Cold War and 'the velvet revolutions' in Eastern Europe.

Finally, Part 5 shows how propaganda strategies developed by the ideological rivals during the Cold War were reflected in the media coverage of events in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Reports of those dramatic developments were very often based on the standard formulae of Cold War propaganda. The Cold War was, amongst other things, an ongoing propaganda war, so it was natural that both superpowers used propaganda strategies as a means of non-violent warfare. Intensive propaganda campaigns were directed and addressed to the masses, both inside and outside the Eastern and Western blocks. The Soviet and Western governments funded printed media and radio broadcasting in order to win over the support of people living in the opposing camp. The US government funded *Radio Free Europe* and *Radio Liberty* to broadcast inside the borders of the Soviet block. The Soviets, in turn, funded Communist media in the West to advocate their cause. The situation changed drastically after Mikhail Gorbachev launched a limited liberalization policy that also touched the sphere of the media.

The Appendices contain some of the sources used in the study, selected in a way to produce an overall impression of Western perceptions of the Armenian popular movement. The appended documents include excerpts from US Congressional debates, declassified CIA documents, US Senate and European Parliament resolutions, and print media reports. Photos show those banners and slogans from rallies held in Yerevan in 1988-1989 that criticize Soviet media coverage of the Armenian popular movement. Several Soviet and Western cartoons were also included in the Appendices.

3 Burek, Antony. *How the Communist press works*. London: Pal Mall Press, 1964, p. 113.

4 Chugrov, Sergei. "Ideological Stereotypes and Political Myths: the Empire Strikes Back". *The Fall of the Soviet Empire*. Ed. Anne de Tinguy. East European Monographs, No. CDLXXXI. New York: Boulder, Colombia University Press, 1997, p. 310.

5 Muminova, Fatima. "National Identity, Mentality and Mass Media". *Central Asia and Caucasus*, No. 5(23), Stockholm: 2002, p. 159.

The Caucasus being a small and remote region, the first reports about developments in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in both Soviet and Western media were mostly informative, containing background information on the region, its population, history, religions and ethnic groups. The Soviet coverage was also brimming with propaganda based on the Leninist principles of 'ethnic brotherhood' and 'internationalism.' Besides, Soviet journalism had no prior experience of reporting ethnic conflict inside the Soviet borders, and was squeezed in the stiff framework of government propaganda and ideology.

Soviet and Western media reports served both informative and propagandistic functions, as a result they sometimes clashed with each other. As a rule, Soviet reports on the conflict were scrupulously reviewed and heavily censored. Information was limited to a minimum needed for a basic understanding of the situation in the conflict zone; disinformation was also practiced. The Soviet media were viewed as a "powerful weapon of the Party".<sup>6</sup> The fact that the Communist Party had full control over the Soviet media network made life very difficult for foreign media trying to report events happening in the USSR.

The local Armenian and Azerbaijani media reacted quickly to the initial stages of the conflict by launching a war of their own. At the first stage of the conflict, this was mostly a 'war of histories': media publications of that time manipulated historical facts and ongoing events in a way that led to further escalation of interethnic tensions.

From the first stages of the conflict, both parties gave rise to distorted images of the enemy, creating stereotypes based on historical references and age-old memories, thus intensifying the hostility and intolerance between conflicting sides. Both local and foreign media were either directly or indirectly involved in escalating the hostile discourse, thus fuelling hostilities on the ground.

Western mass media coverage of the conflict was clearly based on existing Western stereotypes about the Soviet system and a simplistic vision of the East in general and the Eastern block in particular. Even after the break-up of the USSR, Western media coverage of events in the Caucasus was perceptibly flawed. As Thomas Goltz put it, "the media did not cover enough. Journalists affiliated with major newspapers suffer from 'Moscowitis,' for they continue to look at the former Soviet Union from Moscow or other world capital cities."<sup>7</sup> This Western representation and perception of the Oriental world is a phenomenon that Edward Said referred to as 'Orientalism'.<sup>8</sup> According to Said, "one aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the

media resources have forced information into more standardized mold. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping intensified the hold of the nineteenth century academic and imaginative demonology of "the mysterious Orient."<sup>9</sup>

Last but not least, an important objective of this study was to identify the techniques used by Western and Soviet mass media for propaganda purposes, to analyze the impact of this propaganda, and to examine the peculiarities of propaganda and counterpropaganda with respect to Nagorno-Karabakh within the context of the Cold War.

6 Speech by V. Afanasyev, Editor-in-Chief of *Pravda*, given at a Communist Party Assembly. *Pravda*, September 27, 1989.

7 Goltz, Thomas. "A View From the Front: Coverage of the Post-Soviet Caucasus". *Contemporary Caucasus Newsletter*. The Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, Issue 7, winter 1998-1999, p. 24.

8 Said, Edward W. *Orientalism. Western Conception of the Orient*. London: Penguin Books, 1995.

9 Ibid. p. 26.

## PART I

*Glasnost has given people fetishes of possible symbolic value, but no real content.*

*Françoise Thom*

### THE 'WAR OF ANTENNAS': INFORMATION WARFARE BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST TOWARDS THE END OF THE COLD WAR

The Cold War between the East and the West involved information warfare. Since the end of WWII, and throughout the Cold War, negative images of the ideological rivals, the East and the West, prevailed in the mass media. Most of the time, those images reflected the respective governments' foreign policies: officially in the Soviet Union, where the press was closely tied to government and Communist party structures, and indirectly in the United States, where the media, in spite of their presumed adversarial role, were largely sympathetic to government policies, and especially foreign policies.<sup>1</sup>

The frontlines of the Cold War reserved a special role for radio broadcasts, and both Superpowers spent enormous amounts of money on propaganda and counter-propaganda that often relied on *hate speech* and clichés. The mission of Western radio broadcasts was auxiliary but not marginal, as far as their involvement in upsetting the Communist system. Two Western radio stations, *the Voice of America (VOA)* and *Radio Liberty (RL)*, played very important roles and had clearly defined missions as the vanguards of ideological and informational warfare against the Communist block. "The main task of *VOA* was to explain [to the] Soviet people how good it is to live in the U.S., while *RL* had to send messages to Soviet audiences showing how bad was to live in the USSR."<sup>2</sup>

Since the late 1940's, the Washington-based *VOA* and the U.S.-sponsored European stations, *RFE* and *RL*<sup>3</sup>, had been the principal tools of Western propaganda and information dissemination, presenting a great challenge for the Soviet ideological isolation beyond the Iron Curtain.

A quote from the speech made by *RFE/RL* Chairman C. Jackson at the opening of the radio station was a favorite of the Soviet media, used "to unveil" the true mission of Western radio stations. Jackson had said: "The radio station is a service in the psychological war. It was founded to provoke internal disorders in the countries to which it broadcasts...."<sup>4</sup>

To meet the challenge, Moscow chose a policy of jamming the Western broadcasts, spending enormous amounts of money to this end. According to Steve Salerno, the funding disparity was most noticeable in the obvious superiority of Moscow's hardware. The Kremlin has about 300 transmitters scattered throughout the USSR and Bulgaria, while *VOA* had about half as many. As to antenna power, the Soviets had more than 100 million Watts available to them, out-powering the U.S. by a ratio of almost 4 to 1. Moscow's advantages were no less striking when it came to foreign languages. *VOA* broadcast in 43 languages; the Soviets, in 81.<sup>5</sup> In order to combat the barrage of Soviet jamming and keep the Soviet audiences supplied with alternative news, all three Western stations practiced broadcasting at unpredictable times or at several frequencies at once.

Between 1980 and 1987, the jamming of *BBC* and *VOA* broadcasts was further intensified due to the rise of the *Solidarity* movement in Poland. Special attention was paid to jamming *RFE/RL*. Even before the suspension of Soviet jamming against the *BBC* and the *VOA*, *RFE/RL* had been the target of more than 70 percent of all Soviet jamming.<sup>6</sup> In turn, the West continued to strengthen information penetration beyond the borders of a now, collapsing Soviet Union. Before the Soviets ceased jamming *RFE/RL* in June 1987, the United States and Israel signed an agreement to construct a U.S. short-wave relay station in Israel to strengthen *RL*'s airing range. A joint project of the Board for International Broadcasting and United States Information Agency, the relay station consisted of sixteen 500-kilowatt transmitters, enabling the *VOA* and *RFE/RL* to penetrate the massive Soviet jamming and send a much stronger signal into the Western parts of the USSR, reaching into Central Asia's Muslim-populated areas. After the Soviet Union halted its jamming of the *BBC* and *VOA* broadcasts in 1987, the radios considered it imperative to expand their facilities.<sup>7</sup>

Despite all Soviet efforts, the Western radio programs enjoyed great popularity in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As a rule, the programming focused on domestic affairs of the Soviet countries, featuring news and cultural affairs not covered by official media.<sup>8</sup> Serge Schmemann wrote that "while the *BBC*, *VOA* and *Deutsche Welle*, as well as other Western stations, concentrated on

<sup>1</sup> Dennis, Everette E., George Gerbner and Yassen N. Zassoursky. *Beyond the Cold War: Soviet and American Media Images*. London-New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991, p. X.

<sup>2</sup> Hovhannisyan, Eduard. "Radio Station Liberty Yesterday and Today". *Golos Armeni*, Yerevan, March 23, 2003. The author is ex-director of Armenian programs on *RFE/RL*.

<sup>3</sup> Launched separately, the two stations merged in 1976 to become Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Both stations were originally set up by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency as part of its covert propaganda operations in early 1950s. Since 1971, the merged radio station has claimed to have severed all links with the CIA and is funded and supervised directly by the U.S. Congress.

<sup>4</sup> *Argumenti i Fakti*, No. 7, April 23-29, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Salerno, Steve. "Spreading Freedom's Word". *The American Legion Magazine*, July 1987.

<sup>6</sup> Sosin, Gene. *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider's Memoir of Radio Liberty*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, p. 201.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Nicols, John Spicer. "Wasting the Propaganda Dollar". *Foreign Policy*, October 1984, p. 30.

projecting their 'home' society and the policies of their respective Governments, *RFE/RL* primarily focuses on events in the world of local and regional concerns to a Soviet and Eastern European audience. In short, the station not only broadcasted to, but also about, the Communist world, a form of 'cross reporting' with crucial political importance."<sup>9</sup>

Some scholars believe that the Cold War was largely a communication phenomenon wherein the "war" was carried out in activities variously called 'public information', 'propaganda', or 'disinformation', depending on one's ideology or interpretation.<sup>10</sup>

The Soviets constantly accused the West of 'subversive activities'. One Soviet Cold War publication explains which methods Western military intelligence bodies such as the CIA and the Pentagon were allegedly using to wage 'information warfare' against the USSR: "Those methods are: disinformation, distortion of facts, political demagoguery, creation of various myths, dissemination of negative information, and obfuscation of people's minds with fears and suspicions."<sup>11</sup>

Another Soviet author wrote that Soviet allegations used to prove the illegality of the actions of *RFE/RL* were almost equally applicable to other radio centers in the West, which also engaged in instigative and subversive propaganda against the USSR and Eastern Europe.<sup>12</sup>

One of the main principles of the United States' Cold War strategy was responding to self-determination movements worldwide and avoiding actions that could lead to military confrontation with the Soviet Union. Every decision to support a self-determination movement was based on its potential input in the worldwide struggle against the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup> Within the context of the Cold War, the Soviets used similar tactics to challenge American involvement or control over a region or country.

On the eve of the popular movement for the reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia, the Soviet media reaction to Western media broadcasts and publications is well illustrated in the following extract from *Argumenti i Fakti*, a popular Soviet weekly that sold several million copies:

"On the orders of the special services, RL/RFE is constantly changing its tactics, using sophisticated means and methods of exerting a hostile ideological influence. In the present-day situation, together with the old, outmoded calls for the kindling of discord between nations, incitement to religious fanaticism,

and so forth, the RFE/RL radio saboteurs see, in their broadcasts in the languages of many nationalities, to "convince" listeners of the "futility" of perestroika and the program for socioeconomic renewal in our country...

The big and small nations and ethnic groups living in the Soviet Union are virtually in a state of hostility. This conflict will continue to deepen and will seemingly be the basis of the collapse of the Bolshevik tyranny..."<sup>14</sup>

The Soviets rated Western media advocacy for human rights and national liberation movements as anti-Soviet propaganda, because basic human rights were being constantly violated in the Soviet social environment. However, Western radio coverage of these issues was clearly selective and based on double standards: while advocating for the rights of East European nationals, they ignored the rights of other nations, such as Kurds, Palestinians etc.<sup>15</sup> Radio stations mostly covered domestic affairs in target countries, concentrating on keeping listeners informed of those important developments in their country that were unpublished, distorted or inadequately discussed by official media. Since the official ideology often fostered distortion of the historical past, *RFE/RL* offered listeners basic historical and cultural materials on the heritage of their respective areas.<sup>16</sup>

There is little doubt that Western radio stations played an important role in the formation of attitudes diverging from the official Soviet position.<sup>17</sup> In the summer of 1982, the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial while referring to the Soviet strategy in the Cold War environment mentioned the following activities:

"The Soviet Union's propaganda war has manifold aims: to influence world public opinion against U.S. policies; to portray the U.S. as an aggressive and "imperialist" power; to discredit those foreign governments and officials who cooperate with the U.S.; to obfuscate the true nature of Soviet actions and intentions, and to create a favorable environment for the execution of the Soviet foreign and military policies."<sup>18</sup>

Since the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968, the Soviet media paid unprecedented attention to the susceptibility of East European audiences to *RFE* broadcasts. The major thrust of Communist attacks against *RFE* was to denigrate *RFE* as a "remnant of the Cold War" and an obstacle to the Détente. In the early 1970's, the trend has been to portray the *RFE* as a tool of the dangerous Western concept of "peaceful coexistence." The Soviets condemned *RFE* as the West's

9 Schmemann, Serge. "Soviets Stop Jamming Radio Liberty broadcasts". *The New York Times*, December 1, 1988.

10 *Beyond the Cold War*, op. cit., p. 2.

11 Zamyatin, Leonid. "Washington's Crusades". *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, June 30, 1982.

12 Alov, Gennady and Vassily Viktorov. *Aggressive Broadcasting: Evidence. Facts. Documents*. Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1985, p. 149.

13 Halperin, Morton H., David J. Scheffer and Patricia L. Small. *Self-Determination in the New World Order*. Washington D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1992, p. 11.

14 *Argumenti i Fakti*, No. 7, April 23-29, 1988.

15 Hovhannisyan, Eduard, op. cit.

16 Short, K. R. M. "The Real Masters of the Black Heavens: Western Broadcasts over the Iron Curtain". *Western Broadcasting over the Iron Curtain*. Ed. K. R. M. Short. London - Sidney: GROOM Helm, 1986, pp. 91-92.

17 Parta, R. Eugene. "Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research (SAAOR) at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty". *Western Broadcasting over the Iron Curtain*. Ed. K. R. M. Short. London - Sidney: GROOM Helm, 1986, p. 229.

18 "The Soviet Forgery War" (editorial). *The Wall Street Journal*. July 13, 1982.

"ideological tool" in a new "revisionist strategy."<sup>19</sup>

Since the end of WWII, Soviet newspapers launched a number of campaigns against the way Western radio and other news media covered the USSR and Communist countries. The *RFE* was the major target of those campaigns. The impact and efficiency of *RFE* broadcasts addressing sensitive Soviet issues could be measured by the intensity of reactions in Soviet printed media. Since *RFE* openly discussed those topics which were banned in the USSR, it was only natural that the Soviets reacted.<sup>20</sup>

*RL*, originally launched under the aegis of the CIA together with *RFE*, was intended to "to fill the information gap" while at the same time practicing selective approaches in pursuing its clearly defined objectives. During the Cold War, the *RL* had to keep its broadcasts in line with American government policies. For example, Muslim desks were instructed to never praise Khomeini or condemn Israel in their programming. The Armenian desk was prohibited from addressing the topic of the Armenian Genocide or condemning Turkish policy, since Turkey was a U.S. ally in the NATO.<sup>21</sup> Another policy observed by Western radio stations, as claimed, was to avoid comments or broadcasts that could be reasonably construed as incitement to revolt or support for illegal and violent actions.<sup>22</sup>

The Soviet press regularly condemned almost all foreign radio stations as media arms of the 'capitalist world'. An important component of Western broadcasting was the airing of *samizdat* documents and statements by unofficial organizations. *Samizdat* was clearly distinguished from editorial content<sup>23</sup>; national desks sometimes aired *samizdat* materials that contained hate speech, quoted from chauvinistic or nationalistic *samizdat* publications.<sup>24</sup>

The jamming of the 'Western voices' was ordered by Stalin in 1948 and continued for about 40 years until the end of the Cold War. All the Russian-language services of the *VOA* and subsequently other Western radio stations were put on the list of *non grata* radio stations.<sup>25</sup> Charles Z. Wick, the former Director of the U.S. Information Agency, claimed that in the early perestroika years, the Soviet jamming resources comprised 15,000 technicians working at 2000 jamming stations.<sup>26</sup> By the estimates of *VOA* and *BBC* engineers, the Soviet Union spent between \$500 million and \$1 billion annually on jamming, more than

the combined annual operating budgets of the *VOA*, *RFE/RL*, *BBC*, and *Deutsche Welle*.<sup>27</sup> In 1985-1986, the European Parliament passed resolutions condemning the jamming of *RFE/RL* and other Western stations by the governments of the USSR, Poland, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>28</sup>

A significant aspect of Western broadcasting on Soviet territories was its very careful programming in minority languages. The *RFE/RL* had a monopoly in this sphere, having the resources to broadcast in almost all the languages spoken in the Communist world. During the 1970's, the National Security Council (NSC) made a decision to strengthen *RL* broadcasts to the nations of Soviet Central Asia. The decision was based on views, voiced by U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and other experts, to the effect that Muslim republics within the Soviet Union were the USSR's weak spot.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, *Radio Liberty* as well as the *BBC* launched an Afghan service, broadcasting in Daro and Pashto.<sup>30</sup>

This is what S. Enders Wimbush, former director of *RFE/RL*, wrote:

"My thinking was quite simple. The Soviet Union was a multinational empire. Multinational empires don't survive. The Soviet Union was an evil empire, one of the most pernicious experiments in human history. And its very existence was contrary to the interests of the United States. My view was very different from those who believed that dissent or economic failure would bring the Soviet Union down. I always believed that the nationality problem was the Soviet Union's most serious weakness. And I believed that it was in the American interest to prevent the Soviet Union from feeling that it had complete control over its border regions. Because if the Soviet leaders felt their country's borders were secure, they were more likely to become aggressive internationally."<sup>31</sup>

The beginning of Gorbachev's reforms signaled a new relationship between the East and the West, with the increasing news coverage of the Soviet Union, now rated as more newsworthy by American and European mass media.

During the Reykjavik meeting in the fall of 1986, initiated by Gorbachev, radio news and radio propaganda were on the agenda of discussions between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet leader. Mikhail Gorbachev pointed out what he said was an "unequal position", referring to numerous radio transmitters surrounding the USSR, broadcasting in the languages of every Soviet nation.

19 Congressional Record Service. Price, James R., March 22, 1972, pp. 161-162.

20 Ibid.

21 Hovhannisyan, Eduard. *op. cit.*

22 Short, K. R. M. "The Real Masters of the Black Heavens: Western Broadcasts over the Iron Curtain". *Western Broadcasting over the Iron Curtain*. Ed. K. R. M. Short. London-Sidney: GROOM Helm, 1986, p. 94.

23 Ibid.

24 E.g. in 1989 the Azeri-language service of *RFE/RL* broadcast *samizdat* compilations made by Azerbaijani historian Sabir Asadov and containing negative descriptions of Armenians quoted from various sources, including chauvinistic and anti-Semitic publications. A reaction to this broadcast was published in Armenian press, see Muradyan, Paruyr. "The Hypocritical Voices". *Kommunist*. Yerevan, September 30, 1988.

25 "BBC Russian service turns 40". *RFE/RL records*. 23 March, 1986, Krasny Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/764.

26 Wick, Charles Z. "What do Soviets Fear". *The Washington Times*. May 28, 1986.

27 Sosin, Gene. *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider's Memoir of Radio Liberty*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, p. 203.

28 "European Parliament Condemns Radio Jamming". *RFE/RL Records*. 11 October, 1985, Krasny Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/764. For the another resolution, see Appendix no. 1.

29 Puddington, Arch. *Broadcasting Freedom. The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*. University Press of Kentucky, 2000, p. 290.

30 "Afghan Broadcasting in Daro Started in 1985 and Then in Pashto". *RFE/RL Records*, Krasny Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/78, "BBC Will Expand its Broadcasting to Russia, Begin Afghan Service." *The International Herald Tribune*, February 28, 1981.

31 Puddington, Arch, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

The Soviets made the following offer: we stop jamming the *VOA*, and you allow us to broadcast to U.S. citizens on your territory.<sup>32</sup>

With the start of the détente between the USA and USSR, officials in the East and West responsible for orchestrating the "information war" began corresponding with each other, proposing to hold consultations about the "needless war of words."<sup>33</sup>

Although radio stations in the late 1980's were considered an anachronism of the Cold War, and the former rivals were discussing prospective positive steps towards the establishment of an atmosphere of mutual confidence, the Soviets continued to accuse the West of subversive initiatives. For example, after riots broke out in Alma-Ata in December 1986<sup>34</sup>, the *Washington Post* wrote: "When major political riots in Alma-Ata greeted the dismissal of D. A. Kunayev as boss of the Kazakhstan Communist Party, *Radio Liberty* broadcasts far more about the size and intensity of the riots than came out of Moscow – and more about Kunayev's corrupt past than Gorbachev may have wished."<sup>35</sup> Soviet accusations of subversive anti-Soviet activities were usually dismissed by Western experts and officials.

After the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor, the Soviet government did its best to conceal the consequences. While Soviet censors concealed the information about the accident for several days, the news was immediately disseminated by *RL*. Vera Tolz, *RFE/RL* leading expert on Soviet affairs and Soviet media, wrote: "The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant was regarded in the West as a serious test of Gorbachev's campaign for openness. The initial Soviet delay in announcing that the accident had taken place and the subsequent reluctance to release the details about it made it appear that glasnost' had failed that test resoundingly."<sup>36</sup>

"Media behavior in times of crisis gives some idea of the true value of *glasnost*. Whenever taken by surprise by some unexpected serious event, the press has maintained a cautious silence or given a brief report while waiting for instructions from the top on how to proceed. This was the case with the Alma-Ata, Sumgait riots and also with Chernobyl."<sup>37</sup>

Eduard Shevardnadze, former Soviet Foreign Minister, later confessed, "Chernobyl was the first test for Glasnost, and it was failed. I thought that we had just started and all the events were taking us further still. However, we

were confronted with events in Alma-Ata, Sumgait, Stepanakert, Baku, Tbilisi, Vilnius and Riga. Here again, the same old-fashioned mechanisms used for simplifying, distorting or simply totally covering the truth about the events came into play."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, even during the Glasnost era, the Soviet Union lodged a formal diplomatic protest with the United States embassy, accusing the U.S. government-run *VOA* radio network of subversion and encouraging public unrest during broadcasts in the Soviet Baltic Republics, "making provocative insinuations about the growth of nationalist sentiment in the Baltic republics."<sup>39</sup>

The Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev raised the topic of "subversive radio voices" in his address to the Plenum of the Central Committee of Communist Party in February 1988. He said:

There are persistent attempts to transfer the ideological struggle over *perestroika* and détente onto our territory. "Radio-voices" spread provocative inventions about escalating tension in the Soviet society, saying that "opposition" against *perestroika* and the foreign policy of the CPSS is on the rise.

In a hurry, they have worked out new techniques of subversive work against other socialist countries also going through dynamic modernization of socialism. For each country, they look for specific methods to operate, taking national specificity into account.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that the Plenum discussed ethnic tensions and interethnic relations in the Soviet Union came to the attention of foreign observers.<sup>41</sup> Almost ten days after the address by Gorbachev, on February 29, 1988, the Soviets sent a protest to the U. S. embassy in Moscow, alleging that *VOA* news broadcasts had a "subversive thrust" and were intended not to report but to "provoke nationalist actions" in the Baltic republics. Simultaneously, a new Soviet propaganda charge against the United States stated that the U.S. Army had created and spread the AIDS virus as a biological weapon against Third World countries. These allegations appeared in the Soviet press in mid-March 1988.<sup>42</sup>

However, even after a huge and unprecedented détente, both rivals were either overtly or covertly keeping up the policy of influencing each other. Anti-capitalist rhetoric still prevailed in the Soviet print media<sup>43</sup>, well illustrated by the words of Yevgeny Primakov, Director of the Institute of World Economics

32 See *Pravda*, October 23, 1986.

33 See "The letter of Charles Z. Wick, Director of USIA, to Yegor Yakovlev, Editor, Moscow News Newspaper." *The Moscow News*, April 13, 1988.

34 Interview with Kazakhstan SSR KGB Chairman M. Miroshnik. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, June 7, 1988.

35 Evans, Rowland and Robert Novak. "Don't Cripple Radio Liberty." *The Washington Post*, March 23, 1987.

36 Tolz, Vera. "Glasnost' in the Soviet Media Since the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress." *Radio Liberty Research Record*, October 20, 1986, *RL* 391/86, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/657, p. 6.

37 Thom, Françoise. *The Gorbachev Phenomenon. A History of Perestroika*. London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1989, p. 35.

38 Shevardnadze, Eduard. *My Choice for Defending Democracy and Freedom*. Moscow: Novosti, 1991, p. 296.

39 "Moscow Protests "subversive" Broadcasts by Voice of America." *RFE/RL Reports*, 29 February 1988, Krasniy Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/771.

40 Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU. *Pravda*, February 19, 1988.

41 Shanker, Thom. "Gorbachev Acts on Minorities." *The Chicago Tribune*, February 19, 1988.

42 "VOA Denies Soviet Charge, Says Honest News Will Continue." *RFE/RL Reports*, USIS, March 26, 1988. Krasniy Arkhiv, HU-OSA 300/80/1/771.

43 Krivolapov, A. "The BBC and M 5." *Izvestiya*, August 20, 1985; Alekseev, A. and V. Valentinov. "New Recipes in an Old Cuisine." *Izvestiya*, May 22, 1987; "Attempts by RFE and VOA to Disorientate Public Opinion in the Republic." *Sovetskaya Latvija*, August 20, 1987; Belitsky, B. "The Two Faces of the "Aunt", or How BBC Tries to Make Us Hate Our Home." *Sovetskaya Kultura*, February 5, 1987; Matyash, V. "Heralds of "Psychological War."" *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, March 22, 1988; Ivanenko, A. "Instigators from Overseas." *Izvestiya*, July 8, 1987; Voytenko, V. "Freedom or Irresponsibility." *Argumenti i Fakti*, No. 10, March 10, 1988.

and International Relations: "Professional anti-Soviet activists in the West have been finding it more and more difficult to sustain their false images of the USSR as a bellicose, non-democratic state standing over the world and thinking only of expansion... The current popularity of the Soviet Union and of our leadership abroad, whether among the masses or with intelligentsia, is unprecedented."<sup>44</sup> Despite the cessation of broadcast jamming, the Soviet position towards Western radio broadcasts did not have any cardinal shifts from the line of information warfare. That is, although the Soviets initiated *Glasnost*, they kept their agents in the *RFE/RL*. The exposure of Oleg Tumanov, a KGB agent in the Russian service of the *RFE/RL*, led to conclusions "that Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost was little difference from Leonid Brezhnev's censorship."<sup>45</sup>

Gorbachev's *glasnost* slightly opened the internal Soviet debate on many of topics that had been previously tabooed. Attitudes to Western reporters also relaxed quite a bit. On April 13, 1989, the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted new "Basic rules regulating the professional activity of correspondents of foreign countries' mass media on the territory of the USSR."<sup>46</sup> According to this document, accredited foreign journalists could not lose their accreditation, or be expelled or otherwise punished, as a result of engaging in lawful professional activities, or based on the content of their reports or any materials broadcast by the information companies they represented.<sup>47</sup> As David Remnick wrote, while reporting the official summit of the Soviet and American leaders in Moscow, "Soviets had gone to extraordinary lengths to make life acceptable for pampered Western journalists."<sup>48</sup>

Another significant event in 1989 was the replacement of Viktor Afanasyev, a rather conservative Editor-in-Chief of the very conservative *Pravda* newspaper, by the more liberal Ivan Frolov.<sup>49</sup>

At the same time, attacks on Western journalists were fairly common in Soviet press. Moreover, in the time since M. Gorbachev came to power and launched his *glasnost* campaign, there had been many cases of physical assault on Western television crews. Correspondents of the *New York Times*, *The Times*, *AFP*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Reuters*, *BBC*, and *Le Figaro* were beaten up.<sup>50</sup> As K. Short put it, "Although the new Soviet look initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev gives the appearance of liberalization, it is liberalization applicable

only to the western media and the manipulation of western public opinion."<sup>51</sup>

Another sign of partial media liberalization was the cessation of the relentless jamming of Western radio stations. The Soviet Union stopped jamming the Russian language broadcasts of the *VOA* in May 1987, and those of the *BBC*, five months later. However, the Soviets continued jamming *RFE/RL*. E. Eugene Pell, the president of *RFE/RL*, said that "the cessation of jamming represents a significant step on the part of the Soviet government toward the free flow of information."<sup>52</sup> The reasons why the Soviets continued jamming *RFE/RL* after they stopped jamming the *VOA* and *BBC* were explained by M. S. Forbes, former *RFE/RL* Director:

"I think primarily because we touch the nerve far more than other free outside broadcasting operations do. BBC, for example does a fine job of international news, while we take a more micro approach and concentrate on local events. For example, when Alma-Ata had riots 18 months ago, we didn't just report the riot. We were able to give detailed biographical on the players involved, the background of the friction between the local population and the Russians going back to the 1930s, when Stalin killed a goodly portion of the population to try to Russify the region. Even in Solidarity in Poland in the 1980s, we gave considerably more detail, depth and analysis than anyone."<sup>53</sup>

Although the Soviet steps towards liberalization were welcomed in the West and particularly in the USA, there were some skeptical reactions in Western mass media circles towards the Gorbachev *glasnost* and *perestroika*. There were both skeptics and people who applauded the Gorbachev reforms. Andrew Rosenthal from the *New York Times* wrote: "Mr. Gorbachev is bringing important changes to the Soviet Union... but it is a serious moral and political error for the United States to commit itself now to a man who is still the dictator of the most powerful totalitarian nation in the world."<sup>54</sup> Françoise Thom gave the following description of the functions of *glasnost*:

"Glasnost was introduced to neutralize Western influence in two ways: first by taking away the West's monopoly of exclusive news stories about the USSR. Furthermore, glasnost aimed to enlist the Western media in the service of Soviet propaganda by bombarding them with rumors and sensations, which they then hastened to broadcast both in the West and to the Communist Block. Thanks to glasnost, the West is losing interest in the Soviet opposition, preferring to fix its attention on the intrigues within the Politburo and the conflict between the 'conservatives' and

44 "Disinformation." *Soviet Active Measures and Disinformation Forecast*. Winter 1988, No. 8.

45 Puddington, Arch. "Broadcasting Freedom." *The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, University Press of Kentucky, 2000, p. 286.

46 The entire document see: *Vestnik MID SSSR*, No. 10, 1989, pp. 48-52.

47 Ibid, p. 50.

48 "Soviet Diplomacy and Negotiating Behavior-1988-90: Gorbachev-Reagan-Bush Meetings at the Summit." *Special Studies Series on Foreign Affairs Issues*. Vol. III, April, 1991, p. 91.

49 Goldstein, Steve. "Gorbachev Replaces Pravda Editor with Reformer Friend." *The Knight-Ridder Newspapers*, October 20, 1989.

50 Walker, Martin. "Izvetiya Condemns 'Slander.'" *The Guardian*, January 8, 1987; Bohlen, Celestine. "Soviets Attack Demonstrators, Western Journalists." *The Washington Post*, February 14, 1987.

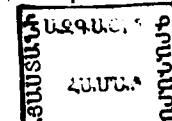
51 Short, K. R. M. "The Real Masters of the Black Heavens: Western Broadcasts over the Iron Curtain." *Western Broadcasting over the Iron Curtain*. Ed. K. R. M. Short, London - Sidney: GROOM Helm, 1986, p. 1.

52 Schmemann, Serge. "Soviets Stop Jamming Radio Liberty Broadcasts." *The New York Times*, December 1, 1988.

53 "Glasnost Heightens Radio Free Europe's Role." Interview with M. S. Forbes, Jr. *The San Diego Union*, July 3, 1988.

54 Rosenthal, Andrew M. "Formerly, the Evil Empire." *The New York Times*, June 3, 1988.

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Gorbachev and his allies. In other words, the regime has practically won back the monopoly of information about the USSR taken from it by the dissidents in the 1970s."<sup>55</sup>

Another author, Alexander Zinoviev, was more radical in his views: "... in the Communist society environment glasnost appears to be a means for disinformation and manipulation of public consciousness. Disinformation is not an absolute lie; it is a special selection and way of cultivating a monopoly of power. Any other attempts to practice glasnost independently from the Regime could be seen as blackmail on the social order and for propaganda." As an illustration, Zinovyev mentioned the Soviet persecution of the editors of *Glasnost* magazine, Sergey Grigoryants, Lev Trofimov and Andrey Shilkov.<sup>56</sup>

On the whole, the changes that had taken place in Soviet media since the inception of *glasnost*, including the cessation of the jamming of *BBC* and *VOA*, were seen in Western circles as new challenges and opportunities for Western broadcasters. The following extracts from a report on *glasnost* list the principal changes in the Soviet media and their implications for Western radio:

- "Soviet television has recently adopted a number of changes in programming and presentation intended to make TV broadcasts livelier, more interesting, and thereby more competitive with Western radio. It is becoming an increasingly important source of information for Soviet citizens.
- The central press has been in the forefront of *glasnost*, both in reporting on previously taboo subjects and in serving as a forum for discussion of reform proposals.
- Western radio is no longer the sole source of alternative viewpoints on Soviet issues, and Soviet media are becoming more timely and sophisticated in their reporting. Efforts are being made to render Soviet media more attractive with increased entertainment and a livelier presentation.
- At the same time the limited nature of *glasnost* presents Western stations with the opportunity to communicate more effectively than ever with Soviet audiences. Instead of remaining an observer, Western radio can become a participant in the ongoing internal debate by providing critical but constructive analysis of Soviet affairs. Since many topics remain outside the limits of *glasnost*, Soviet citizens will continue to turn to Western radio for objective, complete information and analyses that they still cannot get from domestic media."<sup>57</sup>

Definitely, Western mass media, including radio stations, were given considerable privileges by *glasnost*. It became possible to interview Soviet government critics directly over the telephone "without fear that association with

the instrument of imperialist propaganda would earn the interviewee a term in the Gulag. The station also began to experiment with live broadcasts, something that had never been attempted before."<sup>58</sup> According to Arch Puddington, the station made excellent use of its contacts during periods of crisis, such as the disturbances over Nagorno-Karabakh, when *RL* interviewed leading independence politicians, reported on their speeches and manifestos, and gave extensive coverage to rallies and other pro-independence manifestations.<sup>59</sup>

The new imposed Soviet image was designed to facilitate the policy of "cooperation and mutual understanding" within the capitalist society that Gorbachev portrayed in such unflattering terms. This helps explain the sharp change in the Soviet political line from confrontation to cooperation. From the Soviet viewpoint, circumstances and the balance of forces dictated the new benevolent international stance.<sup>60</sup> However, totally lacking or very limited information regarding domestic interethnic and community conflicts, were clear-cut signs of the existence and further promotion of old-style censorship. According to K. Short,

"Gorbachev's new public relations-propaganda look also includes the revitalization of the Soviet Union's domestic propaganda machinery, which includes the propaganda department, state television and radio, the press and publishing houses and Ministry of Culture. In the list of topics to be censored in the Soviet press among many others figured also references to the censorship organs or to the jamming of foreign radio station."<sup>61</sup>

Within the controversial pseudo-liberal atmosphere of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, ethnic movements emerged among the oppressed Soviet minorities. From the start, these movements attracted the attention of the Western mass media, especially the radio stations. Further developments showed that the neither official Soviet agencies with their huge propagandistic machine, nor the Soviet mass media were ready to deal within such a situation.

In the final analysis, the official reaction of the Communist party leaders and Soviet mass media towards the Armenian popular movement in Nagorno-Karabakh showed the true degree of degradation of the policy of *glasnost* and political liberalization as defined by Mikhail Gorbachev.

<sup>55</sup> Thom, Françoise. *The Gorbachev Phenomenon. A History of Perestroika*. London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1989, pp. 31-32.

<sup>56</sup> Zinoviev, Alexander. *Gorbachevism*. New York: Liberty Publishing House, 1988, p. 94 (in Russian).

<sup>57</sup> *Glasnost and the Soviet Media Environment: Implications for Western Radio*. AR 1-88, March 1988, Soviet Area Audience and opinion Research, Krasni Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/771.

<sup>58</sup> Puddington, Arch. *Broadcasting Freedom. The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*. The University Press of Kentucky, 2000, p. 292.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Romerstein, Herbert. "Soviet Active Measures and Propaganda: 'New Thinking' and Influence Activities in the Gorbachev Era." *Psychological Operation and Political Warfare in Long-term Strategic Planning*. Ed. Janos Radvanyi. New York-London: Praeger 1990, pp. 38-39.

<sup>61</sup> Short, K. R. M. "The Real Masters of the Black Heavens: Western Broadcasts over the Iron Curtain." *Western broadcasting over the Iron Curtain*. Ed. K. R. M. Short, London - Sidney: GROOM Helm, 1986, pp. 1-2, 5.

## PART II

### A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

*The collapse of the Soviet Union began when the Center did not want or maybe failed "to hear" the Karabakh bell.*

**Nikolay Rijkov**

Former Soviet Prime Minister

There is a huge amount of literature on the ethnic history and historical legacies of the Karabakh region.<sup>1</sup> The parties in conflict, i.e. the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and Azerbaijanis claim that Nagorno-Karabakh plays a key role in their national, cultural and historical identity.

Karabakh, known since antiquity as *Artsakh*, was a historical centre of Armenian life and culture in the North East of Armenian plateau. Through centuries, Karabakh flourished under the semi-autonomous rule of Armenian princes even during the Persian and Turkish conquests of the rest of Armenia. As a result, Armenians have always regarded the area to be of prime historical, cultural and strategic significance. The Azerbaijanis also see the region as a centre of Azerbaijani intellectual and spiritual life, especially the city of Shushi, where many Azerbaijani Muslim composers and musicians were born in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the same time Shushi remained the cultural and educational centre of Karabakh, regarded by Armenians as one of the main centres of Armenian life in the Eastern South Caucasus.

Following a brief period of independence after World War I., the Armenian and Azerbaijani republics contested control over the homogenously Armenian populated region of Karabakh. The League of Nations viewed the area as a contested territory. Several times over, the National Council of the Karabakh Armenians voted for unification with the Republic of Armenia. In August 1919, the Seventh session of the National Council of Armenia gave its temporary consent to Azerbaijani control over the province until the final resolution of its status at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. However, this resulted in a bloody

massacre of thousands of Armenians in Shushi and the surrounding villages in April 1920, organized by the Azerbaijani Governor Khosrovbek Sultanov. As a result, the city lost its Armenian identity<sup>2</sup>.

Bolshevik troops annexed Azerbaijan on April 28 and Armenia, on December 1, 1920. Three days after the invasion of Armenia, *Pravda* published an article in which Josef Stalin, then People's Commissar for Nationalities, assured that Nagorno-Karabakh and other disputed territories, such as Nakhichevan and Zangezur, would be restored within the borders Soviet Armenia.

In order to finalize the matter, on July 3, 1921, the Caucasus Bureau of the Bolshevik party called a meeting and voted for the inclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh in Soviet Armenia on the grounds that 95% of its population was Armenian by ethnicity. However, the following day the Bureau made a new ruling, this time to annex Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan proceeding from "the necessity of establishing national peace between Muslims and Armenians."<sup>3</sup> In fact, the Soviets were anxious to secure Azerbaijani oil for their economic independence, and engaging the support of the Muslim Orient in their efforts to spread the Bolshevik ideology further east.

In July 1923, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) was formed within the borders of Soviet Azerbaijan. During the entire Soviet era, Azerbaijani officials pursued a policy of upsetting the demographic balance in Armenian-populated enclaves of Soviet Azerbaijan. While this policy was successful in the Nakhichevan Autonomous Region, the ethnic composition in Nagorno-Karabakh changed to a lesser degree. By the mid-1980's, the ethnic balance had become an issue of particular concern for Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Between 1921 and 1979, the number of Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh decreased from 124,000 (94%) to 123,000 (76%) whereas the Azeri population increased from 7,400 (6%) to 37,000 (23%). Between 1979 and 1987, the Azeri population grew to 24.5%, or 44,000, and the Armenian population decreased to 74% despite growing in numbers to 133,000. This policy created perceptions of dwindling control, insecurity and fear of discrimination amongst the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to the outbreak of the conflict in 1988, the Armenians of NKAO had

<sup>2</sup> The last few hundreds of Armenians were expelled from the city in early 1988.

<sup>3</sup> *Nagorno-Karabakh in 1918-1923*. Yerevan, 1992, p. 650 (in Russian). It is interesting to note that conflicting parties in the Caucasus Bureau decision were referred to as 'Muslims' and 'Armenians'. As a result of the Soviet policy of *Korenizatsia* or "indigenouization," starting from the early 1930, the ethnic name 'Azerbaijani' was applied to the Turkic-speaking population in South Eastern Caucasus. From 1918 on, by the initiative of the Ottoman Turks, the geographic term used to describe the territories north of the Arax River was 'Azerbaijan'. The calculation was simple; since the historic Azerbaijan, or Atrpatakan, was situated in the northwestern part of Iran, the Turks wanted to attach Iranian Azerbaijan to the territories they had named 'Azerbaijan'. The Bolsheviks adopted this policy; as a result, Azerbaijanis adopted the new name. One can thus say that the Karabakh conflict also lies between two national identities: the established authentic Armenian and newly formed Azerbaijanis.

<sup>4</sup> Cohen, Jonathan. "The Conflict over Nagorno Karabakh." *Conflicts in the Caucasus*. Ed. Baev, Pavel and Ole Berthelson. PRIO Report no. 3/96, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo: PRIO, 1996, p. 44.

<sup>1</sup> For the brief historical account of the ancient history of Mountainous Karabakh see Shnirelman, Victor A. "The Value of the Past: Myths, Identity and Politics." *Transcaucasia, Serri Ethnological Studies*. No. 57. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2001; Walker, Christopher J. (ed.) *Armenia and Karabagh: The Struggle for Unity*. London: Minority Rights Publications, 1991; Harutyunyan, Babken and Alexander Iskandaryan. "Armenia: Karabakhization of National History." *Histories in the Soviet and Post-Soviet States*. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1999, pp. 147-160 (in Russian); Mikaelian, Vardges and Lendrush Khurshudian. "Several Issues Concerning the History of Mountainous Karabagh." *Armenian Review*, Summer/Autumn 1990, vol. 43, no. 2-3, pp. 51-65.

plead for unification with Soviet Armenia in countless petitions, open letters and public protests, as well as behind closed doors at meetings of Communist party committees and other official bodies. This was a case "in which historical arguments and the right of self-determination of a segment of a national group has coalesced into a political demand, which would be perfectly realizable without any danger to the stability of the Soviet system."<sup>5</sup>

In the 1960's, Soviet Armenian intellectuals and thousands of Armenians from all over Karabakh and Armenia addressed an open letter to Moscow, stressing the necessity of reassessing the unfair borders drawn in Stalinist years. In 1962, 2500 Armenian residents of NKAO signed an appeal addressed to Nikita Khrushchev in which they complained that they were subjected to economic and cultural discrimination compared to their Azerbaijani compatriots.

This trend continued in the 1970's. Local authorities continued to suppress Armenian irredentism, expressed in countless appeals to Moscow and the Soviet Armenian leadership for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Such unusual activity within Soviet borders did not escape the attention of Western media, which published several articles covering the issue.<sup>6</sup> One can thus say that Western mass media was to some extent aware of the problem.

When the newly elected General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev initiated policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in 1985, this raised expectations in the Soviet Union, especially among nationalities with historical grievances stemming from decisions made during the Stalinist era. The Soviet society attempted to face its Stalinist legacy, revealing fundamental injustices.<sup>7</sup>

Gorbachev's policies triggered high expectations among the Soviet nations. It also raised nationalistic feelings amongst the local populations of the Soviet Republics. The first nationalistic disturbances took place in 1986 in Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, the largest Central Asian Soviet Republic. Kazakh student protests started when Gennadi Kolbin, an ethnic Russian, was selected as the First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party. Two persons were reportedly killed during clashes with the army and police. In the summer of 1987, Crimean Tatars gathered in the center of Moscow to get permission to repatriate to Crimea, from where they had been deported in 1944. Simultaneously, the Baltic republics, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, raised their voices for revising the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that divided the Soviet and German sectors of the Baltic region and forced their annexation to the Soviet Union.

For sixty years Nagorno-Karabakh remained an enclave within Azerbaijan, an anomaly in the Soviet system: the only autonomous province with a majority that was of the same ethnicity as a neighboring Soviet republic yet was not permitted to join that republic. Discontent of the Armenian population with Azerbaijani rule grew, as discrimination against Armenian language, culture, and contacts with Soviet Armenia became a persistent practice.<sup>8</sup>

In autumn 1987, the first petitions for the protection of the environment and the unification with Nagorno-Karabakh were signed by hundreds of thousands people gathered in Yerevan Central Square. Recent incidents in Chardakhlu, an Armenian-populated village near the NKAO border, escalated the situation. Local Armenians opposed the nomination of an Azerbaijani for the position of director of the *kolkhoz* (collective farm). The response from Azerbaijani officials took the form of a punitive raid, organized by the First Secretary of the Azerbaijani Communist Party of the district. Even the Soviet daily of *Selskaya Zhizn* ('Rural life' in Russian) covered this incident, reporting that women, children, elderly, and even disabled veterans of the WWII were beaten up. This news made a strong impression when it reached Yerevan, which was then in the midst of environmental protests. The environmental protests soon turned into nationalistic rallies demanding the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Soviet Armenia.<sup>9</sup>

There is no doubt that this issue, alongside other ethnic disputes, appeared on the political agenda as a direct result of Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Although such activities were suppressed from the very start, the central government made much less use of military force than, for example, during the suppression of Eastern European uprisings in the 1950's and 1960's. It may also be argued that the first rallies were not large enough to be a major concern for the Soviet powers.

In the first rallies, Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh protested against cultural, ethnic and economic discrimination in Azerbaijan and voiced their wish to rejoin Armenia. Local officials in Nagorno-Karabakh sided with the demonstrators, and were condemned in the Communist newspapers for putting 'parochial interests' above the interests of the state. The 'Armenian ego' and possible concession to Armenian demands became an anathema for Soviet leadership believing that these demonstrations would encourage other Soviet nationalist movements throughout the USSR, challenging the programmed reforms. The Soviet media and Communist Party leadership accused organizers of the Armenian rallies of exploiting the Kremlin's 'democracy' and '*glasnost*' slogans in order to promote ethnic feuding and weaken the reform drive,

5 Simon, Gerhard. "National Tensions in the USSR." *Swiss Review of World Affairs*, May 1988, p. 8.

6 Anderson, Raymond. "Armenians Ask Moscow for Help, Charging Azerbaijan with Bias." *The New York Times*, December 11, 1977.

7 Hovhannisian, Richard. "USSR: The Borders of Blood. The Protests in Armenia are Testing the Limits of Glasnost." *The Washington Post*, February 28, 1988.

8 Suny, Ronald Grigor. *Looking Towards Ararat*, p. 194.

9 See *The Boston Globe*, October 19, 1987; Mouradian, Claire. "The Mountainous Karabakh Question: Inter-Ethnic Conflict or Decolonisation Crisis?" *Armenian Review*, Summer/Autumn 1990, Vol. 43, No. 2-3, p. 15.

condemning their demands for reunification of 'a clear anti-socialist spirit.'

Several days prior to the eruption of the Armenian popular movement, Soviet authorities called a Central Committee Plenum that discussed new policies which could address nationalities issues in the Soviet Union. During the Plenum, Gorbachev called the nationality issue "the most vital and fundamental issue of the Soviet society." Indeed, the Soviet Union's multiethnic structure coupled with suppressed ethnic antagonism made it vulnerable, since the "nationalist policy" had taxed the Soviet regime from the start.<sup>10</sup>

In the question of the settlement of the Karabakh question Gorbachev sided with the hardliners who declared that the situation was becoming 'anti-Soviet' and benefiting foreign powers. He opposed territorial changes, although he acknowledged that mistakes had been made sixty-five years ago when the state was formed.<sup>11</sup>

There was, however, a fundamental quality that singled out the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from other latent conflicts in the USSR. The uprisings in Kazakhstan and the Baltic republics stemmed from a peripheral opposition against Moscow, while in the Karabakh case, the opposition between two peripheral Soviet republics came forward. The Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh expressed a great willingness to find a "safe heaven" in joining with Armenia.

Consequently, on February 20, 1988 the Regional Soviet of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO) appealed to Supreme Soviet of the USSR, asking it to transfer the NKAO from the jurisdiction of Azerbaijani SSR to Armenian SSR. Armenians in Soviet Armenia backed this demand, unknowingly setting in motion the chain of events.

The issue raised by the Karabakh Armenians does not come down to a purely territorial or secessionist claim; it deals with basic human rights - social, economic, political and cultural - which the Armenian population was denied by Soviet Azerbaijani government.<sup>12</sup> The foundation of the Karabakh movement, at least in its initial phase, was mainly built on a "democratic factor" that had not been thus far practiced in the Soviet Union. Violent clashes on ethnic grounds were yet another reason to appeal for reuniting Nagorno-Karabakh with Soviet Armenia.

Starting in February 1988, thousands of people carrying portraits of Gorbachev packed the central square of Yerevan in a show of solidarity with the Karabakh Armenians' demand. The first days of the Armenian popular movement were a popular demonstration of faith in democracy and justice. As Gorbachev admitted many years later, the rallies were well-organized and peaceful. The

protesters carried large posters supporting *perestroika* and *glasnost*.<sup>13</sup>

Moscow officials decided against encouraging or fulfilling the Armenian nationalist aspirations and demands, viewing them through the prism of what Mark Beissinger called a "domino theory," according to which one boundary change might encourage other groups to put up similar demands.<sup>14</sup> Participants of the rallies composed statements and appeals to the leadership of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Republics and to the central Soviet authority, asking for a hand-over of Nagorno-Karabakh to Soviet Armenia.

1988 began with the dismissals of the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. First, in late February, Boris Kevorkov, the Communist Party leader of NKAO, was dismissed for "shortcomings in his work." The Communist Party leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Karen Demirchyan and Kyamran Bagirov, were sacked shortly afterwards, both on the grounds of 'health problems'. Although leaders have been known to retire due to poor health, in these two cases it was clear that they were dismissed because of their inability to deal with the existing situation. This method of sacking leaders smacked of Brejnev-era methods and caused sharp criticism, even in the Soviet media, with readers calling for more openness regarding this issue and requesting comprehensive coverage of events in the conflict region.<sup>15</sup>

The national awakening of Soviet Armenians sent a new signal to the Armenian Diaspora. Traditional Armenian political parties operating in the Diaspora, and various Diaspora institutions, engaged the Soviets with many appeals. The official visits of the Soviet leaders abroad were always met with Diaspora Armenian protesters calling for rightful fulfilment of Armenian demands.

The Armenian popular movement to reunite with the Soviet Armenia was unparalleled in Soviet history. The Karabakh Armenian authorities voted "to undertake a peaceful unification with their brethren in the Soviet Armenia, a move supported fully by the latter."<sup>16</sup>

This unprecedented decision sparked off a turbulent reaction in Soviet Azerbaijan. Three-day anti-Armenian pogroms in the industrial town of Sumgait, northwest of Baku, resulted in dozens of casualties among ethnic Armenians. The Sumgait killings were ethnically motivated and brought up old memories of the Armenian Genocide implemented by the Ottoman Turkey in 1915. The Sumgait massacres were the first mass murders on ethnic grounds within the

10 *The Washington Post*, March 2, 1988.

11 Suny, Ronald Grigor. *Looking Towards Ararat*, p. 204.

12 Libaridian, Gerard J. (ed.) *The Karabagh File. Documents and Facts on the Question of Mountainous Karabagh, 1918-1988*. First Edition, Zorian institute, Cambridge-Toronto, March 1988.

13 Gorbachev, Mikhail. *Memoirs*. London and New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 333.

14 Beissinger, Mark. *Nationalist Mobilisation and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 66-68.

15 Reformatorski, I. "Why Cannot We Speak Openly?" *Argumenti i Fakti*, No. 23, 1988.

16 Croissant, Michael P. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998, p. xii.

Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup>

The reports of Armenian pogroms in Sumgait were followed by a report from Soviet deputy Prosecutor General, Alexander Katusev, who told *Baku Radio* that two people had been murdered in connection with the disturbances in Nagorno-Karabakh. Katusev identified the dead as 16-year old Bakhtiar Uliyev and 23-year old Ali Godjiev, both Azeris from the Agdam region.<sup>18</sup>

Before the outbreaks of violence, Mikhail Gorbachev, while receiving a delegation of Armenian intelligentsia, surprised it by making the following bizarre statement: "Have you thought about the hundreds of thousands Armenians in Azerbaijan?"<sup>19</sup> Zori Balayan, one of the leaders of the Armenian popular movement, was quoted by Igor Noylain as saying that during that meeting, M. Gorbachev acknowledged the orderly fashion in which the large rallies in Yerevan had taken place, noting with approval that the crowds marching through the streets hushed when they passed a hospital, to avoid disturbing patients. He even apologized for an early TASS report, which had called the Armenian demonstrators "extremists."<sup>20</sup> One day before the riots started, Gorbachev went on television with a statement in which he said: "At this moment, what is most important is to concentrate on overcoming the existing situation, on solving concrete economic, social, ecological and other problems that have accumulated in Azerbaijan and Armenia, in the spirit of the policy of perestroika and renewal that is being realized throughout our country."<sup>21</sup>

Official Soviet tallies of victims in Sumgait counted 32 dead, including 26 Armenians and 6 Azeris. Deputy Public Prosecutor Katusev said that two of the six Azeris killed in Sumgait had been stoning a bus and were run over by it, and that vehicles belonging to the security forces killed the four others.<sup>22</sup>

The Sumgait massacres were a watershed in the history of the Soviet Union. Almost the entire 14,000-plus Armenian community fled the city. Sumgait events had a negative impact for Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani image, which struggled to react to the unexpected events in Karabakh, unable to deal with the fact that it had produced the most savage community violence in Soviet history. The brutality was a painful contrast to the peaceful demonstrations in Armenia, and ordinary Azerbaijanis were horrified and confused.<sup>23</sup>

17 Matveeva, Anna. "Nagorno Karabakh: A Straightforward Territorial Conflict." *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia. An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*. Eds. Tongeren, Paul van, Hans van de Veen, and Juliette Verhoeven. London: Boulder, 2002, p. 56.

18 At least one of them was gunned down by an Azeri policeman who tried to prevent further mob assault on the Armenian city of Askeran. See: Waal, Thomas de. *Black Garden. Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2003, p. 15; see also: "Armenian events". *RFE/RL Records*, February 29, Krasniy Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/11/12.

19 Interview with Zori Balayan, see *Report of the USSR*. January 29, 1990, HU-OSA, 300/8/38/3.

20 Nolyain, Igor. "Moscow's Secret Initiation of the Azeri-Armenian Conflict (A Study of Divide-and Rule Policy in Modern History)." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*. Vol. 12, No. 3 (September 1999), pp. 39.

21 Experts from Gorbachev's address to Armenians. *The New York Times*. February 27, 1988.

22 "Soviet bars TV Parallel of Afghan and Viet Wars." *Washington Times*, April 28, 1988.

23 Waal, Thomas de, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

On March 23, 1988, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR rejected the petition of the Nagorno-Karabakh local council for its unification request with Soviet Armenia. Moreover, the council was denied the right to appeal. Both Azerbaijani and Soviet officials accused Armenians of violating the fundamental Leninist principle of internationalism and ethnic friendship. The decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, announced on 23 March 1988, though expected, came as a powerful shock: a 'no' to all demands, denunciation of the 'impermissible pressure' from the Armenian side, condemnation of 'all nationalist and extremist rallies' and a threat of legal action. Although a number of economic and cultural reasons were cited, they could not lessen the effect of the refusal.<sup>24</sup>

Official bodies in Armenia and Azerbaijan continued to adopt rival and conflicting resolutions. On June 13, 1988, Azerbaijan rejected the Karabakh declaration of February 20, whereas on June 15, Armenia reaffirmed its support for the declaration. In June, Gorbachev intervened again, by ruling out any possibility of frontiers being modified. Despite this, on July 12, the Karabakh Assembly voted to secede, the first such vote ever made in the Soviet Union. In the meantime, the Armenian Communist Party was negotiating with the Karabakh Committee, a body composed of Armenian intellectuals which was becoming increasingly popular.<sup>25</sup> On the whole, popular attitudes were by no means pro-Kremlin. Before the December earthquake and the arrest of Karabakh Committee members in Armenia, both Soviet Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh strongly supported the Karabakh Committee. Armenian Communists had lost control over Yerevan and the rest of Armenia, and sent letters and appeals to the Kremlin, pointing out that the Communist Party was completely bankrupt in Armenia.

Divisions of the Karabakh Committee operated at virtually every business, institution and educational establishment. Very often they took control over from Communist Party divisions and the management of collective farms and enterprises. Local police began collaborating with the Committee.<sup>26</sup>

Three months later, the July 18 session of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a large-scale plan for the economic and cultural development of the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast, while once again rejecting the appeal of the Karabakh Armenians for reunification with Armenia. This decision caused great disappointment amongst Armenians in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and the Diaspora. The July 18 decision on the Karabakh issue sobered up Armenians, making them realize that reunification was a much more difficult task than initially expected.<sup>27</sup> Throughout 1988, as Moscow hesitated to take definitive

24 Walker, Christopher J. *Armenia and Karabakh: The Struggle for Unity*. London: Minority rights publications, 1991, p. 125.

25 Goldenberg, Suzanne. *Pride of Small Nations: the Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder*. Zed Books, p. 162.

26 See *Izvestia*, July 22, 1988.

27 See Walker, Christopher J., *op. cit.*, p. 127.

action, Armenians grew increasingly disillusioned with Gorbachev's programs, and Azerbaijanis sought to protect their interests by organizing a powerful anti-Armenian nationalist movement. From the very beginning of the Armenian popular movement, the Kremlin supported the Azerbaijani position by opposing any rearrangements of internal administrative borders drawn by Stalin. Moscow feared chain reactions from nationalist and secessionist movements across the territory of the Soviet Union in case the Armenian demands were fulfilled.

Border change was considered by Soviet state system as an anathema since "the satisfaction of the interests of one republic at the expense of another could create a dangerous precedent under the conditions of a multiethnic state."<sup>28</sup>

But while the position of the political leadership over Karabakh remained unshaken, it was overtaken by unavoidable circumstances. In November, minority populations had to flee from Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armenians fled from Baku, Kirovobad (now Gjanca) and other Azerbaijani towns. Ethnic Azeris fled Soviet Armenia. In the span of one month, 180,000 Armenians left Azerbaijan, and 160,000 Azeris left Armenia, uprooting communities that had existed for years.<sup>29</sup>

The December 7 earthquake in Armenia relaxed the tension between conflicting sides for a while. Right after giving a speech at UN headquarters, Gorbachev was informed about the quake. He flew to Armenia on December 10: as the *Washington Post* put it, "Obviously he wanted the world community to view him as a humanitarian, not as another Stalin."<sup>30</sup> Michael Dobbs from the *Washington Post* thus drew the connection between the natural disaster and political turmoil in the Soviet Union:

"When the rubble from this month's devastating trembler has been cleared away, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev will still have to cope with the political aftershocks of the most severe ethnic turmoil to hit the Soviet Union in decades."<sup>31</sup>

In the atmosphere of political liberalization, weakened state institutions, and rising local initiatives, these unrests did not take shape as major political cleavages. Rather, the ethnic unrest in the USSR started as inter-ethnic communal clashes directed towards the vulnerable "double minorities" within the national republics.<sup>32</sup> Examples of inter-ethnic communal clashes can be drawn from the anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait, Azerbaijan, February 1988, the bloody clashes between Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks in Fergana valley, Uzbek-Kyrgyz

violations in Osh, and others.

As it was mentioned above from the initial stages of the conflict Moscow's reaction was very traditional but relatively soft compared with the former interventions, such as Budapest in 1956, and Prague in 1968. The Soviet's most recent experience of this kind had been the suppression of the Polish *Solidarnost* movement just a few years before the Karabakh conflict broke out. It was therefore logical that experts who had organized the crackdown on *Solidarnost* were sent to Yerevan at the very beginning of the riots together with Soviet army units. The experts tried to handle the situation by traditional methods. One of them, Lukyanov, said, "Don't try to scare me with these rallies of yours. I have seen Czechoslovakia." He added that Armenians with their organizational skills were more dangerous than Azerbaijani cutthroats.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Soviet decision-makers failed to understand the nuances and origins of the conflict led to its further escalation.

The fates of democratization of the Soviet society now depended on the government's ability to handle inter-ethnic issues. However, the peaceful demands of Nagorno-Karabakh had met with Moscow's angry if not hostile reaction. In accordance with the official rhetoric, Soviet mass media considered the events in Nagorno-Karabakh a great disturbance and a "spiritual Chernobyl."<sup>34</sup>

For the Soviet media, reporting on the movement was a big challenge, because they suddenly found themselves using words never before applied to Soviet domestic affairs, such as *sit-in*, *strike*, *refugees*, and *rallies*.<sup>35</sup> *Pravda* wrote: "Day after day, the Armenian population of Stepanakert joins in protests and rallies under a kind of mass hypnosis."<sup>36</sup>

On January 12, 1989, the USSR Supreme Soviet decided to explore ways of granting Nagorno-Karabakh more autonomy. It was ruled that the region, formally remaining part of Azerbaijan, should be managed directly by a Special Administrative Committee, led by an official appointed from Moscow, Arkady Volsky. Although the decision was initially seen as a victory for the Armenians, their triumph was short-lived. Within three months, they were complaining that the initiative was a failure. Funds intended for economic development were held up in Baku, and all the talk of autonomy proved a big lie. Clashes between rival militias went on unabated. Although the leaders of the Karabakh movement were arrested, the conflict escalated steadily through the summer and fall of 1989. Non-official organizations both in Armenia and Azerbaijan called for abolition of the Special Administrative Committee.

The Armenians maintained their position that the region must become

28 *Literaturnaja Gazeta*, July 27, 1988.

29 Goldenberg, Suzanne. *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.

30 *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1988, A24.

31 Dobbs, Michael. "Armenia's Man-Made Disturbance Seems as Daunting as Quake." *The Washington Post*, December 13, 1988.

32 Tishkov, Valery. "History and Legacies of the USSR: The Demise of a Multiethnic Experiment." *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia. An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*. Eds. Tongeren, Paul van, Hans van de Veen, and Juliette Verhoeven. Boulder: London, 2002, p. 56.

33 Grigoryan, Vladimir. *Armenia in 1988-1989*. Yerevan: Armat, 1999, p. 118.

34 *Literaturnaja gazeta*, November 30, 1988.

35 Demidov, N. "Today in Nagorno-Karabakh." *Pravda*, June 10, 1988.

36 Demidov, N. "Nagorno-Karabakh Again." *Pravda*, June 23, 1988.

part of Armenia, while radical Azerbaijanis called for abolition of Karabakh autonomy. As hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis demonstrated in Baku, their government restricted the flow of goods and fuel into Karabakh and Armenia, whereby blockading transportation routes to and from the two regions. In August 1989, The National Council of Armenian majority was formed in Nagorno-Karabakh, which declared the secession of the province from Azerbaijan and its annexation to Armenia.

In November 1989, frustrated and unable to bring the parties together, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR abolished the Special Administrative Committee and handed control of the enclave back to Azerbaijan.<sup>37</sup> The annulment of Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous status was backed by a decision of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan. On December 1, 1989, the Armenian Supreme Soviet declared the Karabakh National Council the sole legitimate representative of the Karabakh people. The response from Azerbaijan was unprecedented in Soviet reality: Baku organized a total blockade of Armenia, completely cutting off the shipment of all goods, humanitarian aid and construction materials intended for the northern parts of Armenia devastated by the earthquake. Humanitarian supplies traveling to Armenia by railroad via Azerbaijan were looted and destroyed on a daily basis.

Although the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union repealed all the declarations and counter-declarations of mid-1989, and although both Armenia and Azerbaijan were still governed by Communist authorities, neither republic was willing to obey Moscow's directives on the Karabakh issue. Rejecting Moscow's decision, the Armenian Supreme Soviet declared Karabakh part of Armenia on December 1, 1989.

Early 1990 was marked with new waves of conflict escalation and interethnic clashes between the two communities. The transportation blockade imposed by Azerbaijan persisted. A new round of escalation started on the Soviet-Iranian border. The destructions of border facilities under the guise of "visiting relatives on the Iranian side" caused new problems for the Soviets. Moscow realized that the situation in Baku, and Azerbaijan as a whole, was out of control and the existence of the Soviet power in Azerbaijan was in serious doubt.

The growing authority of the Azerbaijani Popular Front, and the declining popularity of the Communist Party, promoted more anti-Armenian sentiment and eventually anti-Armenian violence. In mid-January 1990, massacres against Armenians began in the Azerbaijani capital Baku. Over a hundred Armenians were murdered in Baku between January 13 and January 20. The *Los Angeles Times* published terrifying reports of the massacre:

"Lenin Street, one of Baku's main avenues, was described as drenched with blood. Russians living in the Azerbaijani capital

spoke with horror of seeing Armenian neighbours shot at point-blank range, hurled from balconies, burned alive and even dismembered by the rampaging mobs of Azerbaijanis.

"We have seen murders here of the cruellest sort," a veteran Soviet journalist said by telephone from Baku. "...men, women and children, the young and the old alike, were attacked and often killed because they were Armenians. That alone – to be Armenian in Azerbaijan – was a virtual sentence to death."<sup>38</sup>

The feeling of vulnerability and insecurity deepened among Armenians, eventually leading to a total rejection of the Soviet system. When the Soviet military invasion of the Azerbaijani capital in January 1990 failed to stop pogroms against Armenians, this further enhanced the growing anti-Soviet sentiment among Armenians. In early 1990, both republics passed crucial resolutions regarding their participation in a referendum that proposed a modified version of the Soviet Union. In January, Armenia's Supreme Soviet rejected the offer, whereas two months later, Azerbaijan accepted the offer and voted for the Soviet referendum to be held in Azerbaijan on March 17.

Such an attitude had dire consequences for Armenia, especially in mid-1991, when Soviet Army airborne detachments, together with the Azerbaijani Police Special Platoons, carried out punitive raids in the Armenian-populated villages of Shahumyan (a province bordering with Nagorno-Karabakh) and in border regions of Armenia. As a result of these raids, known under the name of Ring Operation, dozens of thousands of Armenians were deported, and dozens were killed, including children, women and elderly. The raids were the last large-scale military actions accompanied with ethnic cleansing that the Soviet Army carried out against the peaceful Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.

Hostilities between local Armenians and Azerbaijanis started in 1988. After the collapse of the USSR, they turned into a full-scale war in 1992. In keeping with the Soviet official requirements for secession, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was proclaimed on September 2, 1991, and on December 10 the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh voted for independence. The plebiscite in Nagorno-Karabakh was based on the Soviet law of April 3, 1990, that prescribed a procedure for quitting the USSR. The law granted autonomous entities the right to decide on their own whether to stay within the USSR or within a seceding republic<sup>39</sup>.

38 Parks, Michael. "Mobs of Azerbaijanis Attack Armenians; Civic War Threatened." *The Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 1990.

39 Azerbaijan decided to quit the Soviet Union in November 1991. Three weeks before the Soviet Union collapsed, the NKR government voted for independence from Azerbaijan, proceeding from Article 3 of the "Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Procedure of the Resolution of Problems on the Secession of a Union Republic from the USSR," which reads: "In the union republic containing autonomous republics, autonomous oblasts and autonomous okrugs, the referendum shall be conducted separately in each autonomous entity. Peoples of autonomous republics and autonomous entities have the right to decide on their own whether to stay within the USSR or within a seceding union republic, as well as on its own legal status as a state." See Avakyan, Shahan. *Nagorno-Karabakh. Legal Aspects*. Yerevan, 2005.

37 Goldenberg, Suzanne, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

These political developments were not acceptable for Azerbaijan, which launched a full-scale military campaign against Nagorno-Karabakh in late 1991, trying to re-establish control over its Armenian-populated regions. As military actions intensified in subsequent years, Baku officially hosted thousands of Chechen fighters, Afghan Mujahideen and other mercenaries to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The US Congress disapproved of the offensive policy of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. On October 24, 1992, the US Congress adopted Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which reads: "The United States assistance under this or any other Act (other than assistance under title V of this Act) may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh."<sup>40</sup>

After undertaking two large military offensives, one in June 1992 and another in winter 1993-1994, Azerbaijani troops were forced to retreat. Armenian forces pushed the Azerbaijani army beyond the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh and even secured control over several adjacent regions of Azerbaijan.

The conflict resulted in over 30,000 casualties, tens of thousands of wounded and missing on both sides. More than one million people were displaced and became refugees as a result of the war. A Russian-brokered cease-fire was signed in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in May 1994, with the participation of the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh and Russian Ministers of Defense. From May 1994 the peace talks are mediated by the Minsk group of the OSCE co-chaired by Russia, US and France. As of the publication of this volume, prospects for resolution of the conflict are still vague.

<sup>40</sup> Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 (Freedom Support Act). U.S. Public Law 102-511, 102d Cong., 3d sess., 24 October 1992, cited in: Croissant, Michael P. *The Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict. Causes and Implications*, Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, London, 1998, p. 161. In autumn 2001, the US Congress passed a bill granting President George W. Bush the authority to suspend Section 907.

## PART III

GLASNOST, PERESTROIKA AND THE KARABAKH MOVEMENT IN  
WESTERN MEDIA COVERAGE IN 1988-1990

"By the way, who do you work for?

I showed a letter of introduction from *The Washington Post*.

She breathed a sigh of relief,

«Thank God it's not *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Boston Globe*,  
*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Baltimore Sun* or *The New York Times*!»<sup>1</sup>

I cannot imagine how long we will have to stand for the biased position of the  
central newspapers. How long will they write that we are wrong  
when we are right, and they are right when they are wrong,  
and how long will they remain silent about our just demands?<sup>2</sup>

*Bakhtiyar Vahabzade*, Azerbaijani writer

The second half of the 1980's in the USSR was marked not only by Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* but also by the reopening of many taboo topics in the Soviet society and mass media. Suddenly the media were reporting about Stalinist repressions, the Soviet-German Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and its secret protocol, the Katyn massacre of Polish Army officers during WWII, the murder of Kirov, the deportation of whole nations. However, the lifting of Soviet taboos almost never touched the sphere interethnic relations, an issue which was officially "resolved once and for all in the Soviet family of nations."

It should be noted that the Karabakh conflict was covered in the Western media, particularly in the U.S., since the late 1970s. Articles published in the *New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor* mentioned an open letter addressed by prominent Armenian writer Sero Khazadryan to the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev concerning the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. This letter was Khazadryan's reaction to an article by Indian Communist Sarad Mitra and Iraqi Communist Adel Khaba published in a multi-language Communist periodical, *Problems of Peace and Socialism*.<sup>3</sup>

The Nagorno-Karabakh issue became the first and serious challenge for

<sup>1</sup> Goltz, Thomas. *Azerbaijan Diary: A Rogue Reporter's Adventures in an Oil-Rich, War-Torn, Post-Soviet Republic*. New York/London: M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1998, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Shaffer, Brenda. *Borders and Brethren. Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press, 2002, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, Raymond. "Armenians Ask Moscow for Help, Charging Azerbaijan with Bias." *The New York Times*, December 11, 1977; Dadrian, V. "The Tragedy of Soviet Armenians." *Russkaya Mysl*, No. 3205, May 25, 1978; Khazadryan, Sero. *An Open Letter to L. I. Brezhnev on the Territorial Problem of Nagorno-Karabakh*. Krasnyi Arkhiv, Nagorno-Karabakhskaya oblast, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14; See also Libaridian, Gerard. *Karabakh File*. Toronto, 1988, pp. 49-52.

*glasnost* and *perestroika*. The Pandora box of Soviet ethnic tensions was opened, and Communist leaders now had to face them. Soviet elites realized the need to be "extremely attentive and tactful" whenever dealing with people's ethnic interests or feelings.<sup>4</sup>

In November 1987, Abel Aganbegyan, an economic adviser to Gorbachev, expressed his views on the matter at a meeting with French Armenians in Paris. He said: "I expect that in the context of *perestroika* the question of the annexation of Karabakh and Nakhichevan to Armenia will find its solution. As a specialist I am interested in the economic dimension of the issue and, according to my analysis, from the economic point of view, Karabakh is closer to Armenia than to Azerbaijan and not the other way around. I have written a letter in this respect to the government and of course this is my counsel as a scientist who does not have a governmental position...but I believe that this issue will be resolved."<sup>5</sup>

In the same year of 1987, the first nationalistic riots took place in the Soviet Union. Those events were almost completely ignored by Soviet press. The first Armenian rallies with demands for the reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia were held in summer 1987 and were suppressed by police. The policy of total silence on this issue was imposed from Moscow. As it becomes evident later, the influential Communist Party member Yegor Ligachev sent a circular letter to editorial offices of central press with strict instructions not to report the Karabakh issue. Soviet leaders justified this policy by saying that media coverage could lead to violence and loss of life.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, Western news agencies, including *Associated Press* and *Agence France Presse*, reported the first Armenian rallies and the Azerbaijani police raid on the Armenian-populated village of Chardakhlu outside the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>7</sup>

The coverage of the first stages of the Karabakh movement in Nagorno-Karabakh and Soviet Armenia was of two kinds: first, reports of an introductory, explanatory character, and second, reports assessing and analyzing the conflict and Moscow's reaction to it.

As some Western analysts wrote, the situation over Nagorno-Karabakh was from the very start exacerbated by an almost total absence of *glasnost* on the part of the media in the Soviet press, either local or central.<sup>8</sup> Worse still, biased reports in central press caused anger and disappointment among Armenians and

Azerbaijanis alike.<sup>9</sup>

The first publications in the Soviet Communist Party editions (*Pravda*, *Izvestiya* etc.) mentioning the developments in Nagorno-Karabakh and Soviet Armenia were under strict supervision and censorship; the initial reaction of all central Soviet editions to the conflict was extremely negative. The leaders of the Karabakh movement and participants of unprecedented public rallies were labeled 'extremists' and 'nationalists' in the central Soviet press and TV news. As a rule, editorials in Soviet newspapers reflected the government's point of view, leaving no room for independent opinion or pluralistic analysis. From the very beginning of the Armenian popular movement, almost all Soviet media presented the conflict as an anti-Soviet move; any neutral analysis was out of the question. Moreover, at the time of *glasnost*, and until the fall of the USSR, the Soviet media lacked the experience and skills needed for analyzing ethnic conflicts and disseminating the results.

The correspondents based in the regions had no opportunity to explore and monitor the conflict and then publish their witness accounts as compared or even opposed to the official government position. Although Soviet television was even more conformist and less innovative than weeklies like *Ogonyok* or *Argumenty i fakti* representing the more or less liberal wing of the Soviet press, the latter also stuck to hardliner explanations of the causes and unfolding of the Karabakh movement.

Even though the breakthrough in Soviet media coverage of disasters and catastrophes could be seen as a sign of partial liberalization, the very first such reports, for example, the reports on the disaster at Chernobyl nuclear power plant, proved that biased interpretation and plain disorientation and misinformation of the Soviet audience still held strong in the Soviet media.

The ongoing changes motivated the United States government agencies and academic Soviet studies programs to monitor Soviet television on a regular basis. This interest in Soviet media partly had to do with the Gorbachev reforms. Detailed analytical reports on the Soviet media policy and partial media transformation were published by think-tanks affiliated with Western radio stations and intelligence agencies.<sup>10</sup>

In 1983, an issue of *Zarubezhnoe Voyennoe Obozrenie*, a Soviet military magazine, published its definition of 'disinformation' which stressed the intent to deceive the public: "disinformation as the principal method of 'psychological warfare'... is nothing other than the dissemination of reports aimed at deliberately deluding people, at imposing on people a distorted and outright false idea about

4 Sanders, Alan. "Gorbachev and the Nationalities Problem." *RFE/RL Records, Krasniy Arkhiv*, February 19, 1988, HU-OSA 300/80/1/544.

5 Masis, Los Angeles, December 5, 1987, *Karabagh File*, pp. 70 - 71; *L'Humanité*, 18 Novembre 1987, p. 17.

6 Hayk, September 1, 1990; Nadeyin, V. "For Journalists, the Cold War Isn't Over." *Izvestia*, August 28, 1990.

7 Armenians Rally to Demand Return of Territories from Azerbaijan. Munich, October 20, 1987, RL 441/87, HU-OSA 300/85/12/19.

8 Fuller, Elizabeth. "Nagorno-Karabakh. An Ulster in the Caucasus?" *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 534/88, December 12, 1988, p. 5, Red Archive, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14.

9 "Armenians Angered by TV Criticism of Clash." *The Times*, London, July 16, 1988.

10 Chorbajian, Levon. "For the Masses: Television in the Armenian SSR." *Armenian Review*, autumn 1989. Vol. 3/167, p. 37; Tolz, Vera. "'Glasnost' in the Soviet Media Since the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress." October 20, 1986, *Radio Liberty Research Record*, RL 391/86, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/657.

realities. Disinformation is fed with the aid of sensational reporting, stereotypes, images, news, etc."<sup>11</sup>

After the first mass demonstrations were reported in Yerevan and Stepanakert, Moscow sent two Communist party officials to deal with the situation in the region. After arriving in Yerevan and meeting representatives of the movement, the two officials, Lukyanov and Dolgikh, said that they had talked to Yegor Ligachev, "who had assured them that TV and the press would cease broadcasting disinformation and would truthfully portray the situation."<sup>12</sup>

While preaching internationalism, the Soviet media put the blame for interethnic tensions on local mafia and corrupt officials, explained the crisis by social and economic problems, and stressed that *perestroika* is a lot more important than any nationalistic concerns.

The lack of information in the USSR about the events in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh had an evident impact on Soviet public opinion about those crucial developments. In such a situation, Western radio broadcasts and telephone calls from friends or relatives became the most reliable sources for Soviet citizens wishing to obtain information about the course of events in Yerevan.

The Soviet media consistently sought to play down the extent of Armenian popular movement. Official reporting of ethnic clashes was frequently belated and lacking in detail; for example, in one case the exact circumstances of an incident involving fatalities were only clarified after a two-month delay."<sup>13</sup>

In the early years of the *glasnost*, national television policy provided for practically no coverage of ethnic clashes. *Vremya*, the authoritative evening news program, took roughly several weeks to deliver coverage of the events in Armenia and Azerbaijan that met the then-current standards of *glasnost*. A long time passed before the special documentary program *Pozitsiya* (Position), authored by a popular journalist Genrikh Borovik, showed the first footage from the February 1988 pogroms in the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait and clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>14</sup>

"While the film made repeated unrealistic calls for brotherhood and friendship between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the absence of the redress of grievances, the program did show film clips of Azerbaijani rioters and scenes of overturned and burned cars and ransacked apartments in Sumgait. The film also discussed some

of the grievances of the Armenians and attributed the protests to "local conditions and official insensitivity."<sup>15</sup>

It was the first time Soviet viewers were shown the result of violence that led to the a number of civilian casualties, mostly amongst Armenians, and provoked the first wave of refugees in the Soviet Union. Borovik's documentary film on the violence in Sumgait was reviewed by *Washington Times* as an "expansion of bounds of *Glasnost*."<sup>16</sup>

The very first publications on the events around Karabakh in the Soviet press were TASS reports reprinted on the same day in *Izvestia*, *Pravda* and other Soviet editorials. As a rule, those reports were written by local correspondents of those newspapers, usually of Armenian or Azeri ethnic background. Very soon, some of the correspondents were replaced with non-natives. The publications of the Soviet printed media had played a crucial role in the further escalation of tensions on both sides. Most of these publications tried to keep a balance between conflicting parties by picking out symmetrical reports from both sides. Such balancing was evident even in the coverage of anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijani city of Sumgait in February 1988, in Kirovabad in November 1988, and Baku in early 1990. Despite obvious facts, the main targets for the Soviet editorials were the Armenian mass movement and its leaders.

A document issued by the Karabakh Committee in March 1988, the Appeal to the Soviet People, read:

"... Radio and television transmit only official messages and artificial interviews. Central press publishes lengthy and vivid reports on movements and uprisings in Africa and in other foreign regions, but shamelessly keeps silence about the essence of Karabakh events. The people of the Soviet Union have to rely on gossip, hints and misinformation. They don't even know who is killing who in Azerbaijan and why. This is the situation with democracy and Glasnost in the USSR. People are forced to resort to information broadcast by foreign "voices" and be grateful to them.

It is not the people but someone in the Soviet leadership who cannot stand the test of democracy and glasnost..."<sup>17</sup>

The first news that rallies were taking place in Yerevan for the reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia did not come from official Soviet sources but from AFP in Moscow on February 21.<sup>18</sup> Soviet central media reported the events in Nagorno-Karabakh only on February 23, when *Moscow Radio* broadcast a

11 *The Soviet disinformation: A Methodology of Deception*. Research memorandum, USIA, February 20, 1987, KA, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/236.

12 "A Short Chronicle of Events in Karabakh." *RFE/RL Records*, Krasniy Arkhiv, Azerbaijan, HU-OSA 300/80/1/14.

13 Fuller, Elizabeth. "Nagorno-Karabakh: the Death and Casualty Toll to Date." *RL Research Institute*, RL 531/88, December 2, 1988, Red Archive HU-OSA, 300/80/1/15.

14 Mickiewicz, Ellen and Dawn Plumb Jamison. "Ethnicity and Soviet Television News." *Mass Culture and Perestroika in the Soviet Union*. Ed. Masha Siefert. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 153.

15 Chorbajian, Levon, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

16 "Soviet Bars TV Parallel of Afghan and Viet Wars." *The Washington Times*, April 28, 1988.

17 The author's personal archive.

18 Sheehy, Ann. "Soviet Media Coverage of Recent Events in Armenia and Azerbaijan." *RFE/RL 109/88 Records*, March 14, 1988, p. 1, Krasniy Arkhiv, Azerbaijan-10, HU-OSA 300/80/1/12.

TASS communiqué, reprinted in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* on February 24.

TASS reported that part of the Armenian population was demanding the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and "breaching of public order" had been "provoked by irresponsible calls of extremist individuals. The Communist Party Central Committee holds that actions and demands directed at revising the existing national and territorial structure contradict the interests of working people in Soviet Azerbaijan and Armenia and damage interethnic relations"<sup>19</sup>. The TASS report also said: "having examined the information about the developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, the Communist Party Central Committee holds that the actions and demands directed at revising the existing national and territorial structure contradict the interests of the working people in Soviet Azerbaijan and Armenia and damage inter-ethnic relations".<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, this statement was made on behalf of the Communist Party Central Committee, which finished its session a few days before the statement was issued. The report was clearly designed to give the impression that necessary measures were being taken, and that the situation was not as serious as rumors might have suggested.<sup>21</sup>

While initially the Soviet authorities may have adopted this policy of limiting information in order not to inflame interethnic hatred any further (assuming that it was not simply an automatic reversion to the pro-*glasnost*' treatment of such incidents), both in Armenia and Azerbaijan people protested that rumors circulating in the absence of reliable information have been a factor in escalating tensions.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, the Soviet television was employed to mobilize Soviet public opinion against the Armenian protesters and to urge the Armenians themselves to abandon protest and to return to regular work schedules. Besides, the Soviet television employed at least three methods in neutralizing Soviet public opinion or shifting it in an anti-Armenian direction, 1) Minimizing the scope of the protests and grievances underlying them. The Soviet media, including television, did not examine the background of historical claims of Armenians to Karabakh and this was one of the main differences between the Western and Soviet media coverage. The Soviet coverage has been a travesty of *glasnost*. The media went big on happy ending, without ever having explained the plot<sup>23</sup>, 2) attributing social problems to Armenian protests, and, last but not least 3) closing off media access to Armenian protesters.<sup>24</sup>

In the first publications in the Western media on the problem of Nagorno-

Karabakh, the issue was discussed in the context of *perestroika* and *glasnost* in general and the nationalities discourse in the USSR in particular. *The Los Angeles Times* wrote:

"Glasnost is not making things easier for Gorbachev. While helping the general secretary and his associates to generate a new sense of momentum in Soviet society, it is also helping to aggravate the nationalities problem. This problem lies in balancing efforts at reform while maintaining firm political control at the time when ethnic Russians represent slightly more than 50% of the Soviet population..."<sup>25</sup>

To follow the first reaction of the Western printed media, it is important to bring some interesting extracts from these publications in order to have a more or less clear image of the ideas and positions in the Western block on the issue.

The interest in interethnic tensions in the USSR had deep-rooted history in the West, partly stemming from the basic strategy of the Cold War. An example of Western media interest and interpretation of ethnic tension between Armenian and Azerbaijani communities is the *RFE/RL* report on riots that took place after a football match between Azerbaijani and Armenian teams in Baku in May 1984. "Extremely unsuccessful" for the Azeri side, the match led to public disturbances in Azerbaijan's capital. Local press in Azerbaijan did not even report the fact that the Azeri team had lost the match with the Armenian Ararat team. The *RFE/RL* report stated that "the tensions between Azeris and Armenians living in Azerbaijan have tended to flare up particularly in Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, where there is a large Armenian population."<sup>26</sup>

The first reactions of the Western and particularly American press express the evident surprise and even suspicions regarding the events in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The first publications also pointed out the unprecedented character of such events. The following extracts give a very good image of the overall reaction in the U.S.:

"An estimated 120000 Armenians rallied today to protest the loss of part of their homeland, the second such gathering in recent days and one of the biggest unofficial demonstrations ever reported in the Soviet Union."<sup>27</sup>

"Armenian uprising "provided dramatic evidence of ethnic tension in the Soviet Union. The unrest in Armenia is the latest sign of strongest nationalist feelings in the Soviet Union. These feelings run counter to the party line, which holds that scores of

19 Tass, February 23, 1988; *Izvestia*, February 24, 1988, translated in: "120,000 Soviet Armenians Reported in Land Protest." *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1988.

20 *Ibid.*

21 "On the Events in Nagorno-Karabakh." *Pravda*, February 24, 1988; Ann Sheehy, *op. cit.*

22 Fuller, Elizabeth, *op. cit.*

23 Angus Roxburgh, "Gorbachev in Desperate Dash to Resolve Armenian Crisis". *Sunday Times*, London, 06. 03. 1988.

24 Chorbajian, Levon. "Armenian TV." *Armenian Review*, 1989, pp. 48-50.

25 Simes, Dmitri K. "Glasnost Makes Ripples in Soviet Empire." *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1988.

26 Mikailov, Mirza. "Armenian-Azeri Soccer Match Leads to Public Disturbance in Baku." *RFE/RL Research*, *RL* 232/84, June 13, 1984, Krasny Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14.

27 "120, 000 Soviet Armenians Reported in Land Protest." *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1988.

ethnic groups live in fraternal friendship."<sup>28</sup>

"But what is happening in Soviet Armenia is over than one could foresee before. Armenian Communist leaders joined to their people and Moscow. They seem likely to go on in their claims and mass demonstrations. This is bad example for other nationalists (in the USSR - H. D.) and could provoke Moscow's reaction."<sup>29</sup>

"The Armenian demonstrations constitute the most serious case of nationalist unrest officially confirmed in the Soviet Union in many years."<sup>30</sup>

"Nationalities question" which haunting Mikhail Gorbachev, threatening to disrupt or derail his reform drive... But a harsh crackdown would be do significant damage to Gorbachev's fresh image as a reasonable man - an image that appears quite essential to the successes of his new initiatives both at home and abroad... We will see less and less glasnost' applied to issues that provoke these riots and we may see a little more of the rumored steel teeth behind that famous Gorbachev smile."<sup>31</sup>

"If the protests continue, Mr. Gorbachev will face growing pressure to stop them, with the use of military force if necessary. The Party has never shown much tolerance for political unrest, and would almost certainly consider the continuation of the Armenian protests an unacceptable precedent. A failure to end the unrest would leave Mr. Gorbachev vulnerable to charges that he is soft on disorder, a fatal label for a Soviet leader."<sup>32</sup>

"By all accounts the Armenian politicians were much more sophisticated than their Kazakh colleagues. Working to their advantage was the long history of Armenia's statehood and a heritage of defending its independence..."

Armenia openly challenged the Kremlin monopoly on making all important decisions... Moscow has already recognized that it is dealing with a new phenomenon - a province that defies the metropolis.

We are dealing here with a new social structure that enjoys the support of a considerable portion of population and that is challenging the Soviet system and all its inefficiency and lies. When this structure is further based on ethnic solidarity, it is almost invincible and challenges the dominance of the Russian. Clearly glasnost and perestroika stand little chance if ethnic conflict becomes a threat to the Russian empire..."<sup>33</sup>

In another extract from a Western journalist's report from Azerbaijan, we can see how the reporter's information sources impacted the interpretation of the history of the Karabakh issue.

"Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century mostly Azerbaijanis populated it, a people of mixed Turkic, Iranian, and Caucasian background that are predominantly Islamic. Armenian swept in during two waves of forced emigration from Turkey and Iran. Most of them belong to an Orthodox denomination that claims to have preserved Christianity in its most pristine form since 4<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>34</sup>

Definitely, the West at the time Armenian unrest started was not ready to face with such a category as open confrontation between two neighboring ethnic groups.<sup>35</sup> Many in the West viewed the Armenian popular movement, unprecedented in the Soviet history, as "a show of defiance."<sup>36</sup>

The presentation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the Western mass media as an interethnic conflict in which the conflicting parties have different religious backgrounds was further complicated by the fact that the parties in conflict were part of the Soviet Union. In this matter, the Cold War stereotypes, concepts and perceptions were mixed with prejudices on the Islamic world existing in the West and in the Western mass media. Historically, one of the prejudices and stereotypes was that Islam has always represented a menace to the West. Edward Said wrote that Western and specifically American responses to an Islamic World perceived, since the early seventies, as being immensely relevant and yet antipathetically troubled and problematic.<sup>37</sup> In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the perception of the Muslim East in the West was transformed in the negative direction mainly due to the oil embargo, the Iranian revolution and hostage crisis, as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

As expected, the Soviet government tried to use all its repressive and ideological tools to calm down and suppress any further escalation or expansion of new nationalistic demands. A vivid example of Soviet techniques used to mislead Armenians is the document issued by the USSR National Academy of Oriental Studies as a road map recommendation to a Central Committee of Communist Party on how to deal with Armenian popular movement. This recommendation says:

"The Commission appointed to investigate the Karabakh issue must delay as long as possible any definitive solution. The

28 See *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1988.

29 "'Glasnost' et nationalites." *Le Monde*, Fevrier 24, 1988.

30 Shanker, Thom. "Armenian Protests Get Results." *The Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1988.

31 Shanker, Thom. "Gorbachev and the 'Nationalities Question.'" *The Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 1988.

32 Taubman, Philip. "Gorbachev Urges Armenians to End Their Protest." *The New York Times*, February 27, 1988.

33 Shlapentokh, Vladimir and Dmitri Shlapentokh. "Run Up Against Backfire of Ethnic Unrest." *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1988.

34 "For Gorbachev, a Major Test of Change Explodes in Armenia." *The New York Times*, March 11, 1988, RFE/RL Records, Krasniy Arkhiv, Nagorni Karabakh, HU-OSA 300/80/1/12.

35 Grigoryan, Vladimir. *op. cit.*, p. 98.

36 *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1988; Taubman, Philip. "Soviet Says Armenian Unrest Broke out in Soviet Asia." *The New York Times*, February 24, 1988.

37 Said, Edward W. *Covering Islam. How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, p. X.

reunification of Karabakh with Armenia is not desirable. It is imperative to claim the population by making concessions in the fields of culture, society, and everyday life. If necessary, sacrifice a few local officials and naturally find some people of interior rank on whom we can put the blame. Mountainous Karabakh must not be united with Armenia. At this point we must create the impression of a total glasnost, in contrast with the previous period, and blow out the proportion any strife, which in turn we can blame on the Armenians. The Armenian circles have to be infiltrated as quickly as possible. We can use the Kurds, in particular, since those living in Armenia are most favourably disposed towards them. It is equally important to undo these friendly ties."<sup>38</sup>

Gorbachev's political liberalization policy echoed in great scale in the Western media with euphoric estimations together with softening of media attitude against the Eastern block in parallel with softening of Cold War harsh media rhetoric. To understand the logic of the East – West discourse during the bilateral meetings in Reykjavik, Geneva, Moscow and Washington one should also refer to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. At this time the U.S.-promoted human rights issue felt under the shadow of much needed *détente* and disarmament intention. No doubt the nationalist uprising in the Soviet Armenia was a topic of extreme political sensitivity inside the Soviet Union. And this is one topic that Shultz and Shevardnadze avoided to discuss during their March 1988 meeting. *The Washington Post* wrote: "the US position is that the nationalities issues do not involve Soviet international commitments and therefore are not part of the US-Soviet dialogue on human rights."<sup>39</sup> It was mentioned also that with its radio broadcasts the United States had plugged an information gap that the Soviet authorities allowed to open on this issue. But it chose not to put the new ethnic stirrings into the "human rights" category in which they became fit objects for diplomatic intervention. Ethnic rivalries were viewed as time bombs. The same newspaper wrote: "Americans can take a certain comfort in seeing a Soviet leader preoccupied by a problem of this sort, but it is best to take that comfort quietly."<sup>40</sup>

With the escalation of ethnic conflicts over the territory of the USSR, the Soviet leadership repeatedly stressed the necessity of "high responsibility" of the mass media and propaganda, of course under the aegis of the Communist Party. In parallel, Soviet media constantly accused Western broadcasting sources like *Voice of America* and *RFE/RL* "for trying to stir up trouble among the country's

various ethnic groups."<sup>41</sup> Even the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev accused the West of attempting to exacerbate Soviet domestic problems by interfering via radio in an ethnic dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. The Kremlin leader said various Western radio stations, including official ones, were "engaged in provocations". Gorbachev's remarks were reportedly made during talks with former West German chancellor Willy Brandt.<sup>42</sup>

A British correspondent Angus Roxburgh, whose dispatches on the events for the West were among the few reasonably accurate and thorough ones, wrote the following: "Soviet coverage has been a travesty of glasnost. The media went big on the happy ending, without ever explained the plot."<sup>43</sup> The independent historian Roy Medvedev also complained that the Soviet public had no idea from the press about what really happened in Yerevan and compared the Soviet authorities' failure to inform the country with the silence that enveloped the Chernobyl' nuclear power station disaster in 1986.<sup>44</sup>

Stressing the patriotic and internationalist connotations, some Soviet press and TV reports tried to find a medium explanation of the situation while at the same time accusing the originators of the movement. "Patriotism as a concern about national values is finally admitted as natural and allowable, but the aspirations of non-formal and formal organizations to solve all problems from the bold book of problems from the past present a serious threat to our common cause – *Perestroika*."<sup>45</sup>

Even some Western researchers supposed that failures in policy on interethnic relations in the Soviet Union were also failures of television policy. Numerous complaints have been registered about the central authorities' tardy response to the pleas of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh to receive television broadcasts from the neighboring Armenian Republic.<sup>46</sup>

With the covering of the legacies and dynamics of the conflict, the Western correspondents also saw the issue in the context of reforms undertaken by Mikhail Gorbachev.

The nationalist movement for reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia was viewed as the worst domestic crisis Gorbachev had faced.<sup>47</sup> "No idea in the world, - as *The New York Times* stressed, - gathered so much people for demonstration."<sup>48</sup>

38 First published in *Russkaya Mysl*, March 18, 1988. The English translation quoted in: Mouradian, Claire. "The Mountainous Karabakh Question, Inter-Ethnic Conflict or Decolonisation Crisis?" *Armenian Review*, Summer/Autumn 1990, vol. 43, No. 2-3 pp. 17-18. For Russian text, see AGMI Archives SB-2/07.

39 Oberdorfer, Don. "Soviet's Visit Bred Uncertainty." *The Washington Post*, March 28, 1988.

40 "One Month Later in Armenia." *The Washington Post*, March 29, 1988.

41 "Police Stop Moscow Protest Supporting Nagorno-Karabakh." *RFE/RL Records*, July 14, Nagorno-Karabakh. HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14.

42 *The Washington Post*, April 6, 1988; *The Wall Street Journal*, April 6, 1988.

43 Roxburgh, Angus. "Gorbachev in Desperate Dash to Resolve Armenian Crisis." *The Sunday Times*. London. March 6, 1988.

44 *The Financial Times*, March 5, 1988.

45 "The Roots." *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, November 24, 1988.

46 Mickiewicz, Ellen and Dawn Plumb Jamison, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

47 Keller, Bill. "Ethnic Uprising Ends in Southern Republic." *The New York Times*, July 26, 1988; Shanker, Thom.

"Gorbachev and the 'Nationalities Question.'" *The Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 1988.

48 Sabov, Dmitri. "Seven Days in Yerevan." *Sobesednik*, No. 32, August, 1988.

Certain Western experts tended to see the limited Soviet media coverage of what must have been the most massive and sustained nationality demonstrations in the Soviet period as a step backward for *glasnost* or even reversal of *glasnost*.<sup>49</sup> Ann Sheehy wrote, "... 'Glasnost' has never meant Western-style reporting, and to date it has certainly not meant full, frank, and objective reporting of nationality protests."<sup>50</sup>

In fall 1988, some Soviet media reports also contain criticism of the Soviet press for misinformation about the "events around Nagorno-Karabakh", and for this reason "many Soviet citizens frequently were satisfied with non-objective letters from home (from the Caucasus - H. D.) and Western 'voices'".<sup>51</sup> Alexander Guber from the Soviet *Novoye Vremya* weekly: "Looking at it from far away, many blame extremists groups, both local and coming from Armenia. This is wrong! The groups aren't what really matters. Here we face a genuinely mass movement."<sup>52</sup>

After the arrest of the Karabakh Committee, leading Soviet media published materials where the overall approach and stance on the Karabakh issue was kept intact. At the same time, there were publications in central media where the stance of the Soviet media was reviewed and somehow criticized. The latter admitted the 'inadmissibility' of tactics of silence or lulling of people by propagandistic sentences from the rhetoric of the Brejnev era of total stagnation about the 'strengthening of friendship and unity of the Soviet people'. The non-professional work of interviewers and correspondents covering ethnic disturbances was also criticized.<sup>53</sup>

Western experts on the Soviet media concluded that the Gorbachev's liberalization and openness had visible limitations. At the same time, some Western media sources claimed that the coverage was considerably more open compared to the total silence over similar events before M. Gorbachev came to power.<sup>54</sup> Although Soviet officials banned the entrance of foreign correspondent in the conflict zone, they did not cut them off from sources of information, and this was seen as an unprecedented phenomenon, which was unthinkable in the pre-Gorbachov era.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the information gap and biased coverage of events in Armenia caused a sharp reaction among Armenian demonstrators, leading to protests against Soviet central media editions, including the ritual burning of copies of *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. From this time onwards, Armenian demonstrators carried

49 See *Time*, March 11, 1988.

50 Sheehy, Ann, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

51 "Rallies in Moscow: Democracy but Not Anarchy." *Trud*, November 24, 1988.

52 Guber, Alexander. "Nagorno-Karabakh. A Burden of Real and Imaginary Problems." *Novoye Vremya*, No. 38, 1988.

53 *Pravda*, December 26, 1988.

54 Sheehy, Ann, *op. cit.*

55 Ibid.

caricatures, critical slogans and copy-pastes from the Soviet media<sup>56</sup>. There were several burials of Soviet editions that symbolized the burial of *glasnost*. The numbers of Soviet central press subscribers in Armenia dropped drastically.

Subsequently, the only source for more or less objective information for Western correspondents became the dissidents who had direct sources in the area of disturbances. For example, after visiting Sumgait in March 11, 1988, Andrei Shilkov and Sergei Grigoryants hosted a press-conference for foreign journalists working in Moscow. During this conference Grigoryants told Western reporters that Moscow had dispatched to Armenia a team of approximately dozen officials previously involved in attempts to defuse the Polish *Solidarity* movement. These officials had apparently been instructed to take action to undermine or compromise unofficial organizing groups set up throughout Armenia to coordinate the campaign for Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>57</sup>

Although the events in Armenia and Azerbaijan did not go unreported, it was evident that official disclosures were inadequate and slow in coming.

"The ongoing events in Armenia and Azerbaijan show Soviet media lapsing into its former bad habits: slowness and secrecy have dogged Soviet reporting on the troubles every step of the way. Without Sergey Grigoryants' statements to Western reporters, even less might have been disclosed. The Soviet public has been kept in the dark' Gorbachev's appeal for calm was not broadcasted outside of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Examples of local media coverage are eagerly awaited in the West - not only for the additional detail they may provide, but also for what may be learned about the limits of the permissible in the local reporting."<sup>58</sup>

Andrei Shilkov who traveled to Sumgait shortly after the pogroms and interviewed locals, including policemen, brought vivid and horrific details of the three-day-long massacre, which the Soviet officials and media never touched on.

"The worst single incident in the violence on February 28 and 29 is said to have occurred in a maternity hospital. Mr. Shilkov quoted an account provided to him by an Azerbaijani nurse who had been working there but who had now left the city in disgust at the events, which she witnessed.

The killers broke into the maternity hospital and doctors were made at knifepoint to show them where the Armenian women were lying, "Mr Shilkov told the shocked correspondents. "They disemboweled them all in a bloodbath. The new babies were held

56 See photos in Appendices.

57 *The Times*, March 12, 1988.

58 "Glasnost and the Soviet Media Environment: Implications for Western Radio." AR 1-88, March 1988, *Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research*, Krasni Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1771.

by the legs and swung and smashed against the wall and then thrown out of the windows."<sup>59</sup>

It is noteworthy that in parallel with preventive measures, the Soviet officials never undertook steps for total control over the information supply for foreign reporters. Moreover, the spokesman of the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs periodically supplied foreign journalists with bits of information.

"Moscow apparently decided, however, that the cost in adverse publicity abroad of denying foreign correspondents access to unofficial sources of information was too high. At all event there seems to have been no serious attempts to prevent having somewhat fuller information become available to Western correspondents from sources other than the official media. Thus, the correspondents were able to speak to officials and individuals in the two republics by telephone. They were also able to speak with people who had recently been in the two republics, and no efforts seems to have been made to stop the dissident Sergei Grigoryants, who has been major source of information for foreign correspondents, from visiting Armenia and reporting back from there. In addition, Foreign Ministry spokesman Genadii Gerasimov was at least ready to field questions on Nagorno-Karabakh - something that would not have happened before glasnost - though he was not always willing to give straight answers to them."<sup>60</sup>

Commenting on the army deployment in Yerevan, some Western political and media circles labeled it a "major military operation" reflecting the controversial decisions faced by the Kremlin "as it grapples with the contradictions of democratic reform in a society that places great importance on the status quo and public order."<sup>61</sup> The Soviet reaction was described as very similar to the ban of the Polish *Solidarity* movement. Diplomatic analytics were even stronger in their assessment, noting that the use of troops, arrests and detention to halt the nationalists indicated that Kremlin hardliners had won the argument that openness and democracy had gone too far in Armenia.<sup>62</sup>

Army deployment in Yerevan brought analogies with the Soviet Army suppression of popular uprisings in Eastern Europe. "Looking at the Armenian situation, it is easy to find amazing analogies with other events that occurred 20 years ago: the deployment of army and tanks in Prague for crashing "antisocialist tendencies", arrests of popular leaders and their delivery to Moscow to indoctrinate and beat them down. It is impossible to reconstruct the country

sitting on bayonets.<sup>63</sup> The same kind of analogy was brought by *The Washington Post*, which called the Yerevan demonstrations the 'Armenian Spring' by analogy with the 1968 Prague Spring.

"Discontent in Eastern Europe that culminated successively in East Germany 1953, Hungary 1956 and Czechoslovakia 1968 has its roots in the presumption of Moscow in trying to rule countries of which it is not worthy. The distinction between Prague and Yerevan may be the distinction between a nominally sovereign country and a constituent republic of the Soviet Union: but the troops and the guns are the same."<sup>64</sup>

An analysis by Garry Lee in the same newspaper presents a slightly different viewpoint, saying that "although Moscow lost face in the West by responding by the use of tanks, troops, media attacks and other methods reminiscent of old Soviet tactics, the Kremlin managed to fulfill its primary objective in the face of unexpected unrest: it maintained law and order."<sup>65</sup> It is interesting to note that during rallies and protest marches, the crime rate in the Armenian capital dropped drastically to the surprise of the local Communist governors and the Soviet police. It seems that the criminal community had reached a private agreement not to show their activity during mass rallies and gatherings in Yerevan and other cities.

The blatant disrespect of the Armenians' right to self-determination, oppressions on the ground combined with overwhelming disinformation in the Soviet mass media concerning the origins of Armenian demands caused new and very dangerous feelings among protestors in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as in Azerbaijan where Moscow's unwillingness to pacify and stop Armenian demands was interpreted as siding with Armenians. In brief, in both Soviet republics, an anti-centrist stance prevailed in an atmosphere of distrust towards Communist leadership. As some put it, "working people were not saying what the Party wanted to hear". The vertical isolation, the gap between the Communist party and the people was becoming more evident. The awakening of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh challenged *perestroika* and showed "the danger of not including people in decision-making, not just in a tiny region of Azerbaijan, but in every part of country."<sup>66</sup>

One of the signs of a looming crisis of Soviet authority was seen in the conduct of Armenian police which openly sided with the mass movement. For Gorbachev and his team, such developments even in one of the smaller Soviet republics were a great challenge that could easily reveal the weakness of

59 Walker, Christopher. "Dissident Tells 'Slaughter' by Muslims in the Maternity Unit." *The London Times*, March 12, 1988.

60 Sheehy, Ann, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

61 Shanker, Thom. "Armenia Quiet but not in Peace. Soviet Troops Fail to Silence over Ethnicity." *The Chicago Tribune*, March 28, 1988.

62 Ibid.

63 *Strana i Mir*, 1989, No. 1 (49).

64 "Armenian Spring 1988." *The Washington Post*, March 29, 1988.

65 Lee, Gary. "Armenian Protest Has Become Nationalist Cause. Resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh Dispute Could Be Model for Other Ethnic Problems." *The Washington Post*, March 30, 1988.

66 Steele, Jonathan. "Nagorno-Karabakh Is a Test That Perestroika Might Not Survive." *The Guardian*, July 27, 1988.

Communist party control when facing a huge mass movement with no genuine anti-Soviet character.<sup>67</sup>

In his large report to *The Guardian*, Jonathan Steele called the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis a "test for *perestroika*":

"Who would have thought six months ago that a tiny piece of land, about the size of the Falklands and with more sheep than people, could become the test-case for Mr. Gorbachev's entire *perestroika*?"

Falkland analogy breaks down. Mrs. Thatcher could go for a politically simple, though economically extravagant, military victory, secure in the knowledge (never publicly admitted by the British government) that Argentines were mature enough people not to take revenge for their defeat on the large British community in their country. For Gorbachev the situation is more complex. There has already been a massacre of Armenians in Azerbaijan... 26 Armenians were murdered by rampaging Azerbaijani crowds in a tribal orgy, which shocked the country. Azerbaijani police did nothing to prevent it.

Gorbachev's second worry is more fundamental. The upsurge of Armenian nationalism has produced an almost total loss of party control. Remember the Polish party's anxiety and the Kremlin's, as it watched Solidarity reach a position of "dual power" in Poland in 1981. What has been happening in Armenia in the last three weeks is worse. Party leaders have been shouted down at mass meeting attended by more than 100,000 people. This never happened in Poland.<sup>68</sup>

However, Karabakh movement became a suitable trump card for conservative circles in the Kremlin to vindicate the vulnerability of Gorbachev initiated *Perestroika* and for causing loss of effective control over situation in country. Their opponents in their turn pointed that anti-*Perestroika* minded people were trying to stop the reforms and use the opportunity to follow their corrupt activities.

The limits of *glasnost* in the Soviet media become especially obvious in the coverage of the anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait in February 1988. Two days later, on February 29 TASS reported that "a group of hooligan elements had provoked disorders in Sumgait on February 28."<sup>69</sup>

The industrial Azerbaijani city of Sumgait is located some 25 km away from Azerbaijan's capital Baku. Built by joint efforts of Armenian and Azerbaijani young *Komsomol* activists in Soviet times, this city was advertised as a symbol of Soviet internationalist policy. Meanwhile the Soviet ideology of internationalism had failed to root out ethnic hatred and interethnic animosities, which continued

to exist in ethnically mixed areas and especially in ethnically mosaic places like the Caucasus.

It is hard to believe that the almighty KGB with its huge network of informers was unaware of preparations for the massacres and helpless to prevent further escalations and violence. Soviet Army troops, including those based in Sumgait, had orders not to interfere and not to open fire. It was not until the third day of the killings that Soviet troops finally intervened. The main organizers were not among the arrested, and remained unpunished. Unprecedented in the Soviet history, the massacres were almost completely hushed-up by central press. The criminal investigations were either covered up or scattered to various courts. The fact that the Sumgait massacres were never publicly discussed or condemned had helped set in motion a machine of violence and pogroms throughout the territory of the Soviet Union.

It is useful to follow Soviet media reports made on February 27, 1988, the day violence broke out in Sumgait. *Vremya* evening TV newsreel reported that Armenian workers had pledged to work extra days to make up for production losses as a result of their having been on strike the previous week.<sup>70</sup> On the same day, TASS reported a premiere at the Armenian Theatre in Baku.<sup>71</sup> Following the tragic events, neither Soviet newspapers nor TV or radio mentioned the ethnicity of the victims. Only in May 1988 did the Soviet daily *Izvestia* admit that "people were killed and physically and morally crippled for the sole reason of belonging to a different ethnic group"<sup>72</sup> *Argumenti i Fakti* Weekly thus commented on the Sumgait pogroms: "It is not in the tradition of the Soviet press to unleash passions by emotional and blood-curdling stories about the details of murders, rape, harassment and pogroms. In a strained situation, this kind of information would only do more harm."<sup>73</sup>

The first Western media reports on Armenian pogroms were mostly translations from the Soviet information sources. Some Western publications pointed out that the Sumgait massacres were the direct consequence of the fact that local and central media alike had failed to provide adequate information on events in Yerevan and Nagorno-Karabakh and had countered rumors about the scale of the unrest.<sup>74</sup> Many later insisted that all the subsequent tragic consequences of the Karabakh movement were only possible because the USSR leadership had failed to take a strong position on the Sumgait massacres.<sup>75</sup>

70 Roxburgh, Angus. "Gorbachev in Desperate Dash to Resolve Armenian Crisis." *The Sunday Times*, London, March 6, 1988.

71 See TASS, February 29, 1988.

72 *Izvestia*, May 14, 1988.

73 *Argumenti i Fakti*, No. 16, 1988.

74 Fuller, Elizabeth. "New Demonstrations in Armenia and Azerbaijan Exemplify Polarization of Views Over Nagorno-Karabakh." *RFE/RL Research*, RL 220/88, May 20, 1988, p. 4, Krasnyi Arkhiv, Azerbaijan, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/13.

75 Golovkov, A. "A Special Region." *Ogonyok*, April 22-29, No. 18, 1989.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 See *Pravda*, 29. 02. 1988.

These killings, at the very onset of what had been shaping up as a prolonged conflict, caused reverberations hostile to Azerbaijan throughout many countries, especially in the West.<sup>76</sup> The first coverage from the area of the conflict appeared in the Western press after six-month restrictions to visit Sumgait.

The Western media reaction to massacres in Sumgait had a profound effect on the Azerbaijani sense of identity. Many Western media cast Azerbaijani as "wild Turks" who had committed a massacre against Armenians<sup>77</sup>. The massive and intensive condemnation of violence in Sumgait by the foreign press caused a reaction in Azerbaijan, where many saw the Western alignments with Armenia as a "common front of those with Christian European background."<sup>78</sup>

One of the reasons of rejecting the Armenian demand for reunification was that Soviet leaders were concerned that a positive solution could establish a precedent for other Soviet ethnic groups, which may start raising similar demands. The stance of the Communist Party and its leadership raised some soft criticism in liberal Soviet publications. Alexander Gelman wrote that for a rather long time the Party, and especially its senior officials, appeared in a role of a force counteracting democracy. At the same time it displayed inexperience of our mass media to cover dramatic events in Sumgait humanly and fairly.<sup>79</sup>

However, Sumgait disturbances left Gorbachev facing a dilemma. Alan Sanders wrote at the time that Gorbachev's "policy of greater openness will remain at risk if cannot deal openly with issues affecting the stability of relations between communities of different nationalities – issues whose existence was simply denied in the past by Soviet leaders."<sup>80</sup>

Thus, the anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait became also a turning point in the relations between the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities, and the dynamics of conflict.<sup>81</sup>

Nationalities problem in the Soviet Union in Gorbachev period and his psychological dealings with this issue interestingly was portrayed by Paul Goble, Deputy Director of Radio Liberty Research:

"Both his comments and his actions highlights and often neglected aspect of Gorbachev's political profile: despite his undoubted political skills, he does not understand the nature of nationality and he has consistently underestimating its importance.... Like most politicians Gorbachev is good at "more-or-less" issues

where deals can be cut, but no so good at "either-or" issues where a clear choice has to be made. Nationality problems generally fall in the latter category. Gorbachev's difficulties in this area are compounded by the changing nature of the nationalities scene, his own background and the unintended ethnic consequences of his broader policy agenda. And because he does not understand the situation, he has often taken counterproductive steps, negotiating with the Azerbaijani Popular Front when it was blockading the railroads to Armenia last fall but using force against the Lithuanians who had steadfastly kept to a peaceful approach."<sup>82</sup>

The Soviet leadership and mass media used several methods to manipulate the Soviet public opinion on what was called an "ethnic Chernobyl."<sup>83</sup> Alongside strict censorship of conflict coverage, the Soviet authorities practiced replacement of editorial staff, especially in local periodicals, in order to secure the publishing of politically loyal materials. For example, the editorial office of the Nagorno-Karabakh bilingual Russian-Armenian newspaper of *Sovietski Karabakh* was moved to Baku where its publications were carefully censored.<sup>84</sup>

In order to mobilize Soviet public opinion against the Armenian movement and to urge the Armenians themselves to abandon protest and to return to regular work schedules, the Soviet media were using a number of methods.<sup>85</sup> One consisted in minimizing the scope of the protests and grievances underlying them. Another method was explaining Armenian protests by social problems. Yet another efficient policy was an 'information blockade' which consisted in closing media access to the locals.<sup>86</sup> Most of the time, the discourse of Soviet media relied on Soviet propaganda clichés on internationalism and brotherhood, and claims that the 'nationality issue' did not exist in the USSR. Letters and appeals from various corners of the USSR were selectively published in central editions. Factory workers, WW2 veterans, old communists, women's organizations, and even Armenian and Azerbaijani veterans of the war in Afghanistan were summoned for "sobering" the conflicting sides.<sup>87</sup>

Open letters from 'laborers' from almost all over the USSR, mainly addressed to colleagues in Armenia, were a popular method, especially in the second half of 1988. As a rule, the workers' letters condemned the Armenian movement and especially its unwillingness to abide by the Soviet government's decisions. By using this propaganda technique, the Soviet press tried to suppress the nationalistic and patriotic feelings of both conflicting parties. As a rule, these

76 Swietochowski, Tadeusz. *Azerbaijan and Russia. Russia and Azerbaijan A Borderland in Transition*. New York: Colombia University Press, 1995, p. 195.

77 Dragadze, Tamara. "Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis." *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet Studies*. Ed. Graham Smith, London, New York: Longman, 1996, p. 283.

78 Swietochowski, Tadeusz, *op. cit.*, p. 195, 198.

79 Gelman, Alexander. "Time to Muster Strength." *Sovetskaya Kultura*, April 9, 1988.

80 Sanders, Alan. "It Was a Pogrom." BBC Central talks and Features, Caris Talk no. 30/88, 15 March 1988, *RF/RL Records, Krasnyi Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14*.

81 "Le Caucase, Baril de Poudre." *Le Figaro*, Paris, 23 Octobre, 1988.

82 Goble, Paul. "Gorbachev Does Not Understand the Nature of Nationality." *The Washington Post*, March 25, 1990.

83 "We Have No Use for a Half-Truth." Interview with Yu. Afanasiev, *Sobesednik*, No. July 30, 1988. Yuri Afanasiev, Russian historian, was at that time a member of the Moscow Tribune, an intelligentsia group.

84 *RFE/RL, Samizdat Materials*, Edition 28/1988, July 24 1988; *Glasnost*, No. 17, March 1988. Azerbaijan, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14.

85 Levon Chorbajian. "For the Masses: Television in Armenia," pp. 48-49.

86 *Ibid*, pp. 49-50.

87 *Krasnaya zvezda* (Daily of the Soviet Army), March 27, 1988.

publications stressed the importance of internationalism and inadmissibility of political struggle within the Soviet Union.

A popular media technique used 'open letters' from readers of Armenian ethnic origin living outside Armenia, or even ones living in Armenia and Karabakh, who tried to persuade and appease their compatriots by various means.

A new divide between Soviet Armenians and Moscow appeared after the Supreme Soviet held an extraordinary meeting on the Karabakh crisis in Moscow in July 18, 1988. Once again, the Soviet leadership expressed its unwillingness to deal with the issue and confirmed its initial position on this matter: Nagorno-Karabakh should remain in Soviet Azerbaijan. Soviet newspapers did not publish either the document adopted during the July 18 meeting or the closing speech made by Gorbachev. Soviet central press failed also to print the subsequently adopted decree.<sup>88</sup>

The July 18 decision was not only perceived as a disappointing turnout for Armenians but also made qualitative changes in Gorbachev's image in the Western and particularly U.S. media as a would-be reformer but not a hardliner Soviet politician, since the nature of response to Armenian uprising had no previous analogue.

For many months now the capitalist press in the U.S. has acclaimed General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, using such adjectives as "innovative," "imaginative," "adroit," "skillful," "flexible," and their favorite one, "pragmatic." This presumably is to distinguish him from the "dogmatic," "inflexible" and "conservative" leaders in the USSR.

However, on July 21, 1988, the *New York Times*, in a front-page story, took a different tack. Gorbachev, said the Times in a bold headline, had joined the "hardliners" by his and the Soviet Presidium's insistence on barring the annexation to Armenia of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. What a quick turnaround!<sup>89</sup>

The July decision caused a new wave of shock among Armenians, and many of them joined in disobedience actions against Soviet state. Moscow continued to view Armenian demands as a sign of "national egoism" and "a mine under the *Perestroika*" at the time when the Soviet society is moving toward reforms.<sup>90</sup> It also became a watershed for *glasnost*. By this decision, Gorbachev "risked losing prestige among Armenians and among their supporters in the Soviet intelligentsia", Bill Keller wrote in the *New York Times*.<sup>91</sup>

88 Steele, Jonathan, *op. cit.*

89 See Marcy, Sam. "Gorbachev's Response to the Crisis over Nagorno-Karabakh." *Workers World*, August 11, 1988.

90 *Izvestiya*, July 21, 1988.

91 Keller, Bill. "Strike in Disputed Soviet Enclave Reportedly Ended After 2 Months." *The New York Times*, July 26, 1988.

While at the initial stage of the Armenian uprising, the Soviet media blamed everything on "extremist elements" and "irresponsible persons", in the search for new culprits the range of "destructive elements" was later expanded to include protectionism, bribery, and the shadow economy in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

This approach of the Soviet media was based on speeches made by high-ranking officials of the USSR. Gorbachev's speech about the 'national issue' made at the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on July 18, 1988, was wired in English translation by TASS and published in *The New York Times* on July 21. Gorbachev's explanations of Armenian demands for reuniting Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia caused criticism even in Marxist press abroad. "If an opinion of his views can be formed from this talk, it is altogether disappointing. His talk was mostly an attempt to blame so-called "irresponsible nationalist elements" in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. He talked of bribery and corruption, but these are only surface manifestations that don't go to the root of the problem."<sup>92</sup>

"Both his comments and his actions highlight an often neglected aspect of Gorbachev's political profile: despite his undoubted political skills, he does not understand the nature of nationality and he has consistently underestimating its importance..."

Gorbachev has effectively destroyed the Marxism-Leninist ideology that had been the mainstay of the state. This has had two destabilizing consequences in the nationality area. "Proletarian internationalism" is now just a memory, and there is no justification for the state save a weak Soviet patriotism, an increasingly questionable economic delivery system, and inertia. Moreover, the destruction of the old ideology has prompted many Russians and non-Russians to look elsewhere for their values -- increasingly, to nationality and religion.

And because he does not understand the situation, he has often taken counterproductive steps, negotiating with the Azerbaijani Popular front when it was blockading the railroads to Armenia last fall but using force against the Lithuanians who had steadfastly kept to a peaceful approach."<sup>93</sup>

While covering the mass movement in Soviet Armenia, the US media published reports about Armenian emigration into the United States. This was the time when Armenian immigration intensified and at the end of 1988, up to 12 000 Armenians applied for emigration from the USSR. The U.S. embassy in Moscow had to hire three new employees to process Armenian applications.<sup>94</sup>

"The U.S. government, immediately upon the outbreak of disorders in Azerbaijan and Armenia last winter, set up a task force in Europe to assist in

92 Marcy, Sam, *op. cit.*

93 Goble, Paul, *op. cit.*

94 NAA, I/127/535, folio 68-69.

processing the immigration of Armenians into the U.S. This is certainly in startling contrast to the willful and cruel way in which the U.S. has barred the door to Haitian immigrants fleeing political terror, as well as to Guatemalans and Salvadorans.<sup>95</sup>

With the July decision of the extraordinary session, Armenian hopes for reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenian SSR dashed on the walls of the Kremlin. This created a new impetus towards the shift of ideas about independence and total disobedience to the central power while Moscow hardened force-using practices. It also clearly revealed Soviet authorities' unwillingness to solve any vital problems surrounding the nationalities issue and originated doubts among liberal-minded Soviet intellectual about the true character of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. The *Economist* touched this issue in the following way:

"...the Armenians of NK have for the present, given up their dream of being united with their brothers in Armenia and have ended a strike that started in March. It looks like a triumph for Mr. Gorbachev. Four month he withstood the blandishments of the two feuding groups of Caucasus.

Soviet media launched a press campaign about the damage done by the strikes. From Mr. Gorbachev domineering performance on July 18<sup>th</sup> onwards, the message to Armenians was clear: this is our last word, you might as well get back to work and shut up. The Armenians, now deeply embittered, sullenly did so.

This is, however, a damaging victory for Mr. Gorbachev. He has brought Armenia under the control, at least at the moment. But his reputation among Soviet intellectuals – the one bit of public opinion that has been pretty solidly behind him – has taken a beating. Most of these people sympathize with Armenian case, and like the idea of democratic self-determination for the Armenian majority in Nagorno-Karabakh. Television showed designer of *glasnost* refusing to listen to good arguments on July 18<sup>th</sup>. A lot of intellectuals, shocked, are no longer quite as euphoric about *perestroika* as they were."<sup>96</sup>

In late 1988 the Soviet government directed a new wave of accusations at both conflicting parties, targeting the two republics' shadow economy, corruption, nepotism, illegal trade, and corrupt health service. "There are some persons for whom *perestroika* means failure of their ambitions and irresponsible pretensions. Cynically and archly, they are ready to play on the difficulties of *Perestroika*, to use the feelings of people in provocative goals in order to push society backward," *Pravda* wrote.<sup>97</sup>

A classic example of badly orchestrated Soviet propaganda was a large article in *Pravda* entitled *Emocii i Razum* (*Emotions and Reason* in Russian). The article immediately became notorious, not only because it was visibly prejudiced and fuelled a lot of resentment against the central press in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, but also because the Armenian *Pravda* correspondent Araquelyan, whom *Pravda* listed as one the authors, publicly refused to hold any responsibility for the article. He announced that his signature was put under a strongly edited version of the article which was not shown to him prior to the publication. In a telegram addressed to the editors of *Pravda*, Yu. Araquelyan said: "By putting my signature beneath the dishonest materials of the Communist Party, you have discredited me in the eyes of the whole nation."<sup>98</sup>

The fact that the editorial scandal of *Pravda* went public was regarded by the Western media as a positive sign and a vivid reminder that *glasnost* is less a goal to be reached than a process of reaching it. In that light, those developments seemed likely to be more of a pause than a setback.<sup>99</sup> The Soviet press in its turn was concerned about the publicity of this fact and that the photocopy of the journalists' letter to the chief editor of *Pravda* "felt in the hands of foreign correspondents" accredited in the Soviet Union.<sup>100</sup>

Another Soviet journalist, Tanya Likhanova, protested against the unobjective coverage of events in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia by canceling her membership in the Union of Journalists of the USSR.<sup>101</sup>

At the end of 1988, when tensions raised to their peak, the Soviet leadership was unable to pacify the public outbursts. The traditional November 7 Revolution Day parade in Yerevan turned into a protest manifestation. In *Pravda*'s November 8 issue it was covered as follows: "People are moving from social apathy towards social activity. The ranks of demonstrators include the city's workers, Party and labor veterans, Great Patriotic War veterans and youth. There are no old Brejnev-era slogans. Some of the slogans call for a review and solution of the Karabakh issue and condemn the Sumgait massacres."<sup>102</sup> *Pravda* intentionally ignored subsequent developments in the main square of the Armenian capital: after the march, the demonstrators started shouting slogans for reunification of Karabakh with Armenia and whistled Communist leaders greeting the crowds from the platform beside Lenin's statue. This was the first case of boycotting the traditionally sacred Revolution Day parade in the Soviet Union.

The possibility of organizing a TV bridge between Yerevan and Baku was on the agenda of the Soviet central press a couple of days before the devastating

98 For the full text of the letter, see AGMI Archives, SB-2/07.

99 *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, March 29, 1988.

100 "Who Violated Journalistic Ethics? On Yu. Araquelyan's Note." *Pravda*, March 25, 1988.

101 Grigoryan, Vladimir, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

102 "A Report on October Holiday Celebrations." *Pravda*, November 8, 1988.

95 Marcy, Sam, *op. cit.*

96 *The Economist*, July 30, 1988.

97 *Pravda*, March 22, 1988.

earthquake which struck northern Armenia on December 7, 1988. Although some Soviet media condemned Azerbaijan's joyful reaction to news of the disaster in Armenia, *Izvestia* blamed it on the opposition's abuse of blunders made by state propaganda. The newspaper wrote that many people in Armenia considered the publication of information about humanitarian aid shipments from Azerbaijan to be a gross blunder.<sup>103</sup> The Soviet propaganda machine saw the quake as an opportunity to play down the tensions but, by overdoing things, caused the opposite reaction, especially at a time when many Armenians received congratulation letters from Baku on the occasion of the earthquake.

The earthquake "created a festive atmosphere" in the Azerbaijani capital with groups of young men marching through the streets of Baku celebrating "Allah's punishment of the Armenians". Elizabeth Fuller wrote: "While the earthquake may at best signify a temporary cessation of hostilities, it would seem unrealistic to regard it as marking the final chapter in the saga of what threatens to become 'an Ulster in the Caucasus.'" <sup>104</sup>

The negative attitude of Soviet central press towards Armenians had some inertia even in the earthquake reports. For example, a January 1989 *Pravda* report from the earthquake zone wrote that in the city of Spitak, someone knifed down a Soviet Army soldier who had rescued dozens of children. Three days later, *Pravda* apologized, writing that after investigation it became clear that the author of that report "had relied on an incompetent source of information. The editorial staff expresses its deep apologies to its readers. The author of the material has been strictly punished."<sup>105</sup>

The Soviet authorities and media continued their practice of blaming local authorities and democratic movement leaders of being involved in corruption, a clan system and a shadow economy. *Sovetskaya Rossiya* Daily wrote: "Extremist, nationalistic associations have a wide international network. Armenian Diaspora in the US, Canada, Australia, and Lebanon, international Islamic centers actively supply nationalists with video equipment, copy machines and computers."<sup>106</sup>

As Vladimir Grigoryan put it, the official conception and reality were diametrically opposite.<sup>107</sup> The gap between the official vision and real developments was widening day by day. In its total ignorance, the center ended up barring all moves for conflict resolution both in Armenia and Azerbaijan. By that time Soviet print, radio and TV reports about the unrest in Azerbaijan and Armenia frequently singled out the lack of reliable information as a factor contributing to the current crisis in the two republics.<sup>108</sup>

103 "Time to Bridge Gaps." *Izvestia* December 20, 1988.

104 Fuller, Elizabeth. "Nagorno-Karabakh. An Ulster in the Caucasus?" p. 7.

105 Studenikin, P. "With Pain and Faith." *Pravda*, January 2, 1989; *Pravda*, January 5, 1989.

106 Yanchenkov, V. "A Sinister Force." *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, January 30, 1990.

107 Grigoryan, Vladimir, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

108 Reese, William. "Situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan Said to Be Exacerbated by Lack of Information." *RFE/RL Research*, RL 532/88, November 29, 1988, Red Archive, Azerbaijan, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/13.

In autumn 1988 and throughout 1989, some extent of liberalization touched the Soviet press, particularly with respect to the ethnic policy debate. Some analytical articles condemned Stalin's legacy, some inferred that the future of Gorbachev's *perestroika* policy depends on the resolution of the Soviet nationality issue. This concerned, amongst other things, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, despite condemnations of Stalin's state-building and ethnic policies, the media discourse was generally in favor of a *status quo* for fear that similar issues should arise throughout the Soviet Union. The protests and condemnation of official policy especially intensified after the Soviet army brutalities in Georgian capital Tbilisi in April 1989.

The distrust of Soviet official information did not abate. The general vision in the West was that, as long as the regime was in the position to influence the contents of the media, it was too early to speak of a general liberalization. *Glasnost* in the media was seen as the latest change in the regime's media policy in an attempt to serve its political needs, a change that was by no means final and could well be reversed.<sup>109</sup>

On the whole, the Soviet central mass media proved unable to covering internal interethnic conflict in an objective way. The lack of a balanced analysis of ethnic issues, misinformation practices and the general unwillingness or inability of Soviet authorities to settle the conflict were all factors that played a major role in the further escalation of the crisis around Nagorno-Karabakh.

As for the Western media discourse, it offered a variety of explanations and interpretations of the conflict. However, most press, radio and TV reports showed openly pro-Armenian trends and presented the Armenian claim as democratic, rightful, and legal.

109 "Glasnost and the Soviet Media Environment: Implications for Western Radio," *op. cit.*, p. 15.

## PART IV

### THE IMAGE OF CONFLICTING PARTIES: STEREOTYPES AND CLICHÉS IN THE WESTERN MEDIA DISCOURSE

Description in the Western media of Armenians as Christians or Azerbaijanis as Muslims add only marginal depth to our understanding of the political culture.<sup>1</sup>

Mark A. Cichok

Studying media images of the parties in an interethnic conflict presents great interest for researchers in various fields. The image of conflicting parties within the Western media certainly deserves profound multidisciplinary research. Images and stereotypes about nations disseminated by the press and TV are to a great extent manifestations of a nation's sense of identity in relation to other nations.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in case of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the representation of both Armenian and Azerbaijani nations in the Western media was influenced by many factors, such as their geographic localization inside Soviet borders, contiguity with Turkey and Iran, the Cold War atmosphere, religious and ethnic differences etc. Based on these factors, many stereotypes and mistaken images were reiterated by Western mass media without significant shifts from the original clichés.

According to Stephen F. Cohen, the prevailing image of the Soviet Union in American media was that of a crisis-ridden, decaying system composed of a stagnant, inefficient economy, a corrupt bureaucratic elite, a sick, cynical, and restive society, and an aging, inept political leadership that was incapable of change or policymaking, and at best was only able to manipulate....<sup>3</sup> He mentions three fundamental ways the American media tended to err.

The first is a focus on the negative side of Soviet life, the second is the use of language loaded with value and bias, and the third is that the press regularly assumes that the Soviet Union is guilty of every charge made against it.<sup>4</sup>

Once the Armenian popular movement found coverage in the Western

media and became a newsworthy topic, the Western press "described the region as "obscure," since it was hardly known in the West, and people in other areas of the Soviet Union could barely find it on the map."<sup>5</sup>

While covering the events in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, the Western mass media showed some diversity in the representation of images vis-à-vis conflicting parties, their motivations, as well as their political, cultural and religious behavior. Analysis of the media-made images presents great interest, especially when such presentations are done in the context of interethnic confrontations.

Here is one of the most common descriptions of both nations in the initial US media reports, from the *Los Angeles Times*. "Armenia is one of the smallest in the 15 Soviet republics. The people have strong sense of national identity, nurtured by language, a long history of persecution, and strong ties to the Armenian Catholic Church. The people of Azerbaijan on the other hand, include not only Azerbaijanis but Armenians, Georgians and Shi'a Muslims of Persian culture."<sup>6</sup>

Western publications generally showed a considerable bias towards Armenia in their coverage of the Azerbaijani-Armenian dispute over the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh. As a result of the West being more familiar with Armenians, they were quoted far more frequently; comparatively, Azerbaijanis received very little coverage due to their lesser-known reputation in Occidental world. Western Media and Academia were responsive to a hefty Armenian representation within the Armenian Diaspora in European countries and the United States. Moreover, the West was also familiar with the image of Armenians as victims of Genocide during the 1915-1918, under the Ottoman Empire.<sup>7</sup> These factors were crucial in the formation of a relatively pro-Armenian stance in the West, which reflected in Western media coverage, especially in the beginning of the conflict.

According to Cedric Maxwell, being Muslim, Azerbaijanis were condemned to the second-rate states that beset all Islamic studies in English. "Though inaccurate, the Western media had intellectually improvised the notion that Soviet Azerbaijan wished to become part of Iran. This is perhaps the most common misconception about Azerbaijan."<sup>8</sup>

Local media, the Soviet Central media, and Western media were offering

<sup>5</sup> Chorbajian, Levon, Patrick Donabedian and Claude Mutaian. *The Caucasus Knot. The History and Geo-Politics of Nagorno-Karabagh*. London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994 p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> William J. Eaton. Large-Scale Protest Flare Up in Soviet Armenia, *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1988.

<sup>7</sup> See "Das war die Woche der Freiheit", *Der Spiegel*, March 7, 1988. After the cease-fire was signed in May 1994, Azerbaijan burst oil factor as the final motivation for Realpolitik. The "Deal of the Century" to export Caspian oil to Western markets was signed in late 1994. After this, the image of Azerbaijan was for a while very well developed in the West and in Western mass media. Oil companies supported the promotion of Azerbaijan's image as a "friend country" whereas Armenia's image as close ally of Russia had some regression.

<sup>8</sup> Maxwell, Cedric. "National Identity in Southern Azerbaijan." *Central Asia and Caucasus*, vol. 8, No. 2, 1989, p. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Cichok, Mark A. *Russia and Eurasian Politics. A Comparative Approach*. New York: Longman, 2002, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Luther, Catherine A. "National Identities, Structure, and Press Images of Nations: The Case of Japan and the United States." *Mass Communication & Society*, 2002, 5(1), p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Chang, Won Ho. "Images of the Soviet Union in American Newspapers: A Content Analysis of Three Newspapers." *Beyond the Cold War: Soviet and American Media Images*. Eds. Everett E. Dennis, George Gerboet. Yassen N. Zassoursky. London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991, pp. 66-67.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

three very different media representations of the conflict, at least during the initial period of the conflict. Among these three representations, we find subgroups, such as the Armenian media, the Azerbaijani media, the European media, the US media etc. Based on these subdivisions it is also possible and quite natural to find diversified approaches and motivations in the representation of the conflicting parties and thereby of the essence of the conflict.

As for the local Armenian and Azerbaijani media representation of the opposite party, the initial "brotherhood" discourse had by late 1988 turned into hard core hate speeches that became common practice for both media discourses. Discrediting and intimidating the opposite camp alongside the adoption of nervous undertones in local broadcasts and reports became attributes that both sides used unsparingly. As in the Balkan case, religious and linguistic stereotypes were amongst the most visible examples of hate speech that functioned as means of differentiation and exclusion in the process of national identity formation."<sup>9</sup>

From the beginning, in an attempt to cover-up the conflict, the Soviet mass media harshly criticized hundreds of thousand of demonstrators by labeling them 'nationalists', 'extremists' and 'hooligans.' The Soviet audience and mass media were in no way ready to experience such dramatic conflict coverage within the borders of the Soviet Union. Audiences in the USSR were accustomed to viewing riots, demonstrations and strikes originating in the capitalist world.

The Soviet press had no systematic approach for covering the ethnic conflict, the ethics to explain the cause, nor any sort of media regulation. Instead, an accusatory tone and a search for culprits (*vinovnik*) and instigators who dared raise such a demands set the precedence for Soviet publications and TV coverage on the conflict. The first publications in the Soviet media on the topic of the nationality issue included an analysis of Lenin's principles and Stalin's legacies on the issue. An open condemnation of Stalin's heritage, in general, did not bring about its editing, particularly in the case of possible border changes. The most popular slogan against the national revival movements and possibility of boundary shifts inside the USSR was: '*Perestroika eto ne perekroika granits*' (Perestroika does not mean redrawing of boundaries). The same rhetoric was also presented in Soviet media organized round tables on the question of nationality, with the participation of prominent Soviet historians, political scientists, and journalists.

The crisis in the Soviet Transcaucasus brought about a great enthusiasm within political and media circles in the West. Such interest was conditioned by number of factors. *First*, connecting with the opposite Super Power and the Soviet authorities' response regarding this matter. That is, the possible socio-

political advantages to be gained by the West as a result of the current crisis. *Second*, more attention was given to the 'Armenian claims' - a possible 'test for Perestroika' in order to uncover the real willingness of Gorbachev to start new way of thinking and instigate democratic reforms.

For some, initial Western publications on the Armenian demands seemed logical and fair, but did not easily satisfy Moscow, 'even if persuaded to try.' *The Cape Code Times* wrote, "statistically and demographically Azerbaijan could afford the loss. Its 33,400 square miles and 6 million population far exceed Armenia's 11,500 square miles and 3,2 million population." But, the newspaper mentioned, one of the main reasons the Soviets evading satiating Armenian demands was that the Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia), might be incited, by an Armenian success, to clamor for equally drastic concessions for themselves - and this was a very good reason for setting an evasive course of action."<sup>10</sup> A message of support, sent to Armenians from sympathizers in Soviet Lithuania, showed the nature of how the Armenian demands found sympathy among other Soviet nations who had if not similar, then analogous problems with the Center. As one Western analyst mentioned, "other nationalists saw that a demonstration by 1 million people in Yerevan came off with no heads cracked, and that emboldened them to demonstrate, too."<sup>11</sup>

The growing sympathy from the Baltic republics with the Armenian demands remained constant until the collapse of the USSR. This sympathy sometimes manifested itself as representatives of 'non-formal' organizations from these Republics making appearances and giving speeches during demonstrations in Yerevan, Armenia.

The Soviet mass media presented a powerful propaganda for the Communist system, but by doing so it also limited the chance for free and open reporting on the dramatic developments in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. Western reporters, despite the ban to visit the region in the initial stage of the confrontation, quite often fell into the whirlpool of oversimplification of the issue. They viewed all analysis within the capacity of easily explained 'ethnic antagonisms' and 'historical animosities' or even referring to sources which were at best, not reliable.

Here is one of the most common texts, or let's say media clichés, to be found in the pages of the US media covering the Karabakh conflict:

"Azerbaijanis and Armenians share a border of several hundred miles but seem to have little else in common. Armenians generally maintain a much higher standard of living and have forged closer ties to the West. Even the languages spoken by the two neighboring

<sup>9</sup> Lenkova, Marina (ed.) "*Hate Speech*" in *the Balkans*. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF), Athens: ETEPE, 1998, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> *The Cape Code Times*, March 1, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> "Ethnic Nationalism Challenge to Gorbachev." *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1988.

nationalities are different.

The most important difference between them is religion, however. Most Azerbaijanis are Shiite Moslems and share more cultural experiences with Moslems across the border in Iran than with Armenians, half of whom are believed to be practicing Christians".<sup>12</sup>

During 1988 and 1989, Levon Chorbajian made a content analysis of major US daily newspapers to follow the coverage of developments around Nagorno-Karabakh and the way conflict was presented to readers. The newspaper coverage was characterized by sparse background information, numerous factual errors, and a consistent reliance on an inappropriate 'Christian versus Moslem' framework. He states, "from the point of view of informing its readership, the media's reliance on a Christian-Moslem paradigm served as a poor substitute for historical background material and analysis, offering in their stead a simplistic and inaccurate reductionist framework for reader 'understanding.'"<sup>13</sup>

Western media discourse on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in some way, may be categorized in the Orientalist theory developed by Edward Said, who stated that "the general basis of Orientalist thought is an imaginative and yet drastically polarized geography dividing the world into two unequal parts, the larger, 'difficult' one called Orient, the other also known as 'our' world, called the Occident in the West."<sup>14</sup>

The Karabakh conflict case, when viewed through this perspective shows the significance of this analysis when taken in consideration to the period, historical-political legacies and the atmosphere of international politics. Especially due to the latter, structural conditions between Western and Eastern blocks along with the mixed, sometimes incorrect assumptions, revealed the shortcomings and stereotypical oriented nature of Western media reporting on Soviet internal affairs. As Edward Said wrote, "the power structure is responsible for the creation of the images, but also emphasized that the images become accepted forms of consciousness by Westerners."<sup>15</sup>

Another issue of concern for Western mass media was presented in the physical geography and localization of the conflict area. The explanations on where and near which countries Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh were situated was a great challenge. As a rule, Armenia was more or less known for Western scholarship and mass media. The issue with Azerbaijan was more complicated due to a lesser knowledge about the country and Azerbaijanis.

During the late 1980's, research libraries in the United States and Britain revealed only one English-language monograph on Soviet Azerbaijan, authored by Professor Tadeusz Swietochowski.<sup>16</sup> In 1989, T. Swietochowski was asked by the Assembly of Armenian Organizations in New York to participate in a conference on Nagorno-Karabakh, as they "could not find an Azerbaijani professor to participate." Later professor T. Swietochowski admits himself, "I don't know any Azerbaijani professors, at least in the Humanities."<sup>17</sup>

The very first reports on the crisis attempted to position the geographical location of the area, and usually it was mentioned as the region just north of Turkey, bordering with Iran or even in simpler terms, Southern USSR. The second issue was the interpretation and explanation of the geographical name of 'Nagorno-Karabakh'. The spelling of the first report by *Associated Press* copied the Russian version of the name – Nagorno-Karabakhskaya, which actually was the first part of the Russian name of the region – *Nagorno-Karabakhskaya avtonomnaya oblast* (NKAO).<sup>18</sup> Only as a result of mixed geographic knowledge could the following titles exist: "*Armenians rally against Soviet control of land*"<sup>19</sup> and "*Soviets Say Armenian Unrest Broke Out in Southern Asia*."<sup>20</sup>

If the Soviet mass media considered the popular movement in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as a threat to the *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* policies, the Western sources in turn, assessed it as an important and serious test for the same policies. On the other side of the world, Western sources showed the historical memory factor pertaining to the ongoing conflict, especially among Armenians connected with the Genocide of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey during the years of First World War. At the same time the West had seen religion as one of the root causes of the troubles between Armenia and Azerbaijan. One year after the Sumgait pogroms, the BBC aired: "Holding today's commemoration as the worst massacre of Christian Armenians by Muslims," underlies the Armenian belief that religious differences were behind the Sumgait massacres."<sup>21</sup>

Almost all publications on the issue in early 1988 while describing Armenians and Armenia contained information about the Armenian Genocide that occurred 1915-1923. Some of the publications in Western editions that were under the influence of an Armenian vision and had the availability of Armenian sources, found some similarities between the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the Armenian pogroms of Sumgait in 1988. References for the historical

12 Lee, Garry. "Soviet Official Acknowledges Deaths in Ethnic Rioting. Unofficial Source: 17 Armenians Died." *The Washington Post*, March 3, 1988.

13 Chorbajian, Levon, Patrick Donabedian and Claude Mutaian, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

14 Said, Edward W. *Covering Islam. How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, p. 4.

15 Said, Edward W. *Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism*. Penguin Books, 1995.

16 Swietochowski, Tadeusz. *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community*. Soviet and East European Studies. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

17 Maxwell, Cedric. "National Identity in Southern Azerbaijan." *Central Asia and Caucasus*, vol. 8, No. 5, p. 1.

18 AP Reports Tanks Used to quell pro-Armenian disturbance Krasniy Arkhiv. NKAO February 23. HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14.

19 See *The Chicago Tribune*, February 24, 1988.

20 Taubman, Philip. "Soviet Says Armenian Unrest Broke Out in Southern Asia." *The New York Times*, February 2, 1988.

21 Dalziel, Stephen. "Sumgait Massacre One Year On." *BBC Central Talks and Features Current Affairs Unit*, February 28, 1989, KRASNY ARKHIV, HU-OSA 300/80/1/15.

memory and history-motivated animosity between both communities also found a ground. As a rule the Western media coverage was usually trying to base the background of the conflict in the historical animosity and ethnic intolerance between Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks.

The best example could be the interview of Jr. Forbes, director RFE. Answering to the question of reporter "How is your coverage on the Armenian unrest differing from what is being reported in the Soviet Union?" he said:

"I think we can give a lot more feel in terms of the local players involved and the issues between the Moslems in Azerbaijan and the Armenians – it goes back a goodly number of years. It also involves things such as the fact that the Armenians until now were probably the one part of the Soviet Union that had a natural favourable opinion of the Russians because they saw the Russians as their protectors against the Turks, especially after the genocide of 1915-1916. Yet one side of glasnost that they didn't anticipate was that it allowed out of the closet these real nationalist sentiments and fears about preserving the culture, preserving the language. They have not been Russified at all."<sup>22</sup>

Comparative identities included parallels of conflicting parties with other ethnic groups in order to simplify explanations for their readers, also served as some kind of over-simplification of the conflict background. The presentation of Armenians as 'Jews of the Caucasus.' was conditioned by the reference to their long history of persecution and dislocation, including "a massacre by the Turks in 1915 and the existence of a worldwide Diaspora. History has helped create a strong solidarity, a well-developed political network and a sense of national pride and grievance among the Armenians."<sup>23</sup>

However, the dominant paradigm in the Western media discourse on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict became the stressing of confessional elements of the identities of conflicting parties. Presentations of Armenians as Christians and Azerbaijanis as Muslims had dominated in the first coverage in the Western publications. The *London Times* writes: "The situation between republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan has been traditionally tense because the Armenians are devoutly Christian, while the Azerbaijanis are Shia Muslim."<sup>24</sup> The following example is from the *San Francisco Chronicle* in its early coverage of the events:

22 "Glasnost Heightens Radio Free Europe's Role." Interview with M. S. Forbes, Jr. *The San Diego Union*, July 3, 1988.

23 "For Gorbachev, a Major Test of Change Explodes in Armenia." *The New York Times*, March 11, 1988, RFE/RL Records, Krasniy Arkhiv, Nagorni Karabakh, HU-OSA 300/80/1/12. It is interesting that at the stage when the conflict became a full-scale war, the successes of Armenian troops in the battlefields caused some Russian and Western media, as well as some Muslim media, to refer to Armenia as "another Israel".

24 Walker, Christopher. "Kremlin Call for Calm as Thousands Demonstrate." *The London Times*, February 24, 1988. 300/80/1/14, F-526 KA 24. 02. 1988. See also: Barringer, Felicity. "Dispute with Religious Overtones." *The New York Times*, February 24, 1988.

The Azerbaijani republic, like Armenia, lies in centuries old border area between the Christian world of European Russia to the northwest and Moslem world of Turkey and Iran to the southwest and southeast. Within the Moslem world, the Azerbaijanis are the part of the Shiite Moslem sect that holds sway in the Iran of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Soviet officials have long been concerned about the spread of Islamic fundamentalism to the religious and ethnic cousins of the Iranian Azerbaijanis. Moscow's worries now focus on the Christian-Islamic disputes that have rent the Southern Caucasus more than 150 years.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the confessional factor overemphasised covering the events. This became the dominant background information during the introduction of conflicting parts. Christian-Moslem confrontation discourse was mixed with coping of Stalinist legacy and criticism of Soviet administrative division and national question policy. The following extract from *The Economist* magazine could be the best example for such reporting: "...Sorting out the Christian-Muslim violence in Azerbaijan and calming the demonstrators in Armenia could be one of the biggest challenges Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev has had to face in his three years of power. How he handles it may decide the fate of the Gorbachev experiment... Attempts by the surrounding Azeris to impose their Muslim culture no doubt contributed to the outbreak of trouble."<sup>26</sup> Such moods in the Western publications were not occasional and were conditioned by world politics and coverage of Islam as a newsworthy one. In Western society, the coverage of Islam became a significant part of media reporting via television and radio network, daily newspapers, and simply, in the news. Knowledge and coverage of the Islamic world therefore, was defined in the United States by geopolitics and economic interest.<sup>27</sup>

Christopher Walker later wrote: "I would dare to say the following: the simplistic Western mind would like to see the West as something Christian and 'good', the East as something Muslim and 'evil', a place where all evils can be projected."<sup>28</sup> Interpretations of the Karabakh conflict, as a conflict of religious connotations was not the first and the only one in the Western mass media. Usually reports on topics like the Middle Eastern crisis between Israelis and Palestinians, and the Protestant-Catholic clashes in Northern Ireland found their way in the news practically every day.

As Mark Saroyan concludes, neither Western nor Soviet journalists have been much help in interpreting the conflict: both groups have explained it largely in terms of traditional enmity between Christian Armenians and Muslim

25 "New Ethnic Riots in the Soviet Union." *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 1, 1988.

26 "As the Sparks Fly Upward from Nagorno-Karabakh." *The Economist*, London, March 5, 1988, p. 43.

27 Said, Edward W., *Covering Islam*..., p. 145.

28 Walker, Christopher. "Armenia in the 90s: Perspectives and Challenges." Excerpt from a lecture given at Oxford University on November 8, 1989. Archives of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, (AGMI) SB-2/07.

Azerbaijanis, without exploring the two peoples' intertwined histories. The actual historical legacy suggests that the conflict is more than natural consequence of ethnic and religious differences.<sup>29</sup>

Another important issue in covering Islam was the violence largely attributed to the Moslem society. These lines became dominant especially after the oil crisis in the early 1970's and the following terrorist activity of several Arabian ultra radical organizations. So, it was not coincidental that the Armenian massacre in Sumgait "appeared to illustrate the volatility of religious conflict in officially secular Soviet society and particularly in the southern Moslem republics located near the Islamic fundamentalist state of Iran. Radiobroadcasts urging Moslem solidarity are regularly beamed in from Iran and Pakistan", Garry Lee from the *Washington Post* mentioned.<sup>30</sup> Some Western media sources mentioned the influence of Iranian proximity as one of the causes of anti-Armenian bloody pogroms in Azerbaijani city of Sumgait. Understandably, the stereotypes of the Iranian revolution and following "hostage crisis" still dominated Western, particularly US mass media views to see the Iranian hand in every militant Islamic manifestation. "Sumgait is one of the three main population centres in Azerbaijan where Islamic militancy has recently been exacerbated by the physical proximity to Iran." - *Radio Free Europe* broadcast.<sup>31</sup> The *Washington Post* described the situation as follows:

"Various interpretations on the causes and origins Nationalist tensions in Armenia and Azerbaijan arise from different reasons. Ecology has been a main issue in predominantly Christian Armenia, where unrest last month was originally sparked by protests against the building of a new chemical plant. By contrast, Turkic Moslem Azerbaijan has been swept by the winds of Moslem fundamentalism, fanned by the Islamic republic in Iran and guerrilla resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Western visitors have said Azerbaijani Moslems even walk the streets of Moscow listening to sermons by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on their portable stereos."<sup>32</sup>

Islamic conspiracy and possible fundamentalist threat found a place in both, the Soviet and the Western mass media reporting on the events after Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini claimed that Islamic fervor was behind unrest in Soviet Azerbaijan and that Moscow should not deal harshly with the Shiite Moslem upsurge. Then Tehran radio reported, "Anyone who thinks or

pretends that the notions behind these movements are ethnic or nationalistic is making a big mistake. These sentiments are Islamic and Soviet leaders should face this fact with realism."<sup>33</sup>

According to a majority of Western press sources, whether the Sumgait massacre was instigated by the earlier squabbles or not, religious differences were seen at the root of the outbreaks, pointing out that Shiite Azerbaijani Turks and Christian Armenians have clashed sporadically during their history.

Another important moment was the expressions of solidarity on both sides. Western press accounts of the participation of non-governmental organization representatives from Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia in the Armenian demonstrations were mentioned. On the other hand, the inspiration of anti-Armenian or anti-Russian sentiments in the majority of Azerbaijani demonstrations, and reports of sightings of Turkish and green Islamic flags alongside portraits of Ayatollah Khomeini, added to the religious side of the confrontation.<sup>34</sup> Islamic symbols in the Azeri gatherings even in the Soviet media were seen as a sign of the *fundamentalisation* of the conflict and helped to strengthen the false belief among the international public that it was the Islamic factor that formed the basis of the rapidly growing Azerbaijani movement, and not the rising tide of nationalism.<sup>35</sup>

Some slight variations of the Soviet press played a significant role in making religious outlines of the conflict. For example, the British *Independent*, referring to the Soviet daily *Izvestia*, brought a picture of anti-Armenian demonstrations in Baku, where "thousands of protesters lit bonfires to stay out all night, carrying red Turkish and green Islamic flags" or "people burned paper crosses to humiliate Christian Armenian population."<sup>36</sup>

The European press, compared with the US press, had some differences in covering the Karabakh mass movement and the developments afterwards. The first reactions of the German press on the developments in the south of the USSR in some way varied from the others. Except the reports of the Soviet information agency, a detailed history, ethnic composition of the conflict area and economic components of the region were reported in the articles. The first German publications brought detailed, historical accounts on the origin of conflict and conflicting parties.<sup>37</sup>

33 "Baku Demonstrators with Khomeini Portraits." *RFE/RL Records*, HU-OSA 300/85/12/18; "Khomeini Says Islamic Zeal Behind Soviet Unrest." 17 January, 1990. *KA RFE/RL Records*, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/13. See also: Swietochowski, Tadeusz. *Azerbaijan Borderland in Transition*, p. 204.

34 Fuller, Elizabeth. "Nagorno-Karabakh. An Ulster in the Caucasus?" *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 534/88, December 12, 1988, Red Archive, p. 4, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14/.

35 Agamaliyev, Farkhad. "Between the Crescent and the Cross." *Central Asia and Caucasus*, vol. 8, No. 2, 1989, p. 2.

36 Cornwell, Rupert. "Kremlin Admits Ethnic Crisis is Near Civil War." *The Independent*, December 2, 1988.

37 Adam, Werner. "Ein weiteres Warnsignal aus dem sowjetischen Transkaukasus. Aufbegehren in Nagornij Karabach." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 25, 1988. See also: "TASS berichtet über Unruhen. Armenier wollen aus Moslem-Sowjetrepublik ausscheiden." *Frankfurter Rundschau*, February 25, 1988; "Armenier fordern Anschluss von Berg-Karabach." *Die Welt*, February 25, 1988.

29 Saroyan, Mark. "Trouble in Transcaucasus." *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, March, 1989, *RFE/RL*, Krasniy Arkhiv, NKA0, p. 34, HU-OSA 300/80/1/15.

30 Lee, Gary. "Tass Reports New Violence in Azerbaijan." *The Washington Post*, March 1, 1988.

31 "Witness Says Armenians Raped, Murdered in Sumgait." *RFE/RL Records*, March 5 1988, Krasniy Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/12.

32 Borowiec, Andrew and Martin Sieff. "Ethnic Unrest Puts Gorbachev on the Hot Seat." *The Washington Times*, March 1, 1988.

In the initial period of the conflict escalation the Western print media quite frequently hosted its pages for the Diaspora Armenian's letters, shaping the developments among the Soviet Armenians.

### Language of representation

In reporting of the conflict even the term 'reunification' had some value for both conflicting sides. It simply meant that Armenian claims were based on a historical background to be attached, as before, to Armenian proper. For Western media rhetoric it was not so significant and the terms: *Anschluß*, *reunification*, *unification* and *attachment* were used from the context of such contested discourse.

In the process of covering the Karabakh conflict the Soviet mass media began the use of special terms and jargon, such as: *Refugees*, *Pogroms*, *Strikes*, *February events*, *Mafia*, *hunger strike* and others. This was the first time in Soviet reality that these terms were being applied to the events, people, and locations and this was in fact, uncharacteristic for the Soviet system, and the Soviet lifestyle.

As was mentioned above, the first Soviet publications and broadcasts tried to blame the escalation of situation in the Soviet Transcaucasus on hooligans and non-responsible elements to destabilize the situations in both republics.

"The first ethnically-tinged civic clashes under Gorbachev (the Sumgait and Fergana pogroms against Armenians and Turks) were dismissed by experts as "incidents", "events" etc. Until the Ingush-Ossetian conflict and the Chechen War erupted on the territory of Russia itself, the term 'ethnic conflict' was seen as an inadequate and humiliating term to describe people who do not normally hate and fight each other. Ethnic entities, it was held, are deliberately driven into conflict by in-group agitators or by outside conspiracies. Conflicts were viewed as carrying political, territorial, criminal, or economic dimensions, and as falling into two major categories – conflicts of ideological doctrines, and conflicts of political institutions."<sup>38</sup>

Western media representation of the conflict, as an ethnic conflict with territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not please the Armenian side, and this attitude was sometimes was targeted by the local Armenian press:

"Browsing Western print media you will have an impression that all currently happenings in Azerbaijan are as a result of the "territorial demands of Armenians," and that claims for secession from the USSR is an expression of indignation against the position of Moscow in Karabakh question, since "Moscow does not

38 Tishkov, Valery. "Ethnic Conflicts in the Former USSR: The Use and Misuse of Typologies and Data." *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 36, no. 5, 1999, p. 574.

repulse territorial pretensions of Armenians against Azerbaijan. The problem of Nagorno-Karabakh – is the problem of self-determination of Karabakhi people. It is now clear that Azerbaijani nationalist are using the Artsakh question to cover their separatist, anti-Soviet goals. And it is not surprising that certain foreign mass media readily believe Baku's fabrications."<sup>39</sup>

As an example of errors in reporting, the US papers noted on several occasions that the transfer of a territory from one republic to another had had no precedent in the Soviet Union, when in fact there had been numerous occasions. It was only in a British *Sunday Times* that one could discover that there was indeed, a precedent: the Crimea was transferred from Russian to control jurisdiction in 1954.<sup>40</sup> Simply, it was Soviet might, which initiated the unilateral decision of transference of the Armenian populated territories of Nakhichevan and Nagorno-Karabakh to the Soviet Azerbaijan.

Initially seen in the Western press as one more example of nationalist protest against the policies of the Soviet government, and then as the latest expression of an 'ancient enmity' between neighboring Muslims and Christians, the Karabakh conflict was in fact from the beginning a layered problem – structured in part by quite separate, religious and cultural allegiances. These allegiances were based in part on uneven social and political developments of Armenians and Azerbaijanis. More perceptive reporters noted rather quickly that the demonstrations in Yerevan and Stepanakert were not particularly hostile to the central Soviet authorities or anti-Russian in their expression, but were acting in the spirit of *Glasnost*, in support of Gorbachev's policies of *Perestroika* and *demokratizatsiya*, and directed their particular grievance against the neighboring Republic of Azerbaijan.<sup>41</sup>

Soon, some political scientists spoke about the anti-Armenian lobby in the Western press. The presentation of the struggle for Karabakh not as a struggle for democracy and justice, but as an ethnic, clan or religious confrontation, problem without solution, was one anti-Armenian strategy.<sup>42</sup> Christopher Walker interprets this phenomenon in the following way:

"Why this happening in the USSR, and why in the period of *Glasnost* – this is one of miseries. But there is another one: why Western mass media follows Soviet line, and mainly cover and explain moderate and legal demands of Armenians? We see

39 See "Alliance or Deal?" *Kommunist*, Yerevan, No. 246, October 24, 1989.

40 Roxburgh, Angus. "Gorbachev in Desperate Dash to Resolve Armenian Crisis." *The Sunday Times*, March 6, 1988. It was also in British press that I found the lone instance of media advocacy for the reunification of Karabakh with Armenia: see "Gorbachev's Armenian Dilemma." *The Independent*, February 26, 1988. See also: Chorbajian, Levon. *Karabagh and the US Media*. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Association of Mass Communication Research, Bled, Yugoslavia, August 1990; Chornajian, Levon, Patrick Donebadian and Claude Mutafian, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

41 Suny, Ronald Grigor. *Looking Towards Ararat. Armenia in Modern History*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 193.

42 Walker, Christopher, *op. cit.*

how Moscow based correspondent of *New York Times* Bill Keller agrees with Baku version and hides the real nature of the conflict – oppression of Karabakhi people by Azerbaijani rule, and Armenian position in general. Rupert Corneal from *Independent* cover the conflict visiting only Baku but not Yerevan or Stepanakert. In fact, in the sphere of political discusses, both in Europe and America, anti-Armenian visions are supported much more than Armenian viewpoints.<sup>43</sup>

Just like the reports that covered the Sumgait Armenian pogroms, the Soviet News Agency did not specify the nationalities of the victims in the reports of the Baku pogroms on January 20.<sup>44</sup> Soon after a Soviet military intervention on the nights of January 18 and 20, in 1990, the Armenian massacres faded away. This was in fact not implemented to protect Armenian victims from the Azerbaijani mobs, but instead, to reestablish Soviet power and installation in Baku as well as in the rest of the Soviet Azerbaijan.

A new wave of Armenian massacres exploded in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku, now facing huge protests worldwide. In Western publications the violence in the Azerbaijani capital was condemned and one of the interesting publications on this matter was an open letter signed by world-known social scientists in the *New York Times* condemning new wave of Armenian pogroms.<sup>45</sup>

The London based *Times* brought horrific details of the largest anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan after Sumgait:

“Again, the blood of innocent people was spilled,” the official news agency, TASS, said. Armenians were burnt alive in front of the main station. Like ugly black dolls, two blackened bodies were cast on a rubbish dump.<sup>46</sup>

Even after many years, Western publications still stressed that the religious animosity between both conflicting parties caused the Armenian massacres in Sumgait. Such marginalisation of the Karabakh conflict gave life to some new transformations after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Although it is out of the time frame and scope of this study, the further representation of Western coverage is a topic for more in-depth study that would reveal new factors appearing in Post-Soviet conflict development in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. The time-oriented trend of reporting in Nagorno-Karabakh was transformed to the new opposition of Russian-oriented Armenians (non-friends) and anti-Russian Azerbaijanis (friends) heavily garnered with help of the oil-rich Azerbaijan.

43 *Ibid.*

44 Buetta, Bernard. “Massacres des Arméniens au Caucase. Moscou envoie des troupes en renfort.” *Le Monde*, Janvier 16, 1990.

45 “An Open Letter to International Public Opinion on Anti-Armenian Pogroms in the Soviet Union.” *The New York Times*, July 27, 1990. See, Appendix V.

46 “11,000 Extra Troops Fail to Halt Civil War; Armenia and Azerbaijan.” *The Times*, January 17, 1990.

## PART V

- (1) The Soviet government should respect the legitimate aspirations of the Armenian people.
- (2) The Soviet government should discontinue its very serious violations of the human rights of the Armenian people.
- (3) mIf the Soviet Union continues its deplorable suppression of the Armenian people, it will inevitably impact on U.S.-Soviet relations.<sup>1</sup>

July 1988 US Senate Bill

## COLD WAR LEGACY AND PROPAGANDA WARFARE AROUND THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

The escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1988-1992 from non-violent political struggle to a full-scale interethnic war became a fatal episode in the final phase of the Cold War. Some analysts claim that this local conflict heavily weakened the Soviet Union and thus directly contributed to the end of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup>

Before Gorbachev came to power, the Soviet government almost never disclosed the existence of internal disasters, natural or man-made, partly because it was unwilling to recognize imperfections within the Communist system. The “era” of *glasnost* gradually released those constraints while simultaneously threatening the system. Partial *détente* in the East-West relations did not, of course, bring an end to either the confrontation or the propaganda warfare in which the two blocks had engaged since the end of WWII.

“A common wisdom has emerged that the lifting of the Cold war system has released ancient ethnic ambitions and hatred, potentially leading to a world far more complex and dangerous than the familiar bipolar East and West. Certainly for the news media, the Cold war struggle was in many ways a much easier contest to cover, with the seeming simplicity of the Moscow-Washington dichotomy. In contrast, today’s ethnic conflicts are seen as presenting the news media with myriad problems. In many respects, the depth and nuance necessary for substantive coverage of ethnic and religious conflict are perceived as antithetical to the methodology of the modern media, with its emphasis on celebrity culture, entertainment, market shares ratings, and the financial

<sup>1</sup> US Senate bill adopted in July 1988. See: Congressional Record. Proceeding and Debates of the 100<sup>th</sup> Congress Second Session, Volume 134 – Part 13, July 13, 1988 to July 27, 1988, Washington, 1988, pp. 18970-18972.

<sup>2</sup> Melander, Erik. “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Revisited. Was the War Inevitable?” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Spring, 2001, p. 48.

bottom line. Thus, the news media's half-hearted efforts to lend context to ethnic politics have often reinforced stereotypes and led to oversimplification."<sup>3</sup>

Before the outbreak of the Armenian popular movement for unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia, Western radiobroadcasts were actively involved in the coverage of the Polish *Solidarnost* movement in early 1980s. The structure of the Armenian popular movement was in places similar to that of *Solidarnost*; for example, both movements had created divisions at workplaces.

While the massive protests in Yerevan in early 1988 vividly reminded everyone of the persisting strength of nationalism in the Soviet Union, the biggest concern of the authorities was their own impotence when confronted by a spontaneous demonstration of popular power. There were distinct similarities between Yerevan and 1980 *Solidarnost* demonstrations in Poland. Intended as a revolution from above, the very last thing that *perestroika* was meant to do was challenge the leading role of the Communist party.<sup>4</sup>

As in case of coverage of Polish *Solidarnost*-related events by Western mass media, Karabakh events also found themselves in the epicenter of Western journalists' interest. This caused an increase in the Soviets' sensitivity, who promptly responded with the traditional jamming of such broadcasts.

"Western radio stations in these days have not been sleeping. Their programs were filled with calls to develop protests, to toughen demands, to maintain positions to the end, the official Communist Party daily said in its first serious report on the Polish crisis."<sup>5</sup>

Definitely, each ethnic or social disturbance in the Eastern Europe countries or inside the Soviet borders presented great interest for Western intelligence services and ideologically oriented radio stations. In its turn, the Soviet propaganda machine presented the Armenian democratic movement as a consequence of Western propaganda and interference, trying to avoid a detailed and deep-rooted analysis of the origins and historical legacies behind ethnic issues. Therefore, it was no surprise that in September 1987, the KGB Chief Victor Chebrikov claimed that Western intelligence agencies were taking advantage of *glasnost* to unleash "the virus of nationalism" within the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup>

At the early stage of the Armenian popular movement, the Soviet press cited RFE/RL Director Enders Wimbush, who after being informed about Armenian demonstrations with almost a million participants, said: "My God, what material!"<sup>7</sup>

3 O'Sullivan, Chris. "The News Media and the Resolution of Ethnic Conflict: Ready for the Next Steps?" *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 1, No. 2, December 2001, p. 57.

4 *The East Europe Newsletter*. Vol. 2, no. 5, March 9, 1988.

5 "Pravda Accuses West of Provoking Polish Unrest." *The Guardian*, May 5, 1988; *The Washington Post*, May 5, 1988.

6 Borowiec, Andrew and Martin Sieff. "Ethnic Unrest Puts Gorbachev on the Hot Seat." *The Washington Times*, March 1, 1988.

7 "Rushing after Glasnost." *Western Radio*, p. 9, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/871.

Meanwhile the reform policy initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev significantly challenged the Soviet propaganda paradigms and ideological content created after the Bolshevik revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union. *Perestroika* and the paradigm of 'New Thinking' proved useless for ideological wars, because they did not comprise the 'image of the enemy.'<sup>8</sup>

Paul Goble, a senior analyst of Soviet affairs with the RFE/RL, wrote: "Gorbachev has effectively destroyed the Marxism-Leninist ideology that had been the mainstay of the state. This has had two destabilizing consequences in the nationality area. "Proletarian internationalism" is now just a memory, and there is no justification for the state save a weak Soviet patriotism, an increasingly questionable economic delivery system, and inertia. Moreover, the destruction of the old ideology has prompted many Russians and non-Russians to look elsewhere for their values – increasingly, to nationality and religion."<sup>9</sup>

The Cold War strategy comprised various kinds of propaganda and counter-propaganda, especially in the nationality question. Alongside economic shortages and vulnerability of administrative division, the nationality question presented a great challenge for Moscow, coming forth as the Achilles heel of the Soviet system. Every attempt from the West to promote human rights or to play up the Soviets nationality issue this sent a negative message to Moscow. The latter regarded every such attempt as an ideological subversion against the USSR. The head of the Soviet KGB Vladimir Andropov described it as follows:

"Ideological subversion is first and foremost a form of subversive activity of imperialism against socialism. Its goal is to weaken and unsettle the socialist system. This subversive activity was targeted to influence peoples' views, attitudes and visions, and eventually their political and moral behavior."<sup>10</sup>

From the beginning, the main Soviet print media saw the 'hidden hand of the West', especially that of Western radio stations, which was trying to catalyze ethnic disturbances in the Soviet Union. *Pravda* wrote in March 1988: "Ethnic crisis in the southern republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan was the work of extremists egged on by 'Western radio voices' to acts of 'intolerable' civil disobedience."<sup>11</sup> Asked during a central Soviet TV program: "Did Western mass media play an instigative role in the situation around Nagorno-Karabakh?" the TASS Director General Sergey Lossev said that the main causes of the unrest had been the long-ignored social, economic and cultural needs of local population. However, he didn't play down the aspirations of 'ideological rivals'

8 Tsuladze, Avtandil. *Political mythology*. Moscow: EKSMO, Algorithm, 2003, p. 160.

9 Goble, Paul. "Gorbachev Does Not Understand the Nature of Nationality." *The Washington Post*, March 25, 1990.

10 "Ideological Diversion: the Poisoned Weapon of Imperialism." Speech by Yuri Andropov during at KGB meeting in February 1979; Tsuladze, Avtandil, *op. cit.*, p. 188

11 Keller, Bill. "Armenians and Glasnost." *The New York Times*, March 28, 1988.

to use the existing situation in order to seed national discord in the country via disinformation.<sup>12</sup>

It is interesting to review the evolution of Western media approach towards the two conflicting parties in the context of the Cold War strategy. As a matter of fact, some authors saw the Karabakh conflict as an opportunity to raise the issues of other Soviet nationalities. In this context, the first publications offered some pro-Armenian perspectives.

Meanwhile Communist party statements and media publications prove that the post-Stalinist approaches still dominated in the official Soviet discourse. The shift from the harsh anti-Western and anti-capitalist criticism proved a bigger challenge than an overnight softening of the hardened stereotypes and attitudes.

In one of its pre-conflict publications, *Izvestia* wrote that positive developments in the policy of *glasnost* strengthened our 'purity and power', whereas Western reactionary circles, intelligence services and propaganda machines have joined efforts and launched a powerful campaign against *perestroika* and *glasnost*. The methods and means of this campaign are such that can only wonder just how persistent stereotypes can be.<sup>13</sup>

Based on propagandistic clichés formulated and actively promoted at that time, one can easily imagine how the zero-sum-game logic worked with respect to events in Karabakh and Armenia. The my-foe's-foe-is-my-friend approach meant that if Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh were going against the Soviet state system, the West in its ideological compactness would by default support the non-conformist Armenians. This very same attitude was evident in the publications and broadcasts of the Western mass media.<sup>14</sup>

The Soviet government argued that the position of the Western mass media on the events in South Caucasus went through a certain transformation during the first two years, mainly conditioned by the political developments in the USSR and Eastern Europe. This transformation was just as relevant to ongoing political developments as to the Cold War propaganda machinery.

Subsequent loyalty and even support to Gorbachev's hard-line policy towards nationalistic aspirations was in many cases explained by the Cold War legacy and ongoing developments in the Eastern and Central Europe. This way, the West and The Western media applied a double standard to the nations of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Doubtless revival of the Armenian national liberation movement coinciding with the policy of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, was largely the result of Gorbachev's policies. The Soviet Communist leadership considered the move of Karabakh

Armenians to reunite with Armenia a serious challenge to the fundamental USSR administrative divisions formed back in Stalin times. The predictable reaction of the Communist nomenclature was reflected in the official publications of the Soviet mass media, where the Armenian movement was subjected to negative labeling and total condemnation. Both central and Azerbaijani mass media looked for the causes and culprits of the conflict beyond the borders of the Soviet Union, in "blasting centers in the West which are trying to play the Armenian national card."<sup>15</sup> *Pravda*<sup>16</sup> implicitly accused U.S. foreign specialists of stirring up tensions in the region. "The activists in Yerevan," it wrote, "whether they want it or not, are the target of prompting from those Sovietologists across the ocean who maintain that it is possible to triumph over socialism in the USSR only by partitioning it on an ethnic basis."<sup>17</sup>

Trying to avoid an objective understanding of the historical past, the Soviet media and television played a definitive role in the escalation of the conflict and the formation of an atmosphere of distrust against Moscow among the conflicting parties. Foreign media were seen by the Soviet mass media as having a well-prepared 'strategic policy' intended to unsettle the USSR using the nationality issue. According to Soviet media, the coverage of events in and around Nagorno-Karabakh proved that despite newly established partner relations with the USSR, the West uses every occasion to reveal the 'true essence of imperialist policy.'

Despite the fact that Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed a policy of openness and concrete steps towards *détente* between the East and the West, Western media originally viewed the Karabakh conflict as an ideal opportunity to strengthen nationalistic aspirations amongst the Soviet nations in order to facilitate the demise of the weakening Soviet system. This provoked heavy criticism from the Soviet media. The support and promotion of the Karabakh Armenians' demands by Western media was viewed by the Soviets as a well planned policy towards destabilizing the USSR.<sup>18</sup> And it was no coincidence that an expert on the Soviet Union, Deputy FBI Director Robert Gates was asked to prepare a detailed analysis of demonstrations in Armenia.<sup>19</sup> Within the perspective of a nation's right to self-determination, one could decipher a particular pro-Armenian position within Western reports, which, almost without exception, criticized the Soviet national policy and the principles of the Soviet administrative conflict. Later, in the post-Soviet era ethnic self-determination was viewed as undesirable and even unacceptable, thus revealing political contradictions in the Western

12 Excerpts from "Resonance", a live program on Central TV. *RFE/RL Records*, July 8, 1988, Nagorno-Karabakh OSA-HU, 300/80/1/578.

13 "Who is Not Pleased With Our Perestroika." *Izvestia*, September 19, 1987.

14 Grigoryan, Vladimir. *Armenia in 1988-1989*, Yerevan, 1999, p. 97.

15 *Izvestia*, March 24, 1988.

16 *Pravda*, March 21, 1988.

17 Lee, Gary. "Pravda Hints Armenians to Lose Regional Ruling." *The Washington Post*, March 22, 1988.

18 Oganov, G. "The Crocodile Tears of the BBC." *Sovetskaya kul'tura*, March 31, 1988; "'Crocodile Tears' over Karabakh from BBC and British Press." *RFE/RL Records*, April 4, 1988, Krasnyi Arkhiv, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/14.

19 See *The New York Times*, March 2, 1988; *Literaturnaya gazeta*, March 23, 1988. For the initial CIA reports on the events on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, see Appendix II.

humanitarian approaches and principles.

The emergence of the Soviet media publications as a backdrop, created a separate group of critical issues that could be grouped as a condemnation of the Western media coverage. The latter, as a rule, were estimated as non-objective and aiming to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, in May 1987 the Soviets stopped jamming the *VOA*, and five months later, the *BBC* Russian-language programs. However, in early 1988 the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs lodged a formal diplomatic protest with the US embassy accusing *Voice of America* of inciting public unrest in broadcasts to the Soviet Baltic republics, in particular claiming that the *Voice of America* broadcasts "provide demonstrators the time and gathering place for demonstration, among other information."<sup>21</sup> During one of the press conferences on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, Soviet officials blamed 'radio voices' for escalating the situation in the Baltic republics, inferring that the "scenario for the events in August 1987 was prepared in the USA."<sup>22</sup>

The Soviet propaganda attached significant importance to influencing Armenian Diaspora to secure pro-Soviet attitude among Diaspora Armenians.

A TASS report of March 6, 1988, received by the State Radio & Television of Soviet Armenia via a confidential channel, first astonished the editorial staff with its temperate content. Commenting on the events in South Caucasus, the report admitted that the Armenian cause is just, and that finally the time had come to correct Stalin's faults and return Karabakh to Armenia. However, the initial euphoria quickly vanished as the report contained the explicit instructions 'For foreign broadcasting only.' As Armenian correspondents said, this message was meant to misinform Armenian Diaspora worldwide.<sup>23</sup>

Since the creation of Soviet Armenia, the Soviet Secret service was always concerned about the links between Armenians of the Soviet Union and the Armenian Diaspora. From this standpoint, the KGB shared two main goals with the Communist Party: to maintain the loyalty of domestic Armenians, and to make Diaspora communities support the Soviet Union. Being an integral part of the Soviet Union, Armenia was also involved in Cold War attempts to win over the favors of Diaspora structures.<sup>24</sup> Felix Corley believed that the KGB in general was successful in both of these activities until the *perestroika* era, when nationalist tensions in the South Caucasus overtook all other considerations in determining loyalty.<sup>25</sup>

20 Zargarov, A. "Who Is Heating Up Passions." *Bakinski Rabochi*, March 6, 1988.

21 "Soviets Accuse Voice of America of Inciting Baltic Area Unrest." *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1988.

22 NAA, (1/127/62).

23 RFE/RL Records, Samizdat materials, Issue 28/1988, July 24, 1988; *Glasnost*, No. 17, Moscow, March 1988, p. 42; Azerbaijan, HU-OSA 333/80/1/14.

24 See Suny, Ronald Grigor. "Return to Ararat: Armenia in the Cold War." *Armenian Review*, Autumn 1989, Volume 3/167, pp. 1-19.

25 Corley, Felix. "Dogging Dashnaks, Dissidents, and Dodge-Dealers." *Armenian Forum* 2, no. 3, 2001, p. 1.

Interestingly enough, during the Armenian national movement, the Fifth Department of the local Armenian branch of the KGB (which normally handled 'internal subversion') turned the directorate's work toward 'subversion from abroad.'<sup>26</sup> The Communist leadership and Soviet media explained any interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union by the intention of the West to divert attention from a positive solution of national issue within the Soviet Union. From this standpoint, it is interesting to analyze the *Pravda* article entitled 'Instigators'. The newspaper defines 'instigation' as the activity of those circles and persons abroad and 'in our country' who support the events in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. *Pravda* also accuses the *Voice of America*, *Deutsche Welle* and *BBC* of 'instigation' contained in their coverage of events in Armenia and Azerbaijan.<sup>27</sup>

Another *Pravda* article reads: "It is not secret that extremist tricksters with a nationalistic bias tune their actions to those of the secret services of imperialist states (sic! - H. D.) and foreign anti-Soviet centers, which appear in the role of direct instigators of hostile actions. We must not underestimate the dangers of this type of subversive activity. But the main attention, as it seems, should be concentrated on early prevention of social-economic problems, on teaching patriotism and internationalism, and averting any attempts of opposing these two notions."<sup>28</sup>

According to Azerbaijani newspaper *Bakinski Rabochi*, the existing interethnic problems were created by the ideological enemies of the USSR, professional anti-Soviet and anti-Communist elements. The newspaper stated that "...the national question in the current period is a subject of sharp and intensive ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism. National aspirations are fuelled from abroad in every possible way, i.e. from the part of political actors and propagators of bourgeois world. In their divisive ideological activity, anti-Soviet elements pay special attention to radio broadcasting, especially foreign broadcasting."<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting that demonstrations and gatherings in Yerevan and other cities of Armenia were initially viewed by some Western experts as actions organized by the Soviet government, since they considered such large-scale initiatives impossible in USSR.<sup>30</sup> Of course, for the Western block, the sending of troops in response to nationalistic activities in the southern periphery of the USSR was seen as an extraordinary act. Moreover, it was presented as obvious evidence of the real drawbacks of the Soviet system and the danger it contained.

26 *ibid.*

27 Vasil'kov, A. and G. Ovcharenko. "Instigation. Once Again, Talking About Events in Nagorno-Karabakh and Around It." *Pravda*, April 4, 1988. For the English translation of this article, see Appendix V, No. 1.

28 Order on the banner of the city, *Pravda*, April 14, 1988.

29 *ibid.*

30 Saroyan, Mark. "Trouble in Transcaucasus." *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, March 1989, RFE/RL, Krasniy Arkhiv, NKAO, p. 34, HU-OSA 300/80/1/15.

The headlines of some Western media publications during the first week of the conflict were quite vivid, and the Soviet side was inclined to see them as an open provocation.<sup>31</sup>

Lacking direct information from the center of events, the Western media frequently used dissident channels as sources of eyewitness information.

Until March 1988, foreign reporters were not allowed into the South Caucasus. Soviet officials explained this by the logic that the presence of foreign reporters in Yerevan could intensify the tension and stimulate nationalistic elements at a time when passions are calming down, and that Western media publications could serve to incite nationalist emotions.<sup>32</sup> A U.S. television crew was denied permission to travel even to Tbilisi, Georgia.<sup>33</sup> Although there was no official regulation to this effect, Soviet officials justified their decisions by lack of security for the foreign journalists. This was clearly a pretext.<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Steele, writing that the Nagorno-Karabakh is a test that *perestroika* might not survive, thus commented the Soviet ban on the presence of foreign journalists in the region:

"The good thing about the handling of the crisis is that it is being reported. Not in full, not always fairly, and not by permitting foreign journalists to see uncomfortable domestic problems. But in the old, pre-Gorbachev dates the coverage would have been worse and the widespread nature of the strikes would have been suppressed."<sup>35</sup>

In November 1988, a group of Turkish journalists planned to go to Armenia to cover the situation from inside. The Department of Information of the Soviet MFA appeared was willing to facilitate their visit to Yerevan, pointing out that Mehmet Ali Birand from Turkish *Milliyet* and E. Özkök from *Hurriyet* had been doing 'balanced reporting about the Soviet Union' and created a 'positive interest of Turkish society towards our country.' The Armenian MFA and Communist leadership were opposed to such a visit insisting that "the arrival of a Turkish journalist is not desirable in the current situation."<sup>36</sup>

Western correspondents used two other main information sources other than the Soviet mass media and official sources. Those sources were dissident and tourist witness accounts from the region. Among dissidents were Sergey and Tamara Grigoryants, Sergey Ogorodnikov, Alexei Manannikov, Paruyr

Hayrikyan and others. Sergey Grigoryants was the editor of *Glasnost* magazine. Dissident reports were circulated via a network of phone calls from Moscow to other cities including Yerevan. The weight and importance the West was giving to the activities to Soviet dissidents was exemplified during Reagan's visit to Moscow in May-June 1988, when Sergey Grigoryants was invited to meet with the U.S. president.<sup>37</sup>

The official Soviet propaganda machine tried to put the blame for the disturbances on foreign countries and those Soviet citizens who presumably were trying to unsettle the 'unbroken ties' of the Soviet internationalist society. Culprits were usually found among dissidents, two of them of Armenian descent: Paruyr Hayrikyan and Sergej Grigoriants. They became the main targets of Soviet officials. *Izvestia*: "It is not difficult to foresee that certain mass media in the West will do all in order to present the decision of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet of the USSR nearly as an act of violence and Hayrikyan as a victim of tyranny of the Soviet authorities. It is not difficult because the attempts to portray Hayrikyan as a martyr were made several times before. Believing the radio voices was Hayrikyan only sin is that he is a human rights activist who did not bother to express his opinion loudly."<sup>38</sup>

As a result of liberalism being the vogue, Soviet society by and large fell under the spell cast by the Armenian dissident movement and was hypnotized with the developing events. This idea was propagated by radio broadcasts of *RFL/RL*, *Voice of America* and *Deutsche Welle*, no longer jammed by the Soviets. It seemed that Armenian society stepped on the path of liberalization, directly leading to the idea of inviting the high ranks of the Western power structures into the Armenian Republic. These illusions were not groundless, as far as creating the charming, euphoric feel of openness paired against the backdrop of the Soviet monster preventing all from seeing the truth.<sup>39</sup>

From time to time, Armenian demonstrators used the opportunity of foreign visits to raise the issue. In the late May 1988, the then U.S. president Ronald Reagan paid an official visit to Moscow. During this visit, hundreds of Armenians gathered at Vagankovskoye Cemetery in Moscow and later at downtown Pushkin Square "to call on Reagan to take up our issue in his negotiations."<sup>40</sup> Armenians in the Diaspora rallied in support of these demands and took the opportunity to bring the issue to light during M. Gorbachev's foreign visits to the countries with strong Armenian contingencies, such as the United States and France.

Western concerns skirting the Karabakh issue very often appeared with broad strokes stressing the necessity of illumination and analysis of the problems

31 "The Quakes on the Soviet Façade." *Newsweek*; "A Hundred Nations Against Moscow." *Der Spiegel*; "Persecutions in the USSR." *L'express Internationale*, see in *Argumenti i Fakti*, No. 14, April 2-8, 1988.

32 *Argumenti i Fakti*, March 5-11, 1988; Bobinski, Christopher. "Soviet Troops Enforce Curfew in Riot City." *Financial Times*, March 2 1988.

33 Eaton, William J. "Gorbachev Calls for Calm in Armenia." *The Fresno Bee*, February 27, 1988.

34 See *State Archive of Political and Social Organization of Republic of Armenia* (SAPSO RA), fund 1, register, 127 file 564, (1/127/564), folio 50.

35 Steele, Jonathan. "Nagorno-Karabakh is a Test That Perestroika Might Not Survive." *The Guardian*, July 27, 1988.

36 NAA RA, 1/127/537, folio 1-5.

37 Roshchupkin, V. "Nationalistic Faces of Anti-Sovietism." *Komunist Voorujennix Sil*, September, No. 18, 1988.

38 Senchenko, T. "History of a Former Citizen." *Izvestia*, 24. 07. 1988.

39 Grigorian, V., *op. cit.*, p. 55.

40 Grabowski, Gene. "Soviet Dissidents use Reagan Visit to Test Glasnost Limits." *The Washington Times*, May 30, 1988.

of *perestroika*, the Soviet economy and other aspects of Soviet social norms. In one of its programs in March 1988, *BBC* pointed out that it was necessary to legalize private enterprises and privatize the land, otherwise the eruption of nationalistic feelings in the future might emerge as a result, and these feelings could lead to the overwhelming crisis of the Soviet state system.<sup>41</sup>

Some Western Sovietologists believed that the developments in Karabakh were the beginning of the end for the Soviet Union, brought on by nationalistic feelings that acted as the impetus for an anti-colonial struggle against the Soviet system. The example the Soviets were supposed to follow, in their eyes, was identical to the granting of independence by several capitalist powers to their colonies. For example, Daniel Pipes claimed that a collapse would ensue from the "mere preservation of Soviet republics' existing borders."<sup>42</sup>

The British *Time* magazine foresaw that a serious political crisis in the USSR, which could be fatal for the policy of *perestroika*.<sup>43</sup> While *Times* considered that the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would be a precedent for other Soviet nationalities, as well as for Poles, Romanians, Moldavians, Byelorussians and other who suffered from the changes of state borders.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Army newspaper wrote that "the international cohesion of the Soviet nation has become the number-one target for our class enemies and ideological rivals."<sup>44</sup>

During its counter-propaganda activities, the Soviets very often stressed the inconsistency of data and facts brought by Western reports, in particular by Armenian and Azerbaijani broadcasting services of the *RFE*.<sup>45</sup>

While busy accusing the Western radio-stations for their attention to the events in South Caucasus, Soviet propaganda and counter-propaganda pointed out that ill-wishers would actually benefit from reports coming out of the West. While standing up for the rights of a nation, the 'radio voices' could easily forget about the others, thereby fueling ethnic discrepancies.<sup>46</sup> Criticising the style and format of Western media reports, *Argumenti i Fakti* weekly pointed out that despite the formation of mutual trust in recent years, the West has tried 'to repair an omission' and in doing so, had created a domestic interethnic problem in order to create a hub for speculation. By misrepresenting the USSR as a conflict-torn state, the West has created a dependent relationship where the USSR was now relying on the offending force to solve the problem and restore normalcy.<sup>47</sup>

41 Oganov, G., *op. cit.*

42 Davthyan, A. "The Burden of Mistakes, the Time for Decisions." *Sotsialisticheskaja Industrija*, 13. 05. 1988.

43 See *Argumenti i Fakti*, No. 14, April, 1988.

44 Roshchupkin, V. "Nationalistic Faces of Anti-Sovietism." *Komunist Woorujennij Sil*, No. 18, September 1988.

45 "The Voice of America Radio Station Has Two 'Truths': One for Armenians, Another for Azerbaijanis." *TASS*, 08. 04. 1988; "USSR Today Soviet Media Actualities." *RFE/RL Records*, HU-OSA 300/80/1/514.

46 *Argumenti i fakti*, No. 14, April 2-8, 1988.

47 "Western Press about Nagorno Karabakh". *TASS*, April 2, 1988; "USSR Today Soviet Media Actualities." *RFE/RL Records*, HU-OSA 300/80/1/514; *Argumenti i fakti*, April 14, 1988.

A columnist of Azerbaijani *Bakinski Rabochi* condemned *RFL* and *VOA* for paying too much attention to the situation around Karabakh and using the propagandist methods and tactics devised by intelligence services.<sup>48</sup>

In a speech made at a plenary meeting of the Soviet Communist Party Committee in February 1988, Gorbachev's brief mention of the national minorities came just before a larger passage on international relations in which he accused Western 'radio voices' of attempts to 'sow uncertainty' in the Soviet society. Leading Soviet *apparatchik* Yegor Ligachev warned against complacency in the face of the West's "gambling on the revival of manifestations of nationalism."<sup>49</sup>

Trying by any means to counteract the Western propaganda, the Soviet media mentioned the existing racial, national and social-economic problems in the West. For this purpose, they used Communist newspapers published in Western countries. For example, *Peoples Daily World*, the newspaper of American communists, wrote: "American mass-media editions in every possible way are exaggerating the significance of the events occurred in the USSR during recent years, trying to make a sensation from them and distort the facts". The newspaper adds that "American intelligence services are seeking to use every possible opportunity to escalate and sharpen the problems existing in the USSR, using them during the worldwide anti-socialist propaganda activities."<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, certain authors even went as far as saying that Washington and Islamabad saw the events going on in the South Caucasus, particularly the anti-Armenian pogroms that occurred in Sumgait, as a suitable opportunity to use Soviet internal disturbances for quitting the Geneva agreements on Afghanistan, and even postpone the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan using the difficulties of Moscow as an excuse.<sup>51</sup>

As a rule, the first Western editorials covering the situation around Karabakh stressed the religious diversity of Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The developments in Azerbaijan in many cases were seen from the view of spreading of Iranian fundamentalism and ideas of Islamic revolution in Azerbaijan. Even with the conflict lasting several years, foreign editors permanently saw the difficulty of the problem mired in the religious diversity of conflicting parties.<sup>52</sup>

The Azerbaijani press very often spoke out against foreign articles, claiming that foreigners covering the internal political situation in Azerbaijan were misinforming the American and international community at large. The accusations stated that certain Western reporters accredited in Moscow, such as

48 Zargarov, A., *op. cit.*

49 Sanders, Alan. "Gorbachev and the Nationalities Problem." *RFE/RL Records*, February 19, 1988, Krasny Arkhiv, HU-OSA 300/80/1/544.

50 *Sovetskaja kul'tura*, March 17, 1988.

51 Bandura, Yuri. "Nagorno-Karabakh: Unfriendly Outsider Perspectives." *Moskovskie Novosti*, April 3, 1988.

52 See Keller, Bill. "Nationalists in Azerbaijan Win Big Concessions from Party Chief." *The New York Times*, October 13, 1989; Russian translation in *Komsomolets*, Yerevan, October 24, 1989.

*The Washington Post's* Garry Lee, *The New York Times's* Bill Keller and others, collaborated with "the most reactionary part of the Armenian emigration."<sup>53</sup> In short, the coverage of the events by the main Soviet newspapers indicated a clear difference of analysis on the key issue: the degree to which the demonstrations were being manipulated by foreign enemies of the Soviet Union. Of course, the Western media was the main culprit.<sup>54</sup> In similar articles, Azerbaijani newspapers stated that the existence of Armenian journalists amongst Western reporters left no illusion about objective coverage of the events around Nagorno-Karabakh in the foreign mass media.<sup>55</sup>

In July 27, 1988, the US Senate passed its first resolution on the situation in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. During the discussions Senator McKein even suggested to initiate economic sanctions against the USSR if the condition of Armenians does not improve. The text of the Senate resolution could be considered as a pro-Armenian with no reservations.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, the Minister of External Affairs of Canada, Joe Clark, appeared with the statement pointing out the necessity of reforms and demands satisfying of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh demands for reuniting with Armenia.<sup>57</sup>

Other sources that caused a negative reaction in Soviet editions were the statements and resolutions of foreign countries and international organizations, which in general had a pro-Armenian bias. In March 30, 1988, the European Parliament passed its first resolutions on the Karabakh issue. Referring to it, *Izvestia* wrote, "The nations living in the USSR have in the past and are now resolving their problems without foreign interference. We hope that they will sort this out once again. For the European Parliament, it would be better to deal with their own problems, of which it has more than enough."<sup>58</sup>

The earthquake on December 7, 1988 established an unprecedented rapprochement between East and West. Human tragedy paired with massive human and material losses brought closer many countries and organizations in the West and worldwide in order to help Soviet Armenia with the consequences of the natural disaster. Thousands in the Western Europe and the US provided multi-lateral assistance. As American reporter B. Morton pointed out, "We changed, the whole West changed. We changed because they had changed...."<sup>59</sup> A special mission was reserved for the Western radio stations. Most of them had special teams processing information on the earthquake aftermath, adding extra broadcasts in Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijani. Special phone lines were set

up by the Armenian-language service, and people in the earthquake zone were invited to call in. *RFE/RL* Director Enders Wimbush said, "Most of them wanted us to pass word to relatives in the West that they are OK." He added, "*Glasnost* is far from institutionalised. There are still a number of taboo subjects that cannot be discussed."<sup>60</sup>

For the first time since the inception of the Cold War, NATO military planes crossed the Iron Curtain, without fear of being shot down, to provide humanitarian assistance to suffering Armenians. Construction projects were launched in the disaster zone by Western countries. The unprecedented move to support Armenia in its hardest time would never have been expected without Gorbachev's reforms and limited liberalization.

As a result, European and U.S. interest and political support to the Armenian popular movement didn't decrease. It grew intensively and posed new challenges to the Soviet leadership.

On July 19, 1989, the U.S. Senate's Commission of Foreign Affairs adopted a resolution concerning on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, in which the United States expressed its assistance "to the people of Soviet Armenia in the peaceful and honest resolution of the dispute around Nagorno-Karabakh, and that the current situation of Nagorno-Karabakh continue to be the subject of troubles and strife between Armenians and Soviet Azerbaijani republic."<sup>61</sup> This resolution in particular mentioned that it is necessary "to encourage President Gorbachev to make discussions with the representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh connected with the demand of reunification with Armenia, as well as with Armenian democratic movement, which includes recently released members of Karabakh committee."<sup>62</sup> In the end, the resolution called on bilateral discussions with the USSR to initiate a high-level investigation of the facts of violence against Armenians, as well as to call to account all initiators of that violence.

A TASS report stated: "Unfortunately, the US Senate Council's encouragement of Soviet President Gorbachev "to engage in meaningful discussions with elected representatives of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh regarding their demands of reunification with the Armenian homeland and with the leadership of Armenia's pro-democracy popular movement which includes the recently released Karabakh Committee" could be interpreted in a wrong way. Moreover, this recommendation could be used by extremist elements of the population of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as a call to frustrate cautious and thought-out steps towards the stabilization of the situation in Karabakh and around it. One would like to think that Senator Claiborne Pell who proposed this resolution to the Senate was not aiming to destabilize Nagorno-Karabakh. Yet

53 "The 'Eastern' Policy of Western reporters." *Bukinski Rabochi*, September 6, 1989.

54 Quinn-Judge, Paul. "Armenia: Ramblings, No Explosions." *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 28, 1988.

55 *Ibid.*

56 For the full text of the Senate resolution, see in Appendix.

57 NAA RA, 1/127/536, folio 98-99.

58 Guk, S. "They Can Handle It Without the European Parliament." *Izvestia*, March, 30, 1988.

59 Jukov, Yuri. "The Impotence of Force." *RFE/RL Records*, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/138.

60 *The Economist*, London, December 19, 1988, p. 19.

61 See Appendix.

62 *Ibid.*

it is hard to give advice thousands of miles away from the site of conflict with little of knowledge of the facts. As a result, his actions might work contrary to his intentions. He should have thought beforehand.<sup>63</sup>

This, and a second similar resolution passed in November of the same year caused an abrupt reaction of the Soviet administration and mass media. In the statement of Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the U.S. Ambassador it was stated that "the adoption of such a document was qualified as a pretension and flagrant interference in internal problems of USSR, which could lead to further destabilization of the situation."<sup>64</sup> The statement went on to say: "We could not see this kindling action precisely as a recurrence of Cold War, which could harm the efforts of both countries towards the constructive development of the Soviet-American relations."<sup>65</sup> The full text of the resolution was published in Armenia in the Russian and native-language media with great enthusiasm and pride.

Following Moscow's abrupt reaction, the United States rejected a Soviet protest over a U.S. Senate Committee resolution on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. State Department Spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler stated that the resolution calls for political dialogue to peacefully resolve the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. She said that a call for dialogue and for physical of life and property "cannot rightfully be interpreted as interference in internal affairs."<sup>66</sup> However, in November 19, 1989, the U. S. Ambassador in Moscow, Jack Matlock, was summoned to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and told that the resolution was an attempt at "gross interference in Soviet internal affairs."<sup>67</sup>

The Presidium of Azerbaijan's Supreme Soviet expressed its protest against the resolution. A joint letter of protest of Azerbaijani mass media was sent to the editors of *The New York Times*, stating that "history did not know of any precedent of the adoption of any resolution by Azerbaijan's Supreme Soviet concerning the U.S. internal policy."<sup>68</sup> The new wave of escalation resulted in a new round of anti-Armenian bloody massacres in the Azerbaijani capital Baku in January 1990, followed by the deployment of Soviet troops. Resulting clashes of Azerbaijani nationalist and Soviet soldiers caused numerous deaths on both sides. Tadeusz Swietochowski wrote:

"In the West, events in Baku received wide media coverage, and for a few days Azerbaijan become a household word. The tone of reporting from Moscow-stationed correspondents or Moscow-supplied information tended to be unfriendly to the Azeris, as though

they might be on the verge of beginning a new round of massacres against the Armenians. Reaction from Western governments was hardly less injudicious and not based on better intelligence. The United States Department expressed guarded approval of the Soviet military intervention in Baku on grounds that it was saving lives endangered the ethnic strife. Western statements made no reference to the much larger number of Azeri lives lost through the action of Soviet troops. The effect was to further enlarge the pool of anti-Western resentment".<sup>69</sup>

These were the factors that were crucial for support to Gorbachev in the South Caucasus issue and became especially important since Gorbachev was considered as the best guarantor of *détente* between the East and the West.

Certain Western mass media, for example the *BBC*, were inclined to see the January events in Baku, Azerbaijan as a manifestation of Iranian fanaticism. Others voiced opinions that sending troops to Baku could restrain violence even at the cost of giving up Gorbachev's intended reforms, but would never hide the long-lasting political consequences of the problem.

Surprisingly, the Western print media, in general, took a rather tolerant stance towards the army deployment in Azerbaijani capital. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* in some way justified Gorbachev's actions towards calming Azerbaijani nationalists to prevent 'civil war.'<sup>70</sup> The Soviet newspapers broadly reprinted articles published in the Western press, where Soviet army deployment was justified and Armenian pogroms condemned.

The approach of the Danish *Politiken* newspaper was rather interesting in that they stressed the necessity of supporting the USSR. Particularly interesting were some suggestions for providing support to the housing and creation of jobs for Armenian refugees, while at the same time providing economic assistance to Azerbaijanis<sup>71</sup>.

The French Communist party newspaper, *l'Humanité*, suggested that the Azerbaijani actions along the Iranian and Turkish borders were not unprepared and spontaneous at all (as Azerbaijani media suggested – H. D.). On the contrary, the pogroms pointed clearly towards evidence of excellent organization and planning with the approval and accordance of Azerbaijani nationalists, mafia and bureaucracy.<sup>72</sup>

The French *Le Monde* newspaper and the weekly supplement *l'Humanité-Dimanche* wrote that a moderate response should be expected from the outside world to such a decision of the Soviet authorities. Referring to the events in Nakhichevan and the destruction of the Soviet-Iranian border installations, the

63 TASS report of the US Senate Resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh, *RFE/RL Reports*, July 20, 1989, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/579.

64 *Izvestia*, November 21, 1989.

65 *Ibid.*

66 "U.S. Rejects Soviet Protest Over Armenia." *RFE/RL Records*, November 20, 1989, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/579.

67 *Ibid.*

68 *Bakinski Rabochi*, October 18, 1989.

69 Swietochowski, Tadeusz. *Azerbaijan and Russia. A Borderland in Transition*, New York: Colombia University Press, 1995, pp. 207-208.

70 *Ibid.*

71 *Komsomol'skaja Pravda*, January 23, 1990.

72 *Ibid.*

newspaper wrote that visiting 'the shrines of ancestors' and relatives on the other side of Arax river were a pretext for "for a political action with extremely heavy consequences."<sup>73</sup>

The British *Daily Mirror* wrote that President Gorbachev acted abruptly in order to end the horrible bloodshed. If actions had not been undertaken, a real war could erupt between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The Soviet government had no choice.<sup>74</sup>

*The World Worker* had slightly different opinion:

"Such is the situation as seen from the imperialist side, which is obviously delighted with this development. Of course, an exceptionally significant element is left out, and not only in this dispatch. It is also played down in the USSR itself, where it is given, in our view, only perfunctory attention. That is the role of the U.S. in this struggle of the nationalities, both in the Baltic republics and in the South.

Nevertheless, the sharp contrast in the treatment of refugees was not brought to the attention of the American public. The protests of some Azerbaijani groups regarding the whole matter were not even discussed in the capitalist press. Be that as it may, it showed that the U.S. was effectively strengthening an axis with the Armenian bourgeois groupings, and was doing it virtually unnoticed, at least on the surface, by the USSR authorities.

The capitalist press widely applauded the move as a gesture of openness and glasnost. But the CIA is the CIA. It took every opportunity to widen its penetration of the area. Thus this openness, to the applause of the capitalist press, led to a deep penetration by the U.S. It was able to solicit leading figures and begin to win over whatever friendly sources the central government had in Armenia. From the point of view of the different class systems, it's equivalent to inviting the enemy into your home and giving him unrestricted access.

When in July 1989 the strife between Armenia and Azerbaijan took on an especially violent character, U.S. Ambassador Jack F. Matlock decided to take a tour of the area right in the midst of the conflict. How the Soviet authorities could permit an accredited ambassador to visit an area where civil strife was occurring is a mystery."<sup>75</sup>

*RFE/RL* adopted a different approach, causing a sharp reaction in the Soviet media. *TASS* and the *Vremya* news program gave some comments on the Western radio stations' behavior during the deployment of Soviet troops in Baku. The main accusation was that of disorientation and disinformation fuelling a hysterical propaganda campaign around events in Baku. "They try

to make the impression that no violence or pogroms happened in the city and therefore there was no need to deploy forces to stop the violence." Referring to the CIA connection of the radio station, *TASS* reported that the main aim of foreign radio voices is "not only to destabilize the situation in Transcaucasus but also to direct the fire against Moscow. Maybe someone is interested to go back to the times when *RL* operated as an underground instigating transmitter."<sup>76</sup> Live broadcasts and interviews with Azerbaijani combatants caused a strong Soviet reaction. *TASS* wrote that the British government would very probably ban a live radio interview with an IRA terrorist but it seemed quite natural for the Russian service of the *BBC* to interview an Azerbaijani terrorist combatant<sup>77</sup>.

It is important to note that inside *RFE/RL* there were mixed reactions to the broadcasts of Azeri service. One group supported methods used during the Soviet military crackdown in Baku. Mirza Michaeli, editor of the Azeri service of *RFE*, had previously served as chief editor of the *VOA*'s Azeri service while reporting events in Baku, and used freelance stringers and live broadcasts. In January 1990, the Soviet foreign ministry issued a complaint through diplomatic channels about the content of the Azeri broadcasts.<sup>78</sup> Arch Puddington wrote:

"Some called the broadcasts 'unconfirmed, exaggerated, hysterical hyperbole.' Such critics went in parallel with critics of Wimbush's policy of stirring up discontent among the Soviet nationalities as an irresponsible strategy and serious breach of *RL*'s broadcast code. An investigation by the Inspector General's office concluded some broadcasts were 'inflammatory, highly emotional, lacked objectivity, and supported specific national liberation organization...'

Others were disturbed that Wimbush actually proposed that the Azeri service be rewarded at a time when others thought its performance merited dismissals and stricter control."<sup>79</sup>

Shortly afterwards in March 1990, during a bilateral Soviet-American meeting on informational exchanges in Washington, the Soviet delegation officially raised the question "of *RFE/RL* provocative methods of broadcasting events in Transcaucasus." During that meeting the executive director of *RL*, A. Elliot, said that materials should be more carefully reviewed in order to avoid escalating tensions in the dangerous situation.<sup>80</sup>

The official reaction of the US followed in the statement of Claiborne Pell, Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who commented on

<sup>76</sup> *TASS* comments on *RFE* broadcasts about Baku events in 1990, *RFE/RL Records*, January 20, 1990, HU-OSA, 300/80/1/579.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Puddington, Arch. *Broadcasting Freedom. The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*. The University Press of Kentucky, 2000, p. 292.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>80</sup> "Radio Liberty: Beyond borders?" *Izvestia* (Moscow evening edition) April 28, 1990.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Izvestia*, January 22, 1990.

<sup>75</sup> Marcy, Sam. "Hand of CIA in USSR Ethnic Struggles. The Matlock-Pell Connection." *Workers World*, February 8, 1990.

the Armenian massacre in Baku by saying that allowing Azerbaijan to administer the Armenian majority region "only invites more atrocities." He also said that he is "deeply shocked" at what he described as "the brutality of Azerbaijani attacks against Armenians."<sup>81</sup>

Washington's consent with the Kremlin's decision to send troops to the zone of conflict was unthinkable a few years before. At that time, the West had already carefully considered the Soviet military potential, and facts showed that the Soviet threat had decreased. Michael Mandelbaum from *Time* wrote: "Strange alliances, centuries-old feuds, hard choices between the national rights of captive nations and the political health of a bold reformer: these are the issues that US policy toward the Soviet Union now confronts. In the Post-Cold war era, Washington and Moscow are not necessarily at odds everywhere and an American president can feel morally justified and politically comfortable in endorsing a Soviet leader's decision to send troops to keep order within his own country."<sup>82</sup> Growing fears in the West of a potential chaos festering inside the USSR were based on the possibility of the USSR losing control over its nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction.

President George Bush supported Gorbachev's initiatives to calm Azerbaijan. Even before the Soviet Army intervention in January 17, 1990, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said, "We understand the necessity of restoration of order, when the order is violated."<sup>83</sup> U.S. State Department Spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler, in turn, said that the U.S. deplores the ethnic violence and "deeply regrets the loss of life in Azerbaijan's capital Baku." In fact, the State Department's views reiterated the U.S. view supporting the Soviet Government's decision to send troops to Azerbaijan and Armenia in order to stop the bloodshed. Tutwiler said, "There is a fundamental difference between the short-term use of force to restore order and the use of force to suppress peaceful and legitimate political expression."<sup>84</sup>

The State Department's support of the Soviet Army intervention in Baku caused a sharp reaction in Iran, whose leadership quickly commented that the "Great Satan openly calls to suppress Muslims."<sup>85</sup> Beyond religious sentiments, Iranian fears were based on a possible nationalistic mobilization that would endanger the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan as a result of large number of Azerbaijanis living in the north of Iran.

Commentary on the intelligence coming from the region appeared on the pages of the Western press after the Soviet Army actions in Azerbaijan. The

British *Independent* questioned specialists in this sphere, who mentioned 18 U.S. spy stations located on the territory of Turkey and two British stations situated in Cyprus with electronic intelligence facilities receiving all Armenian and Azerbaijani nationalist radio conversations. An interviewer appeared with an ambitious statement, claiming that "the forming atmosphere of goodwill could create an unprecedented situation, when Western authorities want to share their information with Kremlin, especially about the Azerbaijani forces of resistance."<sup>86</sup>

The West, particularly the U.S., was aware from the beginning that the Soviet military action in Baku was not aimed to protect the Armenian minority in the Azerbaijani capital, where at that time Armenians were being killed or deported. Instead, the Soviets were there to strengthen the Communist Party positions in Azerbaijan that had been fatally wounded by the Popular Front's activities.<sup>87</sup> According to Bill Keller, the occupation of Azerbaijan could threaten Gorbachev's attempt to create a new federalism, and further undermine the Soviet Army's morals after the fiasco in Afghanistan. Disturbances in Azerbaijan could also serve as effective means for the mobilization of Russian nationalists against Muslim populations within the USSR, the *New York Times* reported<sup>88</sup>

Arch Puddington points out an interesting detail about the inside attitudes of *RL* towards the Azeri service, when measures were taken to monitor the content of aired programs at the time of crisis. He confessed that surprisingly, "the Soviet press took little notice of the broadcasts, and the American press, with the exception of a single article in the *Los Angeles Times*, ignored the controversy. Unlike in Hungary in 1956, the Azeri crisis did not do lasting damage to the credibility of the radios."<sup>89</sup> Anyway, the potential for serious embarrassment was clearly present, especially with the content of the programming, the distribution, and more interestingly, the dubious comments made by Enders Wimbush about this *post factum*.

"In the invasion's aftermath, various measures were instituted to control broadcast content, including pre-broadcast review of scripts of both Azeri and Armenian services. But while Wimbush acknowledged that the Baku events should have been covered with more restraint, he was loath to apologize for the Azeri service's handling of the affair. Indeed, Wimbush took pride in the Azeri performance and argued that the coverage may ultimately have served American interests insofar Radio Liberty had made a "strong statement against naked aggression". He later declared, "Had I been there (Wimbush was on holiday with other staff members

81 "Senator Urges End to Azerbaijani Control of Nagorno-Karabakh." 19 January, 1990, *RFE/RL Records*, HU-OSA 300/80/1/579.

82 Mandelbaum, Michael. "The Trouble with Independence." *Time*, January 15, 1990.

83 NAA RA, 1/127/784, folio 60.

84 22 January, 1990. *RFE/RL Records*, OSA 300/80/1/579.

85 NAA RA, 1/127/784, folio 14.

86 *The Independent*, January 22, 1990, see in NAA RA, 1/127/784, folio 17-18.

87 *The New York Times*, January 27, 1990.

88 *The New York Times*, January 22, 1990.

89 Puddington, Arch. *Broadcasting Freedom. The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, The University Press of Kentucky, 2000, p. 293.

at the time of the Baku events - H. D.) I would probably have stopped the live broadcasts and been more careful about what went out over the air. I'm glad I wasn't there, because I'm glad that the station was able to get its message across. While those broadcasts might not have been good policy, they were good politically. Those two days of broadcasts probably earned the United States more good will in Azerbaijan than anything else we ever did. The Azeri ambassador told me an entire generation of Azeri intellectuals was in America's debt because of those broadcasts. I'm glad we did them."<sup>90</sup>

However, Arch Puddington, concludes that this was very much a minority opinion at Radio Liberty.<sup>91</sup> Despite the Western attitudes towards the next Soviet military crackdown just a year after in January 1991 in Vilnius, Lithuania, it is "no wonder that in 1990-1991 the West was trying to preserve the Soviet Union rather to promote its disintegration."<sup>92</sup> Yet Gorbachev's strategy did not receive the full support of Western media, and some publications made radical comments on the entrance of the Soviet troops in Baku, finding similarities between this operation and Soviet crackdowns in Budapest, Prague and Afghanistan. The conclusions drawn from these parallels mentioned the "decline of Soviet empire."<sup>93</sup>

Despite unprecedented massive proactive steps towards the formation of an atmosphere of mutual trust between the East and the West, both ideological camps continued to entertain 'special methods' and forms of propaganda, and counter-propaganda, characteristic to the Cold War era, particularly within the mass media. The situation was very vividly reflected in the coverage of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. On one side, there was the West, inclined to view the Armenian movement as an anti-colonial, national-liberation movement, while the Soviet side viewed the Armenian movement as precedent intended to weaken and decompose USSR. Conflict transformation showed that the West later became inclined to uphold the concept of a nation's right to securing its territorial integrity.

Despite the impressive *détente* and positive steps taken towards the establishment of a partnership relation between the Eastern and the Western blocks in the 1980s, the legacy of the Cold War became iconized with the specific propaganda methodologies and counter-propaganda policies that surfaced on a day-to-day basis. The publications and broadcasts of both the Soviet and Western mass media, which put particular spins on the Karabakh conflict coverage, expertly reflected this climax of propaganda.

The transformation of the West's political approach was clearly visible in

the way its media rhetoric shifted its favors towards oil-rich Azerbaijan rather the Russian ally Armenia. As Morton H. Halperin put it, "A brief survey of the U.S. and international responses to crises involving self-determination claims since the end of the Cold War shows how inadequate the principles that previously guided U.S. policy and the norms of international law are now."<sup>94</sup>

In early 1992, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, while visiting Armenia, urged Azerbaijan to cease its aggressive policy against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

In October 1992 the US Congress adopted "Section 907 of the Freedom Support act of 1992" banning United States assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan "until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh"<sup>95</sup>.

Current attitudes of the West, including the United States' Realpolitik bias sharply contrasting to its original support for the Armenian minority's rightful demands, lead to a sobering conclusion of this topic.

The end of the Cold War has brought on a mighty silent shift in the West's view of what used to be called 'democratic movements.' Western policies on human rights in the post-Cold War period have been quietly and conveniently replaced. Human rights issues were sacrificed on the altar of Great Oil Politics with the start of the New Great Game.

90 Ibid, p. 294.

91 Ibid.

92 Kortunov, Andrey. *The Soviet Disintegration: Did the West Play a Role?* Ed. Anne de Tinguy, East European Monographs, No. CDLXXXI. New York: Boulder, Colombia University Press, 1997, p. 350.

93 *Za Rubejom*, Moscow, No. 5, 1990.

94 Halperin, Morton H., David J. Scheffer and Patricia L. Small. *Self-Determination in the New World Order*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D. C.: 1992, p. 27.

95 Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 (Freedom Support Act). US Public Law 102-511, 102d Cong. 3d sess., 24 October 1992, ATTACHMENT I, Document 11.

## CONCLUSIONS

Western mass media coverage of the interethnic conflicts in the Soviet Union and the Warsaw pact member countries was mainly determined by ideological bias and was predominantly stereotyped and full of prejudices.

News analysis was linked to countries' foreign policy agenda and ideological rivalry amid information warfare; very seldom did this leave room for more or less balanced or fair coverage.

Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika*, aimed at general liberalization of the Soviet society, soon revealed its limited nature, especially with respect to official statements and the Soviet mass media coverage.

The liberalization of the Soviet system was evident by the late 1980s. However, the process was accompanied by rapid degeneration and crisis within Communist block countries and especially in the Soviet Union. A major source of influence on Soviet mentality were Western radio stations, especially those that broadcasted in the languages of Soviet minorities. The main mission of radio stations like *RFE/RL*, the *VOA*, and the *BBC*, was to supply Soviet people with alternative information.

Within *perestroika* and *glasnost* policies, ethnic tensions and conflicts brought enormous challenge for the Soviet power, especially in terms of coverage and interpretation.

The Armenian national movement for the reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with the Soviet Armenia, initially regarded in the West as a "test for *perestroika*", soon became a major democratic movement, unprecedented in the Soviet era. The violent response in Azerbaijan, in the shape of anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait, gave a new impetus to the further escalation of the conflict, moving from peaceful democratic rallies to violence and war.

The Western media reaction to the ethnic conflict in the Soviet Southern periphery happened on several levels:

- a. Analysis of events from a more or less pro-Armenian perspective, since at its initial stage the Armenian popular movement was viewed as similar to Polish *Solidarity* of the early 1980s.
- b. General forecasts about the developments in the Soviet Union, taking the Karabakh movement as an unprecedented starting point in Soviet history.
- c. Analysis, comparison and forecast of the future of Gorbachev's liberalization reforms based on Soviet handling of the Armenian uprising.
- d. Analysis and assessment of the behavior of the Soviet mass media while covering the events in Armenia Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The list is not exhaustive; however, based on a general analysis of sample reports about events in the Soviet South Caucasus, we may state that the West, though more or less sympathetic with Armenians and the Armenian movement, was gradually 'discovering' Azerbaijan. The Western habit of seeing Azerbaijan through an "Iranian filter" was soon broken after the Soviet military crackdown in Baku following the Armenian pogroms in January 1990.

Documents adopted by Western official bodies (see sample documents in the Appendices), also prove the initially pro-Armenian bent of the Western position towards the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

After the collapse of the USSR, Azerbaijan started to play the oil card in international politics, and lobbied very hard against the West's initial pro-Armenian sympathies, covering a lot of ground in this direction. The position of the governments in the West gradually changed. Ignoring Azerbaijan's aggressive policies and violent methods of handling the conflict, the West began to regard the problem at the level of international politics, which was sometimes incompatible with a balanced approach. The way Western coverage evolved over the years reflects the flexibility of Western official policies towards pre- and post-Soviet national movements and towards the principle of self-determination.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX I

September 30, 1986

## TEXT OF THE US CONGRESS RESOLUTION CONDEMNING RADIO JAMMING

Whereas the free flow of information across national boundaries and the free access by all to that information is in the interest of the people of the world and is crucial to any real and meaningful prospect for peace;

Whereas the Voice of America, a radio service of the United States government, is bound by its charter to uphold the highest standard of accuracy, objectivity, and reliability in its presentations to the peoples of the world of American society, institutions, thought, and policies;

Whereas the radiobroadcasts of RFE/RL, incorporated, a service supported by the United States government, are intended to encourage a closer and more constructive dialogue with the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union by improving their access to information and their knowledge of events in their own communities as well as in the world as large;

Whereas for many years in the post war era, the broadcasts of the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and other Western radios (including the BBC, Deutsche Welle, and Kol Israel) have suffered from intentional harmful interference caused by the Soviet Union;

Whereas, by engaging in activities causing harmful interference with broadcasts of radio services of other nations, the Soviet Union repudiates its own commitment to, and fails to meet its obligations under, international agreements (such as the international telecommunications convention of 1973 and the final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) and United Nations resolution (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights);

Whereas jamming prevents millions of people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union from receiving information essential to their health and well-being, which has illustrated by the recent disaster of Chernobyl during which the Western radios presented vital information for the preservation of life and property;

Whereas the effects of jamming, which cannot be limited only to the targeted frequencies, results in interference with the broadcasts on adjacent frequencies and has caused substantially aggravated congestion in the high frequency band

in domestic shortwave broadcasts; and

Whereas the international frequency registration board, pursuant to a resolution passed by the international telecommunications union during the 1984 first session of the world administrative radio conference on international broadcasting, has issued a report finding that the Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia engage in activities causing harmful interference to the broadcasts of the Voice of America and RFE/RL, incorporated: now, Therefore, be it resolved by the House of Representatives (The Senate concurring), that the Congress, recognizing the importance of improving the open and free flow of information among the peoples of the world, calls upon the governments of the Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia to cease activities causing harmful interference to the broadcasts of the Voice of America and RFE/RL, incorporated.

**Source: Reports of RFE/RL Text of U. S. Congress resolution condemning radio jamming, October 1, 1986, Krasnyi Arkhiv, HU-OSA 300/80/1/771.**

## DECLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS OF CIA

### Document I

### Unrest in the Caucasus and the Challenge of Nationalism

#### Summary

This year's continuing unrest in the Caucasus is the most extreme example of the nationality tensions that have surfaced under *glasnost*. Soviet difficulty in stabilizing the situation reflects the strength of nationalism, the limits of Moscow's control over its various republics, and divisions within the leadership on the merits of accommodating long-suppressed regional aspiration. The Caucasus unrest has also become a lightening rod for conservative opposition to Gorbachev, whose Politburo critics have tried to exploit the conflagration for political purposes.

Violent unrest in the Caucasus region has deep roots:

- Enmity between Armenian and Azeri factions has existed for hundreds of years, and the 1920s settlement subordinating Nagorno-Karabakh - Armenia's cultural and religious center to the Azerbaijani republic has been a continual, albeit long-muted, source of Armenian frustrations and concerns.
- Azeri animosity toward the Armenians has been intensified by political, economic, and demographic trends that have adversely affected the political status of Azeris and increased the gap in living standards between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In particular, the rapid expansion of Azerbaijan's young adult population has put enormous strains on the republic's capacity to provide adequate jobs, housing, and education. Azeri frustration has found an outlet in attacks on Armenians.

While *glasnost* was the catalyst that brought these tensions to the fore, the subsequent train of events can be attributed to Moscow's vacillation on the central issue of reunifying Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia:

- Moscow's initial failure to discourage Armenian aspirations led Armenian nationalists to press their demands; its subsequent hard line - by dashing heightened expectations - radicalised the movement. Wide - spread civil disobedience erupted, with control over the protests passing into the hands

- of more outspoken and uncompromising protest organizers.
- Subsequent Soviet steps – economic and nationalistic concessions to diffuse irredentist demands, a strong military presence to discourage violent demonstrations, leadership changes to regain control over republic party activities – were only partly successful.

Date: October 1988

Source: [http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC\\_0000499607/0000499607\\_0004.gif](http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000499607/0000499607_0004.gif)

## Document 2

### Unrest in the Caucasus and the Challenge of Nationalism

#### Introduction

Minority resentment has been simmering for decades in the multinational Soviet state, but glasnost has permitted it to surface. Massive demonstrations and communal violence in Armenia and Azerbaijan have presented General Secretary Gorbachev with his most explosive test since taking office three years ago. They constitute largest, most violent, and most protracted unrest in the Soviet Union since Stalin's death – eclipsing Georgian riots in 1956, strikes in Novocherkassk in 1962, and nationalist riots in several Kazakh cities in 1986.

The unrest in the Caucasus is the most extreme example of nationality tensions throughout the USSR that could jeopardize Gorbachev's efforts to revitalize the Soviet system through economic and political reforms. Throughout Soviet history, regime concern to maintain Russian hegemony over non-Russian areas has been a major impediment to the kind of liberalization Gorbachev advocates. Soviet leaders have feared that relaxing censorship – glasnost- or opening up the political system at lower levels- “democratisation” – would unleash separatist tendencies of disgruntled minorities. Soviet nationality policy was founded on the co-operation and conciliation of national minority elites by Moscow, thus preventing any convergence of elite and popular interests in non-Russian areas. But glasnost and “democratisation” have created conditions for these two groups to coalesce in powerful anti-Moscow lobby.

#### Armenian-Azeri Enmity in Historical perspective

Armenian-Azeri animosities go back hundreds of years and are deeply rooted in religious and ethnic tensions. Armenians are fiercely loyal to their Orthodox church – they adopted Christianity in the forth century, nearly 700 years before the Russians. The Azeris are predominantly Shi'ite Muslims who migrated to the region in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The two groups have lived in close and uneasy proximity to each other ever since, with both groups claiming the contested Nagorno-Karabakh region. Karabakh through the centuries remained semiautonomous under the rule of Armenian princes even when the rest of Armenia was under Persian and Turkish tutelage. Armenians also consider the region a cultural center, and it is the native land of many Azerbaijani writers and composers.

In 1828 the Russian Empire annexed the eastern regions of Armenia – the area of current Soviet republic – that had been under Persian control since 1639. After centuries of perceived cultural discrimination and economic backwardness, the Christian Armenians remaining under Turkish control looked in Russia's Orthodox czars for protection from the Moslem Turks and Persians throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Relations with the Turks worsened after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and, at the turn of century, thousands of Armenians fled the pogroms in Turkey. Many accounts contend that Turkey in 1915 deported the entire Armenian population because it feared Armenian collusion with Russia, with which Turkey had been at the war since August 1914. Armenians believe that 1,5 million of their countrymen were killed. Many Armenians reportedly fled to the area under Russian control, while others scattered throughout the Middle East, to Europe, to the Americas.

When the Czarist Empire collapsed in 1917, both Armenia and Azerbaijan existed for two years independent republics. However, their mutual hatred made it easier for the Red Army to establish Soviet hegemony in the Caucasus in 1920, when both republics were incorporated into the USSR. Armenians, in particular, fearful of Turkey and seeing union with Russia as a "lesser evil", did little to resist incorporation into the USSR.

*Source: [http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC\\_0000499607/0000499607\\_0009.gif](http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000499607/0000499607_0009.gif)*

### Document 3

#### An excerpt

"... A 1978 CIA report on Soviet minorities issues, notes that, "the inhabitants of another turbulent area in the Caucasus, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, are able to make a better argument that their oblast should be transferred from one republic to another. The Karabakh Oblast is part of Azerbaydzhan, yet over 80 percent of its population is Armenian and it lies close to the border of the Armenian Republic. In 1975, according to the Azerbaydzhan Republic newspaper, virtually the entire leadership of the Karabakh Oblast was ousted for supporting a movement to detach the oblast from Azerbaydzhan and join it to Armenia".

*Source: [http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC\\_0000518375/0000518375\\_0001.gif](http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000518375/0000518375_0001.gif)*

## APPENDIX III

### CONGRESSIONAL RECORDS

#### Document 1

#### Congressional Record March 2, 1988

#### HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ARMENIANS IN THE SOVIET UNION

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 1988

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on February 22, nearly 200,000 Armenian citizens of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan engaged in a demonstration - an event that is almost unheard of in the Soviet Union. They were protesting the Soviet Government's unwillingness to honor its own constitution and grant them self-determination. At issue is their 83-year forced separation from their fellow Armenians.

Mr. Speaker, I am very sympathetic to the issue that these Armenians are raising. The continuing suffering of Armenians in the Soviet Union is both tragic and unnecessary.

Earlier this month, the Armenian people petitioned the Soviet Central Committee to have their small sector of Azerbaijan - Nagorno-Karabakhskaya - incorporated into neighbouring Armenia. The central committee flatly refused their request, fearing further nationalist movements, and moved in Red army tanks to crush public protests to the decision. This week's protests were met without resistance by the Soviet Government, only because of increased press coverage.

The Armenians, like the Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, Estonians, Lithuanians, and Latvians, cry out to breathe freely, without cultural and racial oppression. In 1925, Stalin divided the Armenian population, to consolidate Soviet power over the region. Today, over 60 years later, the Armenian people continue to suffer, long after any threat to Soviet control has passed.

Mr. Speaker, the Soviet Union, before the entire world, signed the 1975 Helsinki accord and ratified the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Each and every one of these international documents forbids member nations from coercing its

citizenry, and from restricting the free expressing of religion and culture. By dividing the Armenian people and placing a significant Armenian population in an Islamic area, the Soviet Union has violated these basic tenets of its own *constitution* as well as international human rights law.

Mr. Speaker. I call upon my colleagues in Congress to express their outrage with this continuing injustice, and to encourage the Soviet Government to deal more responsively with the demands of the Armenian people in the Soviet Union.

Document 2

Congressional Record – Extension of Remarks March 3, 1988

AMERICAN PEOPLE CHALLENGE  
SOVIET AUTHORITY

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HON. JIM MOODY

OF WISCONSIN  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Thursday, March 3, 1988*

Mr. MOODY, Mr. Speaker, The American people have dared to challenge Soviet authority. As a result of uprisings that began there last week, the attention of the world has swung to the Republics of America and Azerbaijan-shattering the myth that all is well in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. .

Mass protests broke out last week in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. According to some reports, 1,500 Soviet paratroopers with clubs had been flown into Yerevan. More than 100,000 Armenians took to the streets to demand the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh - an overwhelmingly Armenian region- with the Republic of Armenia. The Armenian community in Nagorno-Karabakh, part of the Republic of Azerbaijan, is one of many groups to fall victim to the artificial and arbitrary borders that divide the "republics" of the Soviet Union.

In a tremendous victory for Armenians, Gorbachev has agreed to consider their demand for unification with Nagorno-Karabakh. Now, more than ever, the Armenian people need the support of the world community to ensure that Gorbachev follows up on his commitment. In the fight for Soviet Jewry, we have seen the critical importance of outside pressure in creating change within the Soviet Union. That pressure is equally important today for the people of Armenia.

I hope my colleagues will take every opportunity to raise the case of the Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh. They have a right to be united with their people in the Republic of Armenia. We have an obligation to support their aspirations and salute their courage.

## Document 3

Congressional Record, March 2, 1988

## PROTEST OF ARMENIAN NATIONALISTS

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**HON. TONY COELHO**  
 OF CALIFORNIA  
 IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Wednesday March 2, 1988*

Mr. COELHO, Mr. Speaker. Mikhail Gorbachev's true commitment to his much hailed policies of glasnost, or "openness," and perestroika, or the "restructuring," of Soviet society, is now being put to the test by the citizens of Soviet Armenia. Hundreds of thousands of these Armenian nationalists have taken to the streets in recent weeks to protest their continued separation from their brothers in the Nagorno Karabakh region of the neighbouring Soviet republic of Azerbaijan. How Mr. Gorbachev and the Politburo deal with this ethnic dispute may well decide whether the U.S.S.R. is to advance down the path of political and social reform in the future, or turn back to the methods of brutality and coercion that Mr. Gorbachev's predecessors often employed to keep order in the vast Soviet empire.

The region now known as Karabakh is a historic center of Armenian culture, and its population today remains 89 percent ethnic Armenian. Karabakh was annexed by Russia in 1805, but the czars that ruled the country during the 19th century allowed this region to remain semiautonomous. Both the Armenian people and the Azerbaijani people declared their independence from the empire following the Russian Revolution of 1917. The two nationalities fought over which would control Karabakh, though, and the conflict was ended only after the entry of the Red army in 1920.

By the terms of the Treaty of Moscow Karabakh became a district of Soviet Azerbaijan (in rather than Soviet Armenia. in spite of the region's historic ties to Armenia and the overwhelming majority of ethnic Armenians that lived there).

Since then, the Regional Government of Azerbaijan has carried out a systematic policy of discrimination against the Armenian people in Karabakh, and has encouraged the emigration of ethnic Armenians from the area. In January of this year I wrote to Mr. Gorbachev about this issue, expressing my deep concern about the discriminatory treatment of ethnic Armenians throughout his country. I also asked him to give his personal consideration to the issue of the reunification of Armenia.

Both Azerbaijan and Armenia have been under the tight control of the Soviet central government during the last several decades, but this control has not served to diminish the deep passion stirred in the hearts of the Armenian people by the artificial separation of Nagorno Karabakh from Soviet Armenia. The Armenians that are now engaged in one of the largest demonstrations of popular dissatisfaction in the history of the Soviet Union are not demanding the secession of greater Armenia from the U.S.S.R.; instead, they only want to be reunited with their brothers in Karabakh within the framework of the Soviet state

The Soviet Union, unlike the United States, is not a melting pot. It is instead a union of more than 100 different ethnic groups speaking some 112 different languages, and many of these groups have a deep history of strife with one another. The Armenian issue is important, then, because it is representative of numerous other ethnic conflicts festering within the Soviet empire. It is clear that the Soviet Government must take steps to cleanse these deep and historic wounds, but it is not clear yet just what steps it will take. Whatever the outcome, it is likely that Mr. Gorbachev's handling of the current crisis will set the stage for how, he deals with the future eruptions of ethnic strife that will inevitably occur in this forced confederation composed of competing nationalities. I call upon Mr. Gorbachev to grant the Armenian people the simple goal that they are seeking - a single, united Armenia within the framework of the Soviet Union. This will be the only real solution to the problem. Any other means of ending the protests that are currently rocking Armenia and Azerbaijan will only put off the final resolution of this problem for the future.

Mr. Speaker, we will be watching the events in Armenia during the coming weeks closely to see whether Mr. Gorbachev is sincere in his proclaimed policies of glasnost and perestroika. He now has a historic opportunity to take steps to peacefully heal one of his country's most serious ethnic wounds. Whether he takes this opportunity or not may well determine if he is the "reformed" Russian leader he claims to be, or if he is just another authoritarian Russian wolf-but in more fashionable sheep's clothing.

## Document 4

Congressional Records – Senate march 3, 1988

### SOVIET ARMENIA

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I have closely followed recent events in the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. What is occurring there, and the eventual official Soviet Government response to it, will tell us much about the future direction of Soviet nationalities policies. This is a subject, which always has created problems for those who wield power in the Kremlin. It will continue to be the source of centrifugal forces in the Soviet political system.

Mr. President, in case some may not have had the opportunity to see the excellent series of articles on the Armenian question published in the New York Times, I ask unanimous consent that they be printed in the RECORD at the close of my remarks. We depend on outstanding reporters such as Philip Taubman and Felicity Barringer to let us know what is happening at this critical time in the Soviet Union. So long as the Armenian national spirit is kept alive, as it surely will be, we will see Armenians struggling in the Soviet Union for stronger rights to develop and preserve their culture and unique identity. I am confident that all Americans wish them well in their heroic efforts...

The article by Philip Taubman. "Soviets Says Armenian Unrest Broke Out in Southern Area" follows in the text.

## Document 5

March 31, 1988, CONGRESSTONAL - RECORD – Extensions of Remarks  
E931

### IS THERE GLASNOST IN SOVIET ARMENIA?

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HON. DEAN A. GALLO

OF NEW JERSEY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 1988

Mr. GALLO. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, large demonstrations have broken out in two Soviet republics where ethnic Armenians are demanding that the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was put under Azerbaijani control in 1921, be allowed to reunite with Armenia.

With protesters reportedly numbering in the hundreds of thousands, the demonstrations were among the largest unauthorized mass protests ever held in the Soviet Union.

On February 27, the leaders of the protests decided to suspend demonstrations until March 26 to give the Soviet leadership an opportunity to address their request. A few days ago, the Soviets gave the Armenian people their answer. Nyet.

Mr. Speaker, many of my Armenian-American friends and associates, including New Jersey Assembly Majority Leader Chuck Haytaian, have expressed their disappointment that the Armenian request was denied and their concern that Secretary Gorbachev's policy of glasnost may now be in retreat.

The people in Nagorno-Karabakh, who have been separated from their brethren and religious believers since 1921, should be reunited. And the failure to listen to these reasonable demands has led many Armenians to question Secretary Gorbachev's commitment to develop a new and fair nationalities policy.

Mr. Speaker, now that the Soviet Government has denied the Armenians' request. I am concerned that activists will be persecuted. In the aftermath of these events, I strongly urge Secretary Gorbachev to show that glasnost is more than just a popular word. Armenian pro- testers and activists should not be punished for voicing their opinions.

I join my Armenian-American friends and constituents in calling upon Secretary Gorbachev to reconsider this unfortunate decision.

## Document 6

Congressional Record – Senate, March 31, 1988, S3516

## TRAGEDY IN SOVIET ARMENIA

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, 12 days ago, I wrote to Soviet leader Gorbachev, expressing my deep concern about the suppression of human rights in Soviet Armenia, and the widespread violence being directed at Armenian citizens, both in their home "republic" and in neighboring Azerbaijan. According to some reports, hundreds of Armenians may have died - men and women whose only crime was demonstrating peacefully for what they believed to be their political and cultural rights.

In my letter, I told Mr. Gorbachev that the Soviet response to the "legitimate demands of many national groups in the Soviet Union!" - including in Soviet Armenia - "would be one key test" of whether the Soviets' so-called "new policy on nationalities" would be real or a sham. I ask unanimous consent that the full text of my letter to Mr. Gorbachev be made a part of the RECORD.

I have not yet received a personal reply from Mr. Gorbachev. But, tragically, in the Armenian case at least, all of us can now view for ourselves the Soviet answer to the concerns I expressed. The Kremlin has chosen to reject all of the demands of ethnic Armenians, and has decided to suppress further expressions of Armenian cultural and political identity, forcibly if necessary.

Mr. President, glasnost has become part of our vocabulary. But it has not yet become a real part of the Soviet system.

"Glasnost" is a word. But the forceful repression of human rights in Armenia - and in Latvia and Lithuania and many, many other places in the Soviet Union - drives home to us once again that Soviet action speaks far louder than words. Mr. President, I appeal again to Mr. Gorbachev and his Kremlin colleagues to match their action to their words, and to live up to the commitments that the Soviet state has made again and again - in the U.N. charter, in the Helsinki accords, and in all the propaganda or Mr. Gorbachev's glasnost.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

March 19, 1988

*His Excellency MIKHAIL S. GORBACHEV,  
General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the  
Soviet Union, Thee Kremlin, Moscow.*

*DEAR MR. GENERAL SECRETARY: I am deeply concerned about*

*widespread violence recently directed against Armenians in the Soviet Union, who were only engaging in peaceful demonstrations demanding their political and cultural rights. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians resident in Armenia and Azerbaijan have joined together in peaceful demonstrations demanding unification. Those demonstrations have been met with violence originating from other residents of Azerbaijan, leading to the death and injury of hundreds of Armenians. Indeed, the seriousness of the unrest was demonstrated by the need for your personal intervention, calling for a restoration of order. The legitimate grievances of the Armenian people of the Soviet Union must be addressed with more than violence and repression. You have promised a new nationalities policy, dealing fairly with the legitimate demands of many national groups in the Soviet Union for greater freedom and cultural autonomy. Many in the United States and around the world will consider your response to the situation of the Armenian population of your country as one key test of the sincerity and efficacy of any new policies which do emerge. Sincerely yours.*

**BOB DOLE,**  
US Senate

## Document 7

Congressional Record, April 28, 1988, E 1283

ARMENIAN RIGHTS IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH MUST BE  
RECOGNIZED

HON. JIM BATES  
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE: HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 28, 1988*

Mr. BATES. Mr. Speaker, as a people composed of many ethnic groups, we Americans must take a careful look at the current situation in Soviet Armenia. Since the First World War, the Armenian people in the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh have been separated from their community in Soviet Armenia proper. Nagorno-Karabakh has been administered by adjacent Soviet Azerbaijan, despite past assurances by the Kremlin that this region would be returned to the jurisdiction of Armenia.

Last February, the legislative body of Nagorno-Karabakh made a formal request to the Soviet authorities to reunify their territory with Soviet Armenia. The refusal by the Central Committee of the Soviet Union's Communist Party resulted in mass demonstrations through the end of March. The Soviets have suppressed demonstrations and riots in Nagorno-Karabakh through harsh measures, in which hundreds of Armenians have died.

In the wake of this expression of Armenian identity and solidarity, the Kremlin recently presented an 8-year plan to appease the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. This plan makes assurances aimed at helping Armenians to retain their ethnic identity, and promotes economic and cultural development in the region.

While the Soviet plan will provide much-needed assistance to the region, this gesture must not be allowed to circumvent the fundamental problem. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh are still separated from their Armenian brethren in Soviet Armenia. The demonstrations will not cease, and the brutal suppression will not terminate, until a reunification of the Armenian people is implemented by the Soviet Union. I urge my colleagues to join me in demanding Soviet recognition of the ethnic integrity of the Armenian people, and urging the Soviet Government to incorporate Nagorno-Karabakh into Soviet Armenia.

## Document 8

Congressional Record – Senate, May 23, 1988

SOVIET ARMENIA

Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, the situation in Soviet Armenia is of deep concern to many in this body. The continuing denial of basic human rights to the people of Armenia by the Soviet Government is an outrage. This fact has been made particularly apparent by the recent arrest and detention of Paruir Hairikian for allegedly "slandering" the state.

Only with strength and persistence can we assure that the legitimate rights of Paruir Hairikian and all the Armenian people are represented by the Soviet Government.

I ask unanimous consent that the attached letter to President Reagan appear in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

U. S. SENAT,

*Washington, DC, April 20, 1988.*

THE PRESIDENT,

*The White House, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT I am writing to request that you enthusiastically defend the aspirations of the Armenian people in your upcoming summit meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

During the week of January 11, 1988, the Soviet government received a petition signed by 90,000 of the 170,000 residents of Nagorno-Karabakh, an autonomous region of the Azerbaijan Republic, asking for the unification of their community with Soviet Armenia.

The Soviets reacted to this initiative by ignoring the petition, suppressing media reports, and deploying Red Army troops to the Nagorno-Karabakh capital of Stepanakert.

Moreover, the Gorbachev regime demonstrated its cavalier attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh petition by ignoring its central purpose and responding only with a promise to allow more coverage of Armenian community events on Azerbaijani television.

These actions, Mr. President, demonstrate once again that the doctrine of "glasnost" will not restrain Soviet authorities from using armed force if they

perceive a challenge to the stability of their empire.

But the people of Nagorno-Karabakh have demanded neither a separation from the Soviet Union nor even greater autonomy in relation to the central government. They only seek reunification with their ethnic cousins who live a mere ten miles away from the region.

In addition, although Armenians comprise more than 80 percent of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, successive Azerbaijani rulers have implemented policies designed to drive the Armenian people out of the area. They have also done little to encourage the economic development of Nagorno-Karabakh and have not taken any significant steps to relieve the tension between the predominantly Christian Armenians and the Moslem Azerbaijanis.

I encourage you, therefore, to make every effort to convince General Secretary Gorbachev that all Soviet Armenians deserve a cohesive and peaceful community for themselves, as well as their children. A united Armenia would pose no threat to Mr. Gorbachev or the Communist Party. I would simply bring generations and families of a proud yet persecuted culture back together in their one homeland.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.  
Sincerely,

**PETE WILSON**

## Document 9

Congressional Records - Extension of Remarks, March 28, 1988

### THE TREATMENT OF ARMENIANS IN THE SOVIET UNION - SOVIET NATIONALITIES POLICY AND HUMAN RIGHTS HON. TOM LANTOS OF CALIFORNIA IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Monday, March 28, 1988

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, all of us in the Congress have followed closely the events that have taken place in Armenia and the disappointing reaction of Soviet officials to those events.

During the last month, significant demonstrations broke out in two Soviet Republics in the Caucasus Mountain region in which ethnic Armenians demanded that the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Azerbaijani Republic be reunited with the Armenian Republic.

These demands are consistent with the ethnic composition of the area—81 percent of the population of the total population of 170,000 is Armenian. Furthermore, this demand is consistent with the geographic boundaries of the republics. The Nagorno-Karabakh region is adjacent to the Socialist Republic of Armenia and it is a considerable distance from the capital of the Azerbaijani Republic.

The demands that have been made by the Armenian people in the Soviet Union are justified ethnic and humanitarian requests. There is no historic justification for this territory to remain a part of Azerbaijan. In fact the history of this region clearly indicates that to continue things as they are simply perpetuates a historical injustice.

Mr. Speaker, an excellent article appeared in the Washington Post by Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian, which provides the appropriate historical background and understanding of this complex problem. I call it to the attention of my colleagues. Dr. Hovannisian is professor of Armenian and Near Eastern history and associate director of the Near Eastern Center at UCLA. He has written extensively on the early history of the Soviet Republic of Armenia.

USSR: THE BORDERS OF BLOOD - PROTESTS IN ARMENIA ARE  
TESTING THE LIMITS OF GLASNOST  
(By Richard Hovannisian)

General Secretary Gorbachev's policies of openness and restructuring have raised expectations in the Soviet Union, especially among those nationalities

with historic grievances stemming from decisions made during the Stalin era. As Soviet society attempts to face the Stalinist legacy, fundamental injustices are being revealed. The Armenian nationality question-which prompted the vast protest demonstrations earlier this month - is one such case.

Against a backdrop of increasing ethnic tensions, Gorbachev's recent declaration about the need to reassess policies regarding "the multinational and multireligious society is an acknowledgement that the long-standing assertion that the Soviet peoples live in brotherhood and harmony has often struck a hollow chord.

More than 100 ethnic groups, including 15 republics of which Armenia is one, constitute the Soviet state. In dealing with the nationalities question, the Soviets have alternated between firmness and reform in response to appeals from its ethnic minorities. Those appeals have ranged from requests for greater cultural autonomy to objections to Russification programs to outright demands for independence. The general intent of the Soviet Union has been to allow as much cultural autonomy as possible without having that autonomy lead to nationalist expression. The minimum objective of each nationality has been to maintain its ethnic identity and historical integrity. The tone and content of each appeal was based upon each group's perception of a particular Soviet administration's nationalities policy. When those objectives are in conflict, headlines are made in the West.

Hence the latest outbreak of protests in Soviet Armenia, the most southern of the 15 Soviet republics, which borders Turkey. The demonstrations began two weeks ago in Nagorno-Karabakh, a 1,700-square mile district in Soviet Azerbaijan and spread to Yerevan, the capital of Soviet Armenia. With protestors reportedly numbering in the hundreds of thousands, they are considered to be among the largest unauthorized mass meetings ever held in Soviet history.

In general, the complaints registered by ethnic minorities of the Soviet Union have been directed against the policies of the central government. But the Armenian demonstrations are motivated by an historical grievance of a different nature - a question of land and boundaries. Armenians are asking Moscow to unite the Nagorno (mountainous) Karabakh district in Azerbaijan with the Soviet Republic of Armenia.

The district of Nagorno-Karabakh has a population of about 200,000, of whom some 80 percent are Armenian and the rest Azerbaijani. Armenians in Karabakh complain that discrimination by the Soviet leadership in Azerbaijan against the Armenian population has hindered development of the area and is intended to encourage Armenian emigration.

A historic center of Armenian life and culture, Karabakh through the centuries remained semi-autonomous under the rule of Armenian princes even when the

rest of Armenia had been conquered by the Persian and Turkish empires. Thus Armenians have always regarded the area to be of prime historical, cultural and strategic significance.

After Karabakh's annexation to Russia at the beginning of the 19th century, the Armenians lived in relative peace until the Russian Revolution of 1917 led to a period of chaos in the Caucasus region. When the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples declared their Independence in the wake of the temporary Russian retreat from the area, Karabakh became a bone of contention - Azerbaijan, with Shiite Muslim population speaking the Turkish language, claimed and occupied Karabakh, despite the intense resistance of the Armenian population which demanded unification with the Armenian state.

The entry of the Red Army into the Caucasus in 1920 brought the fighting to an end; and when Armenia was Sovietized, Azerbaijan renounced its claims to Karabakh and agreed to its unification with Armenia. Nationalist Turkey, then under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, was opposed to seeing a large Armenian state on its borders. An accommodation was reached by the terms of the Treaty of Moscow, signed in March 1921- the first official treaty between the Soviet Union and Nationalist Turkey- which sanctioned the diminution of Armenia and awarded the disputed territories to Soviet Azerbaijan. These violations of territorial integrity were agreed to by Joseph Stalin. In 1923, parts of mountainous Karabakh were given the status of an autonomous district within the Soviet republic of Azerbaijan.

The Karabakh question poses a challenge to the Soviet system. Sensing a regime of genuine reform under Gorbachev the Armenians of Karabakh are demanding neither greater autonomy nor separation from the Soviet Union. Their sole aim is to be reunified with their kinsmen not 10 miles distant.

If this comparatively straightforward question cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens now in the streets of Stepanakert and Yerevan, Gorbachev's new nationalities policy may end before it begins.

Document 10

**AMENDMENT NO. 2680**

(Purpose: Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Soviet government should respect the human rights and legitimate aspirations of the Armenian people)

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. McCAIN], for himself, Mr. WILSON, and Mr. DOLE, proposes an amendment numbered 2690.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert the following:

The Senate finds that:

The 1923 Soviet demarcation of Azerbaijan and Armenia resulted in over 100,000 Armenians residing in Azerbaijan;

The Armenian people of Azerbaijan have called upon the Soviet Government to allow them to secede and join Armenia;

The Supreme Soviet in March 1988 refused to allow the secession of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia;

The legislature of Nagorno-Karabakh voted on July 12, 1988 to secede from Azerbaijan and unite with Armenia;

On July 18, 1988, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet rejected proposals for any changes in the region's borders;

The Soviet citizenship of Armenian leader and activist Paruir Airikyan has been revoked for "damaging the prestige of the Soviet Union";

The Soviet Army has been deployed to the region to maintain order, and has forcibly disrupted and suppressed peaceful demonstrations;

Dozens of Armenians have been killed and hundreds injured during the recent unrest: Now, therefore, be it the sense of the Senate that:

(1) The Soviet government should respect the legitimate aspirations of the Armenian people.

(2) The Soviet government should discontinue its very serious violations of the human rights of the Armenian people.

(3) If the Soviet Union continues its deplorable suppression of the Armenian people, it will inevitably Impact on U.S.-Soviet relations.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, on behalf of myself, Mr. WILSON, and Mr. DOLE, I offer this amendment to express the sense of the Senate that the Soviet Union should respect the human rights and legitimate aspirations of the Armenian people.

Mr. President, despite all the wonderful things we have been hearing about concerning the Soviet Union, the much noted relaxation of the police state which has characterized the Government of the Soviet Union for now over 70 years, the atmosphere of glasnost and perestroika and all of the other Russian words that we Americans are becoming familiar with, the fact remains that in at least one part of the Soviet Union, human rights are not only being restricted, they are being abused on a daily basis. In fact, I am a bit disappointed that the shocking behavior of the Government of the Soviet Union toward the Armenian people is not being more widely reported, nor is it being widely protested by our State Department or by our media.

Mr. President, the demarcation of Armenia and Azerbaijan left thousands of Armenians in Azerbaijan. One hundred thousand Christian Armenians now live in that mostly Moslem country. They are not seeking independence from the Soviet Union, Mr. President. They are asking to join Armenia.

Moscow continuously has refused this secession. Clearly the Armenian nationalists sought, within the context of a relaxation on the part of the Soviet Government, to express their desires to join Armenia. They expressed this in a peaceful manner through nonviolent protest, through strikes, through work stoppages, and other ways which I think characterize legitimate expressions of human rights and desires.

The Government of the Soviet Union through the Red Army has now begun a severe crackdown of arrests and food embargoes to end the Armenian's nonviolent activity.

Mr. President, I have no doubt that they will be able to end the unrest, just as they have in other parts of the Soviet Union when activities by Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and other nationalist organizations have sought to exercise their human rights. At the same time, I believe we have the right to expect Mr. Gorbachev to live up to the commitments he has made to respect human rights in his own country. This amendment simply calls upon Moscow

to respect the legitimate aspirations of the Armenian people and to discontinue violations of Armenian human rights. This amendment also states that continued violations would have an impact on United States-Soviet relations.

With that, Mr. President, I yield to my distinguished friend and colleague, our Republican leader, Senator DOLE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues from Arizona and California, and I am certain many other colleagues, in offering what I consider to be an important amendment.

I have spoken three times on the Senate floor in recent months about the tragic situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan—where Soviet military forces have violently broken up peaceful demonstration, reportedly killed several and injured hundreds of the demonstrators, and thrown hundreds in jail. I have also written twice to Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev on this terrible situation—urging him to live up to his fine words about “glasnost” in terms of Soviet policy toward its Armenian citizens.

All of this, and the many, many other protests around the world, have gone unheeded.

The violence and suppression of human rights has continued. Many more have been injured and jailed. And one prominent Armenian leader has been deported from his own homeland.

All of this because the Soviet Armenian people had the temerity to state their own political aspirations and tried to exercise their human rights.

We are under no illusion that, by passing this resolution, we are going to change anything. I remember in visiting with Mr. Gorbachev recently in Moscow, he was saying that he does not like these resolutions that somehow condemn the Soviet Union. Well, we would not pass these resolutions if he were respecting the human rights of the many nationalities that live in the U.S.S.R., and, in this case, the Armenian people.

But we know with certainty that we have to continue to speak up and we have to speak loudly and in a bipartisan way. And I have no doubt in my mind that this amendment is going to have near unanimous support. We must carry to the Nation and the world the story of what is happening to the Armenian people. We must signal to the Soviet leadership that we deplore what they are doing in Armenia, and that it will inevitably damage our bilateral relations.

The Armenian people have suffered too long. All they want are their rights.

We will not rest until those rights are restored.

So I hope that the amendment will be approved unanimously by this body,

by Republicans and Democrats alike, in sending a strong signal to the Soviet Union and its leadership and a strong signal to the Armenian people and to those in this country who support the rights and the plight of the Armenian people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHELBY). The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, we are prepared to accept the amendment on this side. It is well taken. Coming from South Carolina, it piqued my interest when it talked about secession and I was ready to oppose it because we had learned the hard way that secession was the wrong course in my own State.

But this is not seceding, but rather the joining of people under human rights. I think of the time when the distinguished Senator from Georgia, Herman Talmadge, was talking about the Georgians moving down to Florida, which more or less likens to this particular situation, and he said that improved the intelligence levels of both States.

This would improve the liberties and human rights of Armenians, period, wherever they are within the Soviet Union. So we are not interfering with the political infrastructure or affairs, you might say, but, rather, we are trying to emphasize human rights. And on that basis, we accept the amendment on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. RUDMAN. Mr. President, the Republican leader and Senator from Arizona have spoken eloquently to the amendment. I agree with the chairman it is an amendment that will be overwhelmingly agreed to by the Senate and I agree with the chairman., The amendment is acceptable.

Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, I rise in support of this worthy amendment offered by my distinguished colleague, Mr. McCAIN, and I am proud to be the primary cosponsor.

The McCain-Wilson amendment simply expresses the sense of the Senate that the Soviet Government should respect the aspirations of the Armenian people. And while we hope this gesture will alter the attitude of Soviet leaders toward their own citizens, this resolution nevertheless makes the vital moral statement that the United States Senate will not forget those men and women behind the Iron Curtain who struggle for communities united in peace.

And the Armenians of the Soviet Union, Mr. President, want only to unite—not to rebel or secede. During the week of January 11, 1988, the Soviet Government received a petition from the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh, an autonomous region of the Azerbaijan Republic, asking for the merger of their community with Soviet Armenia.

The Soviets, however, reacted to this initiative by ignoring the petition, suppressing media reports, and deploying Red army troops to the Nagorno-

Karabakh capital of Stepanakert. More recently, General Secretary Gorbachev issued a public statement denying the request for the unification of Karabakh with Armenia.

These actions, Mr. President, demonstrate once again that the doctrine of "glasnost" will not restrain Soviet authorities from ignoring basic human rights if they perceive a threat to the stability of their empire.

This amendment, then, sends the message that the Senate will not ignore the gap between Mr. Gorbachev's rhetoric and the reality of the injustice suffered by the ethnic populations of the Soviet Union. A united Armenia, after all, would pose no threat to Mr. Gorbachev or the Communist Party. It would simply bring generations and families of a proud yet persecuted culture back together in their one homeland.

We must keep the spotlight of constant attention on Soviet repression of the rights of Armenians within the Soviet Union, Mr. President. We must insist that the entirely legitimate and nonthreatening desire of Soviet Armenians to exercise their rights be granted by Moscow as the express condition to any credibility in the West for "glasnost."

If the General Secretary would have us believe that there is a real restructuring of Soviet society into something resembling an open and democratic society, we must tell him clearly we will not be convinced by slogans or gestures or the most massive public relations assault. Rather, he must simply let his people go—as is their right in any free society, but not yet in the Soviet Union.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate today approved an amendment expressing the sense of the Senate that the Soviet Union should respect the human rights of Armenians.

I have deep concern about issues raised in recent months by demonstrations in the Armenian capital or Yerevan and other cities regarding the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Reports surfaced last March of Mr. Gorbachev's decision to use militia and Army forces against demonstrators, and possibly to impose martial law in Armenia. Last week Mr. Gorbachev made it clear he intends to make no concessions to the Armenians. These reports have greatly disturbed me and many of my constituents of Armenian descent, and prompted me to write a letter to the Soviet General Secretary.

Armenian citizens of the Soviet Union who seek unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with the Armenian SSR have risen up for legitimate reasons that deserve the close consideration of the Soviet leaders. The appropriate response to the unrest, which included acts of murder and rape committed against numerous Armenians, is not a military clampdown against Armenians, but rather new policies that will give Armenians the legal recognition and protection they deserve.

The treatment of Armenians under the Ottoman Turkish empire is a legacy of terrible violence, discrimination, and disregard for the human rights of a proud people. The division of Armenia along arbitrary boundaries in 1923 was a policy implemented without adequate consideration for the national identity of Armenians.

At this time of newly constructive relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, with the implementation of the recently ratified INF Treaty, I believe Mr. Gorbachev should take whatever steps are necessary to be responsive to the grievances of his Armenian citizens. Increased respect for the human rights of ethnic minorities and dissidents in the Soviet Union is, in my view, an important prerequisite for further cooperation between our two governments on other issues.

I am pleased my colleagues have given their support to this important and timely amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. We are ready. We urge adoption of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the amendment. The amendment (No. 2690) was agreed to.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

Mr. RUDMAN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, is next the Gramm amendment?

Mr. RUDMAN. That is correct.

Mr. HOLLINGS. I hope you can get him here, and he is not on that slow train that we encountered last night?

I understand that the Senator is in a committee hearing and will be sought and will be, momentarily, on the floor. In the meantime I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the situation that one presently obtains is one in which the tail is wagging the dog. Committee meetings are keeping Senators who have amendments to offer on this bill from coming to the floor. In my judgment it is a little more important that the full Senate be allowed to do its work. We may have to start objecting to committee meetings and I may put in a

live quorum if we do not get a Senator very shortly to call up his amendment. If I put in a live quorum that will get them over here, so I hope that works.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The majority leader.

### QUORUM CALL

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the Senate is marking time waiting on Senators to call up amendments. I am sorry to inconvenience Senators. The full Senate is being inconvenienced by the lack of action, and it is going to mean that we stay another day. So I will put in a quorum call. It will be a live quorum, and I hope Senators will bring up the remaining amendments.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll and the following Senators entered the Chamber and answered to their names.

### [QUORUM NO. 23]

Byrd	Hollings	Rudman
Dole	Reid	Shelby

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A quorum is not present. The clerk will call the names of the absentee Senators.

The legislative clerk resumed the call of the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I move that the Sergeant at Arms be instructed to request the attendance of absent Senators, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The yeas and nays have been ordered and the clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CRANSTON. I announce that the Senator from Texas [Mr. BENT-SEN] and the Senator from Ohio [Mr. METZENBAUM] are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from Delaware [Mr. BIDEN] is absent

because of illness.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber who desire to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 68, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 259 Leg.]

### YEAS-68

Adams	Fowler	Fackwood
Baucus	Glenn	Pell
Bingaman	Gore	Pressler
Boren	Graham	Proxmire
Bradley	Grassley	Pryor
Breaux	Harkin	Reid
Bumpers	Hatfield	Riegle
Burdick	Heflin	Rockefeller
Byrd	Hollings	Roth
Chiles	Inouye	Rudman
Cochran	Johnston	Sanford
Conrad	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Cranston	Kerry	Sasser
Danforth	Lautenberg	Shelby
Daschle	Leahy	Simon
DeConcini	Levin	Simpson
Dixon	Lugar	Stafford
Dodd	Matsumaga	Stennis
Dole	McCluer	Thurmond
Domenici	Mikulski	Trible
Durenberger	Mitchell	Warner
East	Moyakian	Wirth
Ford	Nunn	

### NAYS-29

Armstrong	Moht	Murkowski
Bond	Reinz	Nickles
Bucshwitz	Helms	Quayle
Chafee	Humphrey	Specter
Cohen	Karnen	Stevens
D'Amato	Kassebaum	Symms
Evans	Kasten	Wallop

Gam	McCain	Weicker
Oramm	McClure	Wilson
Hatch	McConnell	

NOT VOTING-3

Bentsen	Biden	Metzenbaum
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So the motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHELBY). With the addition of Senators voting who did not answer the Quorum call, a quorum is now present.

*Source: Congressional Record. Proceeding and Debates of the 100<sup>th</sup> Congress Second Session, Volume 134 – Part 13, July 13, 1988 to July 27, 1988, Washington, 1988, pp. 18970-18972.*

#### Document 11

#### Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act of 1992 (Adopted on 24 October 1992)

United States assistance under this or any other Act (other than assistance under title V of this Act) may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

*Source: Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 (Freedom Support Act). US Public Law 102-511, 102d Cong. 3d sess., 24 October 1992.*

#### Document 12

#### COMMITMENT TO ARMENIA—SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 178 (Senate - July 19, 1989)

[Page: S8291]

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join in support of Senate Joint Resolution 178. I do so because I believe it is imperative that the United States support people around the world who hunger for freedom. This resolution reaffirms America's commitment to the people of Armenia, and it sends a signal to Armenians around the world that America will never forget their ongoing struggle.

Last December, the world witnessed the tremendous courage of the Armenian people as they struggled to rebuild their lives after a devastating earthquake left thousands dead and thousands more without homes. As the world watched with horror, the world also witnessed the amazing determination and resilience of the Armenian people. The United States was quick to respond with donations and volunteers, and we were proud to lend our support to help these courageous people.

This resolution, however, focuses on another type of hardship the Armenian people have had to endure. The status of the Nagorno-Karabagh region, an area located to the south of the Caucasus Mountains in Soviet Azerbaijan with Armenians comprising an overwhelming majority of the population, has been of particular concern to Armenians and to all people struggling to establish a more just world. Since 1923 ethnic discrimination and economic oppression have been the fate of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabagh. In February of 1988, several Armenians were killed in Sumgait, Azerbaijan, and spokespersons for the popular movement in Armenia were jailed for nearly 6 months before their release on May 31, 1989. As a result of these human rights abuses, large demonstrations and unrest continue in Nagorno-Karabagh to this day.

This resolution encourages Soviet President Gorbachev to engage in meaningful discussions with elected representatives of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh regarding their demands for reunification with the Armenian homeland, and with the leadership of Armenia's prodemocracy movement. By urging bilateral negotiations, I believe that a peaceful compromise is a realistic hope. We must be optimistic that Soviet President Gorbachev is intent on carrying his message of change throughout the entire Soviet Union, and we must continue to demand that the rights of Armenians are protected everywhere.

It is apparent then, Mr. President, that greater freedom has not extended to all

corners of the Soviet Union. While glasnost has made some progress in Moscow and elsewhere, I can assure you that the United States will continue to appeal to Soviet President Gorbachev to allow Nagorno-Karabagh to reunite with Soviet Armenia. I believe it is important to Armenians in Nagorno-Karabagh and to Armenians around the world to know that the United States stands behind them as they try to gain a freedom that has so far proven to be elusive.

## Document 13

**PELL (AND OTHERS) AMENDMENT NO. 291**  
(Senate - July 19, 1989)

[Page: S8282]

Mr. PELL (for himself, Mr. Simon, Mr. Levin, Mr. Pressler, Mr. Chafee, Mr. Bumpers, Mr. McCain, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Dole) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1160, supra, as follows:

**SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF SOVIET ARMENIA**

**(a) Congressional Findings.--**The Congress finds that--

- (1) the people of the United States have strong historical and cultural ties with the people of Armenia;
- (2) the Armenian people have been subjected to ethnic discrimination, cultural oppression and economic adversity;
- (3) portions of Armenia were totally devastated by a massive earthquake on December 7, 1988, where, according to official Soviet reports, more than 25,000 Armenians were killed, more than 100,000 were injured, more than 500,000 were left homeless, and tens of thousands of children were orphaned;
- (4) the Government and the people of the United States strengthened their commitment to Armenia by assisting in the immediate relief effort and in the overall reconstruction of those areas affected by the earthquake;
- (5) in the face of such hardship and adversity, the Armenian people continue to exhibit their strong will and resilience;
- (6) the current status of the region of Nagorno-Karabagh is a matter of concern and contention for the people of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Soviet Republics;
- (7) the Soviet Government has termed the killings of Armenians on February 28-29, 1988 \* \* \*
- (8) the Special Administrative Committee set up by the Soviet Government to stabilize the Nagorno-Karabagh region has proven ineffective in that mission, giving rise to further dissatisfaction among the Karabagh Armenians, who constitute the overwhelming majority in the region;

(9) the Karabagh Committee, spokespersons for the popular movement in Armenia, had been jailed for nearly six months before their release on May 31, 1989; and

(10) continued discrimination against Karabagh Armenians and the uncertainty about Nagorno-Karabagh have led to massive demonstrations and unrest in this area that are continuing to this day.

**Sense of the Congress.**--it is the sense of the Senate that the United States should--

(1) continue to support and encourage the reconstruction effort in Armenia;

(2) encourage Soviet President Gorbachev to continue a dialogue with the Armenian representatives to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies;

(3) encourage Soviet President Gorbachev to engage in meaningful discussions with elected representatives of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh regarding their demands of reunification with the Armenian homeland and with the leadership of Armenia's pro-democracy popular movement which includes the recently released Karabagh Committee;

(4) promote in its bilateral discussions with the Soviet Union, an equitable settlement to the dispute over Nagorno-Karabagh, which fairly reflects the views of the people of the region; and

(5) urge in its bilateral discussions with the Soviet Union, that investigations of the violence against Armenians be conducted at the highest level of the Soviet judiciary, and that those responsible for the killing and bloodshed be identified and prosecuted.

[Page: S8283]

Document 14

**To express United States support for the aspirations of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh for a peaceful and fair settlement to the dispute.**

(Engrossed as Agreed to or Passed by Senate)

101st CONGRESS

2d Session

S. J. RES. 178

JOINT RESOLUTION

**To express United States support for the aspirations of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh for a peaceful and fair settlement to the dispute.**

SJ 178 ES

101st CONGRESS

2d Session

S. J. RES. 178

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JOINT RESOLUTION

**To express United States support for the aspirations of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh for a peaceful and fair settlement to the dispute.**

**Whereas the people of the United States have strong historical and cultural ties with the people of Armenia;**

**Whereas the 80 percent Armenian majority in the region of Nagorno-Karabagh has continually expressed its desire for self-determination and freedom;**

**Whereas the current status of the region of Nagorno-Karabagh is a matter of concern and contention for the people of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Soviet Republics;**

**Whereas the Soviet Government has termed the killings of Armenians on**

February 28-29, 1988, in Sumgait, Azerbaijan, 'pogroms';

Whereas continued discrimination against Karabagh Armenians and the uncertainty about Nagorno-Karabagh have led to massive demonstrations and to unrest that is continuing to this day in this area;

Whereas the people and government of the Soviet Union initially responded to the outbreak of violence in Nagorno-Karabagh with the positive step of creating an interim Special Administrative Committee to stabilize the situation;

Whereas the Administrative Committee has proven ineffective because its mission has been undermined by a number of factors, including organized violence against Armenians, Jews, and other ethnic groups, and blockades of Nagorno-Karabagh, Armenia, and Georgia;

Whereas the three month blockade, theft and damage of goods in transit to Armenia have crippled the work of Armenians, Soviets, Americans, and the entire international community in rebuilding after the tragic December 7, 1988 earthquake in Armenia;

Whereas the Government and people of the United States strengthened their commitment to Armenia by assisting in the immediate relief effort and the overall reconstruction of those areas affected by the earthquake;

Whereas the United States maintains its resolve to assist the Armenians as they rebuild from the earthquake; and

Whereas the United States supports the fundamental rights and the aspirations of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh for a peaceful and fair settlement to the dispute over Nagorno-Karabagh: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That it is the sense of the Congress that the United States should--

- (1) continue to support and encourage the reconstruction effort in Armenia;
- (2) urge Soviet President Gorbachev to restore order, immediately reestablish unrestricted economic and supply routes to the people of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh, secure the physical safety of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh

from attacks and continue a dialog with representatives of Nagorno-Karabagh regarding a peaceful settlement;

(3) promote in its bilateral discussions with the Soviet Union an equitable settlement to the dispute over Nagorno-Karabagh, which fairly reflects the views of the people of the region;

(4) urge in its bilateral discussions with the Soviet Union that an investigation of the violence against the people of Nagorno-Karabagh be conducted, and that those responsible for the killing and bloodshed be identified and prosecuted; and

(5) express the serious concern of the American people about the ongoing violence and unrest which interferes with international relief efforts.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Senate shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of State.

Passed the Senate November 19 (legislative day, November 6), 1989.

Attest:

Secretary.

Source: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c101:1::/temp/~c101ewJtWu>

Document 15

SRES 128 ATS  
102d CONGRESS  
1st Session  
S. RES. 128

Condemning violence in Armenia.

**IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES**

May 17 (legislative day, APRIL 25), 1991

Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. DOLE, Mr. PRESSLER, Mr. PELL, Mr. SEYMOUR, Mr. SIMON, Mr. KASTEN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. WARNER, Mr. DECONCINI, Mr. RIEGLE, Mr. BRADLEY, and Mr. HELMS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

**RESOLUTION**

Condemning violence in Armenia.

Whereas the Government of the Soviet Union and Government of the Azerbaijan Republic have dramatically escalated their attacks against civilian Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan, and Armenia itself;

Whereas the Government of the Soviet Union has refused Armenia's request to convene a special session of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Supreme Soviet to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis;

Whereas Soviet and Azerbaijani forces have destroyed Armenian villages and depopulated Armenian areas in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in violation of internationally recognized human rights; and

Whereas armed militia threaten stability and peace in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that the Senate—

- (1) condemns the attacks on innocent children, women, and men in Armenian areas and communities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and in Armenia;
- (2) condemns the indiscriminate use of force, including the shelling of civilian areas, on Armenia's eastern and southern borders;
- 3) calls for the end to the blockades and other uses of force and intimidation directed against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and calls for the withdrawal of Soviet forces newly deployed for the purpose of intimidation;

- 4) calls for dialogue among all parties involved as the only acceptable route to achieving a lasting resolution of the conflict; and
- 5) reconfirms the commitment of the United States to the success of democracy and self-determination in the Soviet Union and its various republics, by expressing its deep concern about any Soviet action of retribution, intimidation, or leverage against those Republics and regions which have chosen to seek the fulfilment of their political aspirations.

END

## APPENDIX IV

## THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Document 1

## RESOLUTION

Thursday, 18 June, 1987

## On a political solution to the Armenian question

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Saby and others on behalf of the Socialist group on a political solution to the Armenian question (Doc. 2-737/84)
- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Kolokotronis on the Armenian question and the declaration of 24 April as Armenian Genocide Day (Doc. V 2-360/85)
- having regard to the report of the Political Affairs Committee (Doc. 2-33/87),
- A. having regard:
  - the motion for a resolution by Mr Jaquet and others on the situation of the Armenian people (Doc. 1-782/81),
  - The motion for a resolution by Mrs Duport and Mr Glinne on behalf of the Socialist Group on a political solution to the Armenian question (Doc. 1-735/83), and
  - The written question by Mrs Duport on the Armenian question,
  - The resolution of the Ministers with responsibility for cultural affairs, meeting within the Council of 13 November 1986 on the protection of Europe's architectural heritage, including that outside the territory of the Community,
- B. convinced that recognition of the identity of Armenian people in Turkey as an ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious minority follows on from recognition of its own history,
- C. whereas the Armenian side regards these events as planned genocide within the meaning of the 1948 UN Charter,
- D. whereas the Turkish State rejects the charge of genocide as unfounded,
- E. whereas to date, the Turkish Government, by refusing to recognize the genocide of 1915, continues to deprive the Armenian people of the right to their own history,
- F. whereas the historically proven Armenian genocide has so far neither been

- the object of political condemnation nor received due compensation,
  - G. whereas the historically proven Armenian genocide by Turkey must therefore be viewed as a profoundly humane act of moral rehabilitation towards the Armenians, which can only bring honour to the Turkish Government;
  - H. profoundly regretting and condemning the mindless terrorism by groups of Armenians who were responsible between 1973 and 1986 for several attacks causing death or injury to innocent victims and deplored by an overwhelming majority of the Armenian people,
  - I. whereas the obdurate stance of every Turkish Government towards the Armenian question has in no way helped to reduce the tension,
1. Believes that the Armenian question and the question of minorities in Turkey must be resituated within the framework of relations between Turkey and the Community; points out that democracy cannot be solidly implanted in a country unless the latter recognizes and enriches its history with its ethnic and cultural diversity;
  2. Believes that the tragic events in 1915-1917 involving the Armenians living in the territory of the Ottoman Empire constitute genocide within the meaning of the convention on the prevention and the punishment of the crime of genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948; Recognizes, however, that the present Turkey cannot be held responsible for the tragedy experienced by the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire and stresses that neither political or legal or material claims against present-day Turkey can be derived from the recognition of this historical event as an act of genocide;
  3. Calls on the Council to obtain from the present Turkish Government as acknowledgement of the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians in 1915-1917 and promote the establishment of a political dialogue between Turkey and the representatives of the Armenians;
  4. Believes that the refusal by the present Turkish Government to acknowledge the genocide against the Armenian people committed by Young Turk government, its reluctance to apply the principles of international law to its differences of opinion with Greece, the maintenance of Turkish occupation forces in Cyprus and the denial of existence of Kurdish question, together with the lack of true parliamentary democracy and the failure to respect individual and collective freedoms, in particular of religion, in that country are insurmountable obstacles to consideration of the possibility of Turkey's accession to the Community;
  5. Conscious of those past misfortunes, supports its desire for the development of a specific identity, the securing of its minority rights and the unrestricted exercise of its people's human and civil rights as defined in the European

Convention on Human Rights and its five protocols;

6. Calls for fair treatment of the Armenian minority in Turkey as regards their identity, language, religion, culture and school system, and makes an emphatic plea for improvements in the care of monuments and for the maintenance and conservation of the Armenian religious architectural heritage in Turkey and invites the Community to examine how it could make an appropriate contribution;
7. Calls on Turkey in this connection to abide faithfully by the provisions for the protection of the non-Moslem minorities as stipulated in Articles 37 to 45 of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne which, moreover, was signed by most Member States of the Community;
8. Considers that the protection of monuments and the maintenance and conservation and conservation of the Armenian religious architectural heritage in Turkey must be regarded as part of a wider policy designed to preserve the cultural heritage of all civilizations which have developed over the centuries on present-day Turkish territory and, in particular, that of the Christian minorities that formed part of the Ottoman Empire;
9. Calls therefore on the Community to expand the Association Agreement with Turkey to the cultural fields so that the remains of Christian or other civilizations such as the ancient classical, Hittite, Ottoman, etc., in that country are preserved and made generally accessible;
10. Expresses its concern at the difficulties currently being experienced by the Armenian community in Iran with respect to the Armenian language and their own education in accordance with the rules of their own religion;
11. Condemns the violations of individual freedoms committed in the Soviet Union against the Armenian population;
12. Condemns strongly any violence and any form of terrorism carried out by isolated groupings unrepresentative of the Armenian people, and calls for reconciliation between Armenians and Turks;
13. Calls on the Community Member States to dedicate a day to the memory of the genocide and crimes against humanity perpetrated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, specifically against the Armenians and Jews;
14. Commits itself to making a substantial contribution to initiatives to encourage negotiations between the Armenian and Turkish peoples;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the European Council, the Foreign Council, the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation, the EEC/Turkey Association Council and the Turkish, Iranian and Soviet Governments and the UN Secretary General.

*Source: Official Journal of the European Communities; No (190/119);  
Droshak English Supplement, January 1988, pp. 18-19.*

## Document 2

Thursday, 10 March 1988

### 1. Troubles in Armenia

— Joint resolution replacing Docs. B2-39, 47 and 67/88

#### RESOLUTION on recent events in Soviet Armenia

*The European Parliament.*

- A. noting the scale of the mass demonstrations which have taken place in Soviet Armenia and the disturbances in Azerbaijan,
  - B. noting that these demonstrations took place in the wake of public protests by the Baltic and Tartar peoples,
  - C. aware that these protests result from the heritage of the past, from unsolved ethnic, cultural, religious and institutional problems and from repression, in some cases brutal, with regard to both individual rights and at national level,
1. States its intention to follow closely the attempts by various peoples in the Soviet Union to assert their identity, their culture and their autonomy;
  2. Stresses that no serious attempt by the Soviet Government to implement a programme of economic and administrative reforms can succeed if it fails to take account of the desire for greater political and individual freedom;
  3. Calls on the Member States of the European Community to adopt a common stand on these events which might directly concern the European Community;
  4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the Foreign Ministers meeting in European political cooperation.

*Source: Official journal of the European Communities, No. C 94/117, April 11, 1988.*

## Document 3

(d) Joint resolution replacing Docs. B2-538 and 587 88

**RESOLUTION**  
**on the situation in Soviet Armenia**

*The European Parliament,*

A. having regard to the recent public demonstrations in Soviet Armenia demanding that the Nagorno-Karabakh region be reunited with the Republic of Armenia,

B. having regard historic status of the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh (80% of whose present population is Armenian) as part of Armenia, to the arbitrary inclusion of this area within Azerbaijan in 1923 and to the massacre of Armenians in the Azerbaijani town of Sumgait in February 1988,

C. whereas the deteriorating political situation, which has led to anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait and serious acts of violence in Baku, is in itself a threat to the safety of the Armenians living in Azerbaijan.

1. Condemns the violence employed against Armenian demonstrators in Azerbaijan;

2. Supports the demand of the Armenian minority for reunification with the Socialist Republic of Armenia;

3. Calls on the Supreme Soviet to study the compromise proposals from the Armenian delegates in Moscow suggesting that Nagorno-Karabakh be temporarily governed by the central administration in Moscow, temporarily united to the Federation of Russia or temporarily placed under the authority of a "presidential regional government";

4. Calls also upon the Soviet authorities to ensure the safety of the 500 000 Armenians currently living in Soviet Azerbaijan and to ensure that those found guilty of having incited or taken part in the pogroms against the Armenians are punished according to Soviet law;

5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Government of the Soviet Union.

*Source: Official journal of the European Communities, No. C 94/117, July, 1988.*

## Document 4

**2. Earthquake in Armenia**

- Joint resolution replacing Docs B 2-1099, 1118, 1160, 1169, 1171, 1176 and 1184/88

*December 15, 1988*

**RESOLUTION**  
**On the earthquake in Armenia**

*The European Parliament,*

A. deeply concerned by the toll of death, injury and homelessness resulting from the earthquake which struck the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia on Wednesday, 7 December 1988,

B. aware of reports of tens of thousands of dead and injured and of hundreds of thousands of homeless,

C. noting the almost complete destruction of towns such as Leninakan, Kirovakan, Slepavan, Akhuryan, Spitak, and other places,

D. conscious of the onset of winter in the Caucasus and the consequent urgent need to provide shelter for the homeless and medical aid for the survivors,

E. applauding the immediate offer of emergency aid by the Commission on behalf of the European Community and the response by Member States,

1. Expresses its deepest condolences to the Armenian people and the Soviet authorities;

2. Requests the Commission to provide medical supplies sufficient to meet the needs of the gravely injured;

3. Calls on the Commission and the governments of the Member States immediately to draw up rapid and effective aid plans, as well as medium-term technical, economic and financial programmes to assist the reconstruction of the areas concerned;

4. Insists that the Commission:

— provide a total of 10 000 000 ECU this year as emergency aid,

— find this amount in the 1988 budget by means of transfers;

hereby approves in advance these requests for transfers and asks the Commission to ensure that this sum is spent with the determination and speed that the Armenian tragedy requires;

5. Invites the Soviet authorities, the Armenian Church and other organizations

concerned to inform the Commission of what relief supplies are needed and what is required to ensure their distribution and calls on non-governmental organizations in the Community to put their services at the disposal of the Armenian people;

6. Considers that, to reduce in future the risk of destruction caused by earthquakes, the best possible system should be developed for the exchange of knowledge with regard to the forecasting of earthquakes and building construction;

7. Requests its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council, the Soviet authorities and the Government of Armenia and the Catholicos of the Armenian Church.

**Source:** *Official journal of the European Communities*, No. C 12/146, January 16, 1989.

## Document 5

*Thursday, 19 January 1989*

**(b) Joint resolution replacing Docs. B2-I262, 1296 and 1304/88**

**RESOLUTION  
on repression in Soviet Armenia**

*The European Parliament,*

- A. having regard to the earthquake which recently shook Soviet Armenia,
- B. whereas the Soviet authorities have arrested all the leaders of the Kharabakh Committee,
- C. whereas this committee requested the reattachment of the autonomous region of Upper Kharabakh to Soviet Armenia, it having been arbitrarily given by Stalin to Azerbaijan,
- D. whereas this committee is also demanding that Soviet Armenia should be able to exercise its sovereign rights as a republic within the framework of the USSR and that its citizens should enjoy the basic freedoms and human rights,
  1. Condemns the arrest of leaders of the Kharabakh Committee and calls for their immediate release;
  2. Welcomes the decision by the Supreme Soviet of 12 January 1989 of the creation of a special status for the Nagorno-Kharabakh autonomous region with a view to preventing renewed outbreaks of unrest resulting from tensions between the nationalities and to stabilize the situation in the region;
  3. Hopes that the Kharabakh Committee will be able to carry out its activities freely and calls on the Soviet authorities to accord it full recognition as an interlocutor;
  4. Expresses the hope that the development of national legislations will provide a genuine guarantee that the fundamental rights and freedoms of all will be respected and that all religions may be freely exercised as a civil and social right;
  5. Asks the Soviet Government also to ensure the effective protection of Armenians living in Azerbaijan, where further acts of violence against the Armenians have occurred despite the earthquake;
  6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the Soviet Armenian and Azerbaijan authorities.

**Source:** *Official journal of the European Communities*, No. C 12/146, January 16, 1989.

Document 6

(f) Joint resolution replacing Docs, B3-137, 139, 145, 156, 157 and 162/90

**RESOLUTION**  
**On the situation in Armenia**

*The European Parliament,*

- A. having regard to the resumption of anti-Armenian activities by the Azeris in Baku (an initial estimate talks of numerous victims, some of whom died in particularly horrific circumstances) and attacks on Armenian villages outside Nagorno-Karabakh, such as Shaumyan and Getashen,
- B. whereas there is severe tension on the border between Armenia and Nakhichevan which could lead to serious incidents,
- C. whereas the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh has been reinstated by Azerbaijan as harshly as ever,
- D. whereas the Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan are almost in a state of war,
- E. deploring the increased nationalism now evident which can only prejudice justified national pride.
- F. whereas the conflict now taking place is largely the result of the dividing up of the territory imposed by Lenin in Transcaucasia, and particularly the forced integration of the Autonomous Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, mainly populated by Armenian Christians, into the Muslim republic of Azerbaijan in 1923,
- G. whereas the decision taken by the Supreme Soviet on 28 November 1989 to alter the present status of Nagorno-Karabakh flies in the face of the wishes of the population of that autonomous region, thus creating even more 'explosive' conditions,
- H. whereas the Fabian tactics of the Soviet authorities over the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh has helped to worsen the situation for which it would have been possible to find a peaceful solution some eighteen months ago,
- I. noting with concern that, according to some sources, arms from Iran have been delivered to the Azeris,
- J. having regard to thy many political, ethnic and economic difficulties facing the Soviet Government,
- K. concerned at the consequences that the repeated threats of secession could have on the budding process of democratization in the Soviet Union and on the maintenance and strengthening of peace,

- L. having regard to its resolution of 7 July 1988 on the situation in Soviet Armenia,
1. Calls on the Commission and Council to make representations to the Soviet authorities with a view to ensuring:
    - that they order the full and immediate lifting of the blockade imposed on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh,
    - that they find a lasting political solution to the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh,
    - that they guarantee real protection for the Armenian people living in Azerbaijan by sending forces to intervene,
    - that they guarantee freedom of movement and the safety of goods and persons between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh,
    - that the circumstances surrounding the pogroms perpetrated against the Armenians, in particular in Sumgait and Kirovabad, Azerbaijan, are brought fully to light;
  2. Calls on the Commission to grant substantial emergency aid to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in the form of basic essentials;
  3. Calls on the authorities of the Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan to seek the means of achieving a peaceful settlement to the conflict between the two communities;
  4. Calls on all countries, in particular the countries bordering on Armenia and Azerbaijan, to avoid all interference;
  5. Instructs its Bureau to consider the appropriateness of sending a fact-finding mission to Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia to report to the Political Affairs Committee;
  6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and Council, the Governments of Iran, Turkey and the USSR, the Governments of the SSRs of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Secretary General of the UN.

**Source: Official Journal of the European Communities, No. C 12/146, February 19, 1990.**

## Document 7

(g) Doc. B3-556/90

Thursday, 15 March 1990

**RESOLUTION**  
**on the situation in Armenia**

*The European Parliament,*

- A. having regard to the serious humanitarian and economic situation in Armenia following the earthquake in 1988,
  - B. concerned at information from Soviet opposition groups showing that 500 000 people in Armenia are homeless and some 100 000 Armenians are traveling the Soviet Union in search of homes and jobs,
  - C. dismayed that a large proportion of the aid destined for the suffering Armenians has failed to reach them,
  - D. concerned at the human rights situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is administered by Azerbaijan against the will of the majority of its inhabitants, more than 75% of whom are Armenians, and at the continuing violence in Azerbaijan,
1. Calls on the Commission and the Foreign Ministers meeting in EPC to urge the Soviet government to improve the humanitarian and economic situation in Armenia and to request the Soviet government to seek a peaceful solution for Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and elsewhere in Azerbaijan;
  2. Calls on the United Nations to take a more active role with regard to the problem of refugees and homelessness in Armenia;
  3. Resolves to send a small delegation to Armenia and Azerbaijan to report to Parliament and the European public on the situation of the Armenians;
  4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Foreign Ministers meeting in EPC, the governments of the Member States and the government of the Soviet Union.

*Source: Official Journal of the European Communities, No. C 96/260-261, April 17, 1990.*

**SELECTED MEDIA PUBLICATIONS**

A. Vasilkov and G. Ovcharenko. Instigators, Pravda, April 4, 1988

"The inciters were identified. Acting in an underhand way and skilfully doctoring the truth, the Western "radio voices" strive to thrust the old anti-Soviet theses on the listeners, to the effect that all difficulties in our country are the result of "colonial oppression" of the peoples of the union republics and autonomous formations, that the clashes on social grounds are the results of a flawed nationalist policy, and that hence "the growth of inter-nationality clashes in the USSR is inevitable for reasons of an historical, political, geographical and economic nature." So that, according to them, the "democracy" of the streets and of meetings to which the organizers of the "movement" for the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia had restored was simply inoffensive reaction to the encroachment on national rights and interests. And any means are good ones in defense of these – even if meanwhile the interests of other nationalities suffer, and considerable material and moral-political damage is done to the state and society. And for that reason, according to them, strong-arm pressure on the state bodies must be maintained, using demonstrations and strikes. In the end they will come to understand in Moscow, they say, that it is better to give in "than to gain a reputation throughout the world as a despotic state".

This was taken by us from a Radio Liberty broadcast. But similar tactical and strategic advice is being given out by other Western radio voices. Their proprietors have their own interest: they are hoping to put an end to socialism by splitting it into national compartments. And on the way they are attempting to discredit the restructuring processes in our society and the process of democratisation, too. The BBC, for instance, claims that "the nationalism in the USSR that has, of course, always existed, just as it has throughout the world, has shown its face in the conditions of decentralization, desalinisation and democratisation".

It can be seen that the changes in our country have been really plaguing some of those who are not kindly disposed towards it. This is the very reason why they are trying to throw more wood of demagogic studies or provocative rumours on the fire of any conflicts that emerge in the context of the revolutionary restructuring processes. They do that as true inciters, by pulling the strings of so-called informants from our country.

By accusing Western media which in openly trying to arouse dissension between nationalities afterwards the paper was accusing Soviet dissidents, particularly Paruyr Hayrikyan and Sergey Grigoryants for their subversive

activities and support for Western media which presented the first one as "champion of national justice" and used as "source of information". S. Grigoryants guilty was that he hosted a press conference about the events around Nagorno-Karabakh and "delivered his fabrications...and tendentious materials demanding for a review of the USSR's internal borders... and direct calls for foreign intervention in the sovereign affairs of our state."

For by using the Western media to spread the slanderous fabrications, which have brought the situation to the boil and have pushed nationalist moods into extremism, they have provoked people into collectively staying away from work, boycotting school classes and taking action which disrupts normal life.

Like Siamese twins the inciters at home and abroad cannot live without one another. They pursue the same ends. The system that exists in the USSR does not suit any of them. Both groups would like to prevent our democratisation and restructuring to an extent whereby the territory of our country would turn into an arena for persistent and embittered interethnic and social conflicts. Our ideological opponents albeit obliged to disguise themselves as democrats and champions of justice, in actual fact reject outright the desire and will of all sensible people for mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and a search for reasonable ways to solve pressing and complex problems.

In the beginning of March 1990 Soviet-Armenian meeting on information exchanges was held at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Touching upon the activities of a number of radio stations that operate under the control of US authorities. Soviet representatives pointed out in particular that the activities of RL, which is subsidised by the US Government obviously stirs up inter-ethnic conflicts.

This particularly manifested itself during the coverage of events in Trans-Caucasus when Radio Liberty beamed overtly provocative broadcasts following the introduction of the state of emergency in Azerbaijan. During this meeting the texts of RFE/RL broadcastings were shown to the American side, which Moscow considered as carried out in the cold war spirit."

**Source: A. Vasilkov, G. Ovcharenko. *Instigators. Once again about the events in Nagorno-Karabakh and around it, Pravda, April 4, 1988 translated in Western media coverage of Nagorno-Karabakh. "Pravda" article on "incitement" criticises BBC, RFE/RL Reports, April 5, 1988, OSA-HU, 300/80/1/871.***

# The New York Times

January 19, 1990, Friday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 34, Column 1; Editorial Desk

## *Nationalism at Its Nastiest*

Azerbaijan is no Lithuania. True, resurgent nationalism arouses people in the Caucasus just as it arouses the Baltic republics. But there the comparison ends - and the trouble for Moscow begins. Nationalists in Lithuania are struggling to wrest independence from Moscow by nonviolent, political means. Nationalists in Azerbaijan also talk of independence, but their protest includes bloody pogroms against their Armenian neighbors. Nor do Azerbaijani nationalists limit their actions to Soviet Azerbaijan. They transgress the border with Iran to make common cause with Azerbaijanis there.

Mikhail Gorbachev seems prepared to bargain with Lithuania's nationalists. But Azerbaijan's violent nationalists leave him no choice but to send in the troops.

The nationalism now surging from Omsk to Tomsk is an understandable reaction to decades of forced assimilation. Stalin redrew borders, relocated populations and suppressed cultural and religious differences, all in the name of internationalism. But ancient national aspirations did not disappear. This week's massacre in Baku, of predominantly Christian Armenians by Muslim Azerbaijanis, shows nationalism at its nastiest. Generations of religious hatred erupted in spasmodic violence two years ago as armed Azerbaijanis rampaged through the town of Sumgait and slaughtered 32 people, mostly Armenians. After the 1988 earthquake that killed 25,000 Armenians, Azerbaijanis blocked railways to Armenia, holding up aid. Now the rivals vie for control of Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave that Stalin incorporated into Azerbaijan in 1923.

The Armenians sought protection from Moscow. Mr. Gorbachev first resisted but renewed strife forced him to intervene. The Azerbaijanis added to his unease by declaring their interest in carving out a state on both sides of the national border. This was a clear threat to Iran's territorial integrity and its warming relations with the Soviet Union. Teheran asked the Soviets to beef up border patrols.

Mr. Gorbachev and his reformist Kremlin allies are prepared to tolerate, even

encourage, moderate nationalists who challenge central control and demand autonomy. But Moscow rightly feels that, in a polyglot country with 104 different nationalities, ethnic violence is beyond the pale. Azerbaijan dramatizes Mr. Gorbachev's larger dilemma. To generate economic thrust, he wants to shift power from Moscow's stodgy bureaucracies to the regional republics. But how can he do this without unleashing nationalist hatreds and irredentism? The problem is illustrated by the struggle over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region as big as Long Island with a population of 160,000. Putting either Azerbaijanis or Armenians in charge would leave one people at the mercy of the other. Moscow has to assume direct control. But that runs counter to Mr. Gorbachev's desire for devolution. And the troops, once introduced, will be difficult to extricate. Nothing so challenges Mr. Gorbachev's resourcefulness, and his fragile coalition of reformists and moderate nationalists, as the flow of blood in the Caucasus.

# The New York Times

July 27, 1990,

## AN OPEN LETTER TO INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION ON ANTI-ARMENIAN POGROMS IN THE SOVIET UNION<sup>1</sup>\*

An era which we all thought had ended, the era of pogroms, has resurfaced. Once again this year, the Armenian community of Azerbaijan has been the victim of atrocious and intolerable premeditated massacres.

As scholars, writers, scientists, political leaders and artists we wish, first of all, to express our profound indignation over such barbaric acts. Which we wanted to believe belonged to humanity's past.

We intend this statement as more than an after-the-fact condemnation. We want to alert international public opinion to the continuing danger that racism represents to the future of humanity. It forebodes ill that we are experiencing the same powerlessness when faced with such flagrant violations of human rights a half century after the genocide of the Jewish people in Nazi concentration camps and forty years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It would be inexcusable if, because of our silence now, we contributed to the suffering of new victims.

The situation of Armenians in the Caucasus is, in fact, too serious for us to remain silent. There are moments when we must assume the moral obligation to assist a people in peril. Our sense of obligation leads us today to appeal to the international community and to public opinion.

More than two years ago, active persecution against Armenians began in Azerbaijan. The pogroms of Sumgait in February 1988 were followed by massacres in Kirovabad and Baku in November 1988. As recently as January 1990, the pogroms continued in Baku and other parts of Azerbaijan. The mere fact that these pogroms were repeated and the fact that they followed the same pattern lead us to think that these tragic events are no accidents or spontaneous outbursts.

Rather, we are compelled to recognize that the crimes against the Armenian minority have become consistent practice - if not consistent policy - in Soviet Azerbaijan. According, to the late Andrei Sakharov (New York Times, November 26, 1988), these pogroms constitute "a real threat of extermination" to the indigenous Armenian community in Azerbaijan and in the autonomous region

<sup>1</sup> \*This is a joint initiative of the Helsinki Truly Watchdog Committee of France and intellectuals from the College International de Philosophie, Paris, c/o 500 Park Avenue, #36, New York, NY 10022.

of Mountainous Karabagh, whose inhabitants are 80 percent Armenian.

Horror has no limits, especially when we remember that the threat is against the Armenian people, who in 1915 paid dearly for their right to be different in the Ottoman Empire. There, Armenians lost half their population to genocide, the worst consequence of racism. Furthermore, if the recent pogroms have revived nightmares of extermination not yet overcome, the current total blockade of Armenia and Mountainous Karabagh - imposed since August, 1989 - has created the prospect of yet another genocide. It is well known that all supplies imported into Mountainous Karabagh and 85 percent of those into Armenia pass through Azerbaijan; it would not be an exaggeration to maintain that such a blockade amounts to the strangulation of Armenia. In a land devastated by the earthquake of December 7, 1988, the blockade has paralyzed the economy and dealt a mortal blow to the reconstruction efforts.

It is our sincere hope that perestroika will succeed. But we also hope for the success of glasnost and democratization. We recognize that the passage from a totalitarian state to a rule of law cannot be achieved overnight. It is nonetheless necessary that in the process of transition, the government of the Soviet Union promote, legalize and institutionalize such critical forces for democracy as human rights, the principle of toleration, and democratic movements. There is no better defense and demonstration of democracy. At any rate, that is the only way to avoid the worst. In the case of a multinational state, the worst may mean threats to the right of a people or a minority to exist. It is during periods of transition and uncertainty that rights of peoples—today Armenians, tomorrow another people or minority - are threatened or denied. In this respect, the ease with which we see today the development in the USSR of racist movements, especially the anti-Semitic movement known as Pamyat, is for us cause for grave concern.

In the name of our duty of vigilance, we demand that Soviet authorities as well as the international community condemn unequivocally these anti-Armenian pogroms and that they denounce especially the racist ideology which has been used by the perpetrators of these crimes as justification.

We ask from the Soviet authorities and the international community that all necessary measures be taken immediately to ensure the protection and security of Armenians in the Caucasus and other parts of the Soviet Union. This can begin by bringing about a definitive lifting of the Azerbaijani blockade. It should be clear that the forceful deportation of Armenians is not the solution to the problem of Mountainous Karabagh which, in essence, is a problem of human rights.

The international community of states under the rule of law must prove the authenticity of its commitment to human rights in order to ensure that, due to indifference and silence bordering on complicity, another genocide does not occur.

## LIST OF SIGNATORIES

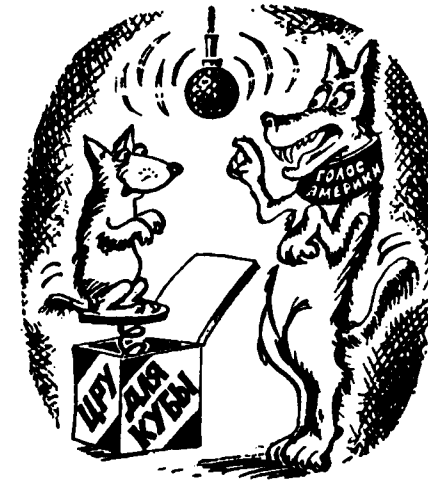
Aaron, David (Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Alperin Mimi (New York. Trustee, International League for Human Rights; Chair National Executive Council, American, Jewish Committee) Apel, Karl-Otto (Philosophy, University of Frankfurt) Balakian, Mark (London) Belekjdian, Wahe (International Law, University of Glasgow) Benattas, Gabriel (Attorney, Paris) Benedikt, Michael (Philosophy, University of Vienna) Berlin, Sir Isaah [All Souls College, Oxford] Bernstein, Richard J. (Philosophy, New School for Social Research, New York) Boreil, Jean (Philosophy, University of Paris VIII) Boyadjian, Rosine (Paris) Brandt, Pere Age (Philosophy, University of Aarhus) Breton, Raymond (Sociology, University of Toronto) Breton, Stanislas (Philosophy, Catholic Institute, Paris) Burger, Rudolf (Philosophy, University of Vienna) Carnous, Bernard (Philosophy, University of Montreal) Chace, William M. (President of Wesleyan University) Chaliand, Gerard (Writer, Paris) Chalk, Frank (History, Concordia University, Montreal) Clark, Roger S. [Distinguished Professor of Law Rutgers Law School; Vice President, International League for Human Rights) Clay, Jason W. (Cultural Survival, Director Cambridge, Massachusetts) Constantineau, Philippe (Philosophy, RMC St.-Jean) Coopersmith, Esther (Washington, DC. Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Cowe, Peter (Armenian Studies, Colombia University, New York) Danielian, Lucig (Communication, SUNY - Albany, New York) David, Jack (New York, Trustee, International League for Human Rights) De Durand Mathieu (Medieval Studies, University of Montreal) de Fonteney, Elizabeth (Philosophy, Ecole Normale, Paris) Decarie, Terese Coun (Psychologie, University of Montreal) DeGare, Vianey (Philosophy, University of Montreal) Deguy, Michel (Writer, Director of International College of Philosophy) Derrida Jacques (Philosophy, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris) Descombes, Vincent (French Literature, John Hopkins University) Donabedian, Patrick (Paris) Douallier, Stephane (Paris) Ellenof, Theodore (Honorary Chairman, American Jewish Committee, New York) Fabri, Paolo (Paris) Fanton, Jonathan F. (President, The New School for Social Research) Feher Ferenc, (Philosopher, The New School for Social Research) Fein, Helen (Executive Director Institute for the Study of Genocide/Harvard, Cambridge) Ferry, Luc (Philosophy, University of Rennes) Finkelkraut, Alain (Philosophy, Paris) Frankfurt, Harry (Philosophy, Princeton) Fraser, The Honorable N. (Mayor of Minneapolis, Trustee of International League for Human Rights) Gadamer, Hans-Georg (Philosophy, University of Heidelberg) Gaer, Felice (Executive Director, International League for Human Rights) Gaillard, Francoise (French Literature, University of Paris VII) Giordano, Ralph (Writer, Frankfurt) Girodias, Maurice (Writer, Paris) Glucksmann, Andre (Philosophy, Paris) Glucksmunn, Christine-Buci (College International de Philosophie, Paris) Gregorian, Vartan (History, Brown University) Habermas, Jurgen (Philosophy, University of Frankfurt) Heller, Agnes (Hannah Arendt, Professor of Philosophy, The New Your School for Social Research) Hooks, Benjamin L. (Executive Director, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Horowitz, Irving L. (Sociology, Rutgers) Hovhannisian, Richard (History, UCLA) Huttenbach, Henry (History, City College of New York, NY) Jonassohn, Kurt (Sociology, Concordia University, Montreal) Kandell, Florence (New York, Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Karagueuz, Hennine (Paris) Kattan, Maim (Writer, Montreal) Kendergi, Maryvonne (Faculty of Music, University of Montreal) Kennedy, Joseph P., II (U.S. House of Representatives, D-Massachusetts) Kessedjian, Catherine (Attorney, Paris) Kolakowski, Leszek (Philosophy, All Souls College, Oxford) Kortian,

Carbis (Philosophy, University of Montreal) Kuper, Leo (University of California, Los Angeles) Laloue-Labarthe, Philippe (Philosophy, University of Strasbourg) Lefort, Claude (Philosophy, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris) Levinas, Emmanuel (Philosophy, University of Paris IV, Sorbonne) Levesque, Claude (Philosophy, University of Montreal) Libaridian Gerard (Historian, Director of Zorian institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts) Liskofsky, Sidney (Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Lyotard, Jean-Francois (Philosophy, University of Paris III) Lytelton, Adrian (History, John Hopkins Center for International Studies) Maass, Richard (Treasurer, International League for Human Rights) Mahe, Jean-Pierre (Linguistics, Ecole des Langues Orientales, Vivantes, Paris) Malkassian, Gerard (Paris) Marian, Michel (Esprit, Paris) Marin, Louis (Philosophy, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris) Maasie, Suzanne (Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Mayer, Ame J. (Historian, Princeton University) Melon, Robert (Political Science, Purdue University) Mertin, Jurgen (Medical Faculty, University of Bern) Miller, Donald E. (School of Religion, USC) Minceles, Juliette (Writer, Paris) Miguel, Jacques (Attorney, Paris) Montefiore, Alan (Philosophy, Balliol College, Oxford) Moutet, Alexandra (Attorney, Paris) Mutaftian Claude (Writer, Paris) Nancy, Jean-Luc (Philosophy, University of Strasbourg) Nercessian, Nora (Art Historian, Boston) Nersessian, Nancy J. (Program in History of Science, Princeton University) Nevas, Leo (President, International League for Human Rights) Nichanian, Mare (Writer, Paris) Pastor, Rafael (Executive Vice President, News Corporation, Ltd.; Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Piche, Claude (Philosophy, University of Montreal) Piel Jean (Writer, Editor of Critique, Paris) Pollis, Adamantia (Professor, New School for Social Research; Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Potamkin, Lexie Brockway (Philadelphia, Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Poulain, Jacques (Philosophy, University of Paris VIII) Proshansky, Harold M. (President, The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York) Putnam, Hilary (Boston) Raulet, Gerard (German Literature, University of Paris IV) Revault d'Allonnes, Myriam (Philosophy, University of Paris I) Ricoeur, Paul (Philosophy, University of Paris/Nanterre) Rorty, Richard (University of North Carolina) Roustang, Francois (Psychoanalyst, Paris) Saeedpour, Vera Beaudin (The Kurdish Program/Cultural Survival, New York) Sarian, Armand (Helsinki Committee, France) Scoberk, Gunnar (Philosophy, Bergen) Shestack, Jerome J. (Chairman, International League for Human Rights) Simonet, Marie-Laurence (Helsinki Committee, France) Smith, Roger (Government, College of William & Mary, Virginia) Suny, Ronald (History, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) Tabibian, Jivan (Political Science, Los Angeles) Taylor, Charles (Philosophy and Political Science, McGill University, Montreal) Tchalmakchian, Arto (Sculptor, Montreal) Temon, Yves (Physician/Historian, Paris) Torricelli, The Honourable Robert G. (Congressman, New Jersey) Traub, Lee (New York, Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Utaker, Arid (Philosophy, Bergen) Vanden Heuvel, William (New York, Former U.S. Deputy Ambassador to the United Nation; Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Verluise, Pierre (Writer, Paris) Vermeren, Patrice (International College of Philosophy, Paris) Vramian, Isabelle (Helsinki Committee, France) Vryonis, Jr., Speros (Professor, Onassis Center for Hellenic Studies, New York University) Weissbrodt, David (Professor, University of Minnesota Low School; Trustee, International League for Human Rights) Wellmer Albrecht (Philosophy, University of Heidelberg) Wiesel, Elie (Writer, Boston) Zelnick, Reginald E. (Professor of History, University of California at Berkeley).

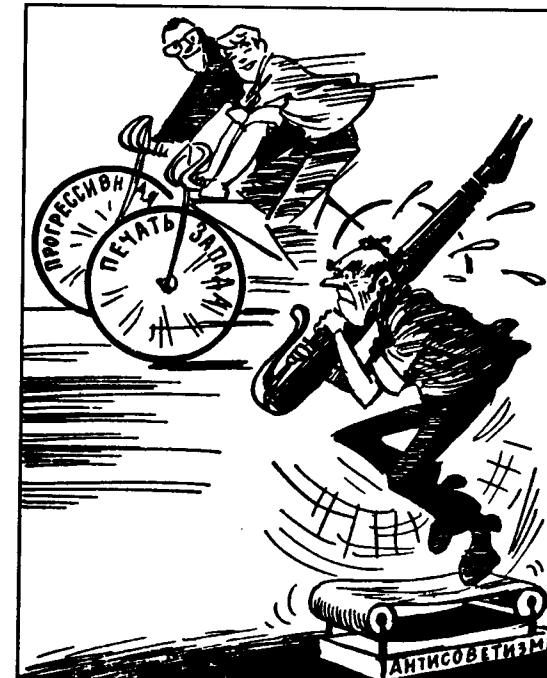
## ILLUSTRATIONS

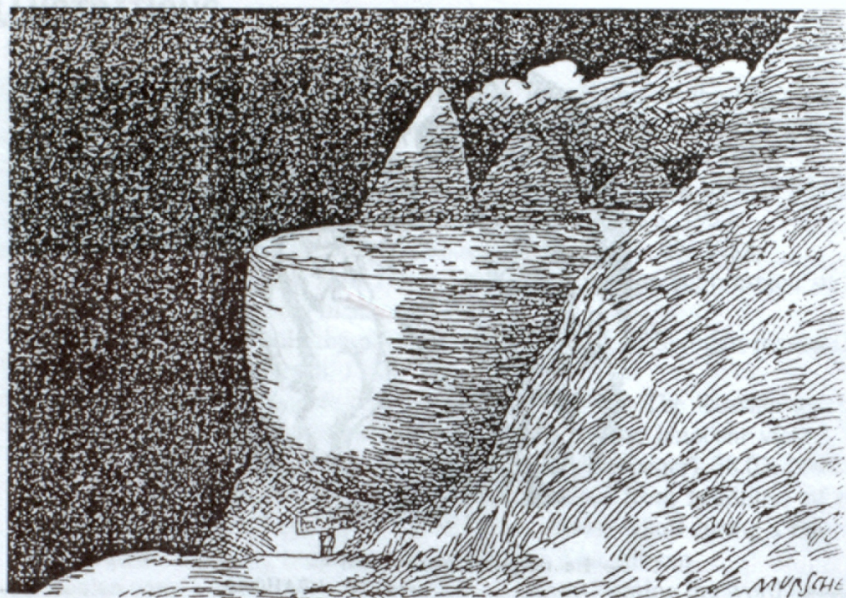
## ILLUSTRATIONS

1. A typical Soviet caricature of the Cold War. Inscription on the dog's collar: "Voice of America"; lettering on the box: "CIA for Cuba". Cartoon caption: "Don't disgrace the pedigree". Source: *Trud* Daily, October 26, 1983.
2. Lettering on the treadmill: "Anti-Sovietism"; lettering on the bicycle wheels: "Progressive Western press". Source: *Pravda* Daily, May 5, 1987.
3. Caption: "The mountain is coming". Source: *Die Zeit*, 01. 07. 1988.
4. A cartoon from *The New York Times* (date) showing the suppression of an Armenian rally in Moscow in summer 1988
5. Protesters in Yerevan hold the portraits of the victims of Sumgait massacres. Photo by Zaven Khachikyan, 1988.
6. Victims of Sumgait massacres. Portraits taken in 1988. The Russian text on the poster says: "The Soviet press is responsible for the innocent victims of Sumgait!". Source: *Golos Armenii* (Armenian daily newspaper), 28.02. 2004.
7. The Russian word *lozh*, meaning *lie*, cut-and-pasted from headlines of the leading Soviet daily, *Pravda* (*truth* in Russian). Photo taken during a rally in Opera Square, Yerevan, Summer, 1988 by Zaven Khachikyan.
8. Armenian word for *television* with three bold letters forming the word *lie* on a TV screen showing logos of local and central TV stations. Photo taken during a rally in Opera Square, Yerevan, 1988 by Zaven Khachikyan.
9. The limits of *Perestroika*. Soviet soldiers surround Armenian protesters in Yerevan, 1988. Poster in the centre says "*Pravda*, were is your pravda? Shame on the media!" (*pravda* means *truth* in Russian, and was the name of the leading Soviet daily newspaper). Photo by Zaven Khachikyan.
10. Armenian woman with a poster comparing the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire to the Sumgait massacre in Azerbaijan. Yerevan, 1988. Photo by Zaven Khachikyan.
11. Poster referring to the Soviet mass media with a popular Armenian saying, "A speaker needs an audience". Photo by Zaven Khachikyan (1988).
12. A banner in the Opera Square in Yerevan, 1988. Written by a local Russian citizen, the banner reads: "I am ashamed of being Russian. I demand: 1. A withdrawal of the army from Armenia, 2. A meeting of the Assembly of the Supreme Soviet, 3. A live Yerevan-Moscow TV dialog. Signed: N. V. Ozhgikhina ". Photo by Zaven Khachikyan.
13. A cut-and-paste from Soviet newspapers headlines. The hat says, "Lies are the norm". Another text reads "A unanimous vote". Photo by Zaven Khachikyan. (1988).
14. A banner criticizing Communist media. The Armenian text reads: "If you are no use to Armenia, I spit both on you and your newspaper". Photo by Zaven Khachikyan (1988).
15. Picket against the murder of Armenian photojournalist Khachik Zaqaryan at the hands of Soviet security forces. Yerevan, summer 1988.
16. Mass manifestation in Yerevan Opera Square. The slogan on top right reads: "Pravda Has no Right to Lie". Yerevan, (1988).

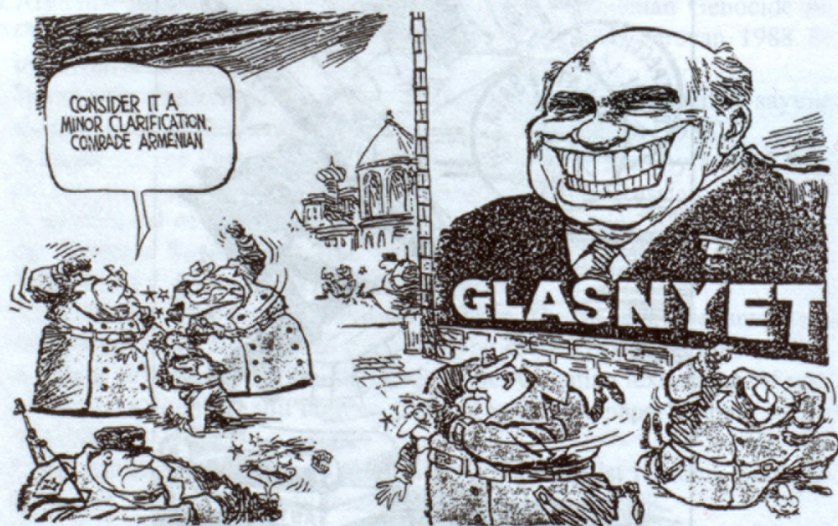


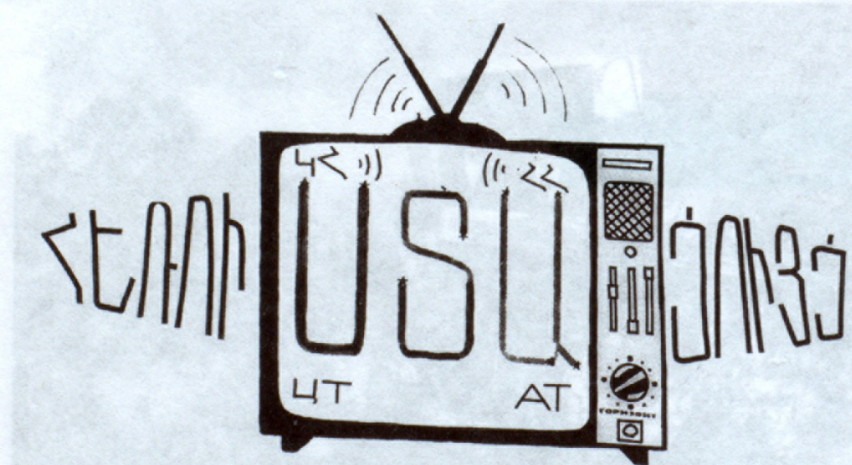
— Не посрами родословную!  
Рис. Ю. ИВАНОВА.





Nagornyj Karabach: Der Berg kommt









**Տպաքանակ՝ 1000, պատվեր՝ 202**