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**Department of English Language and Literature**

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**Literature and Civilization**

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**The Role of US Foreign Policy towards the South Caucasus  
The Nagorno Karabakh a Case Study  
(1992-2020)**

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**DECLARATION OF INTEGRITY**

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I , **Serhani Mabrouka Meriem**, solemnly declare that the dissertation titled " **The Role of the US Foreign Policy towards the South Caucasus the Nagorno Karabakh a Case Study(1992-2020)**" submitted to the Department of the English language and Literature at Biskra University is entirely my own work, free from plagiarism, and has not been submitted to any other educational institution. I have appropriately acknowledged and cited all sources used, and I have conducted myself with academic integrity throughout the process. I understand the severe consequences of academic misconduct and affirm the authenticity of my dissertation.

Signature

## Dedication

My sincere and endless praises go to Allah for his blessings upon me all along my whole life

I dedicate this dissertation:

❖ To my beloved parents Serhani Ammar for support and Abbassi Souad for prayer

❖ To my brothers Haroun, Moussa and Mostafa

❖ To my sisters Khadidja ,Hiba, and Samah

❖ To my nephews Ammar, Chihab and Souad

❖ To professor Nasri Samira

❖ To my classmates Rayan, Oumaima, Roukia, Houda ,Sabrina,Loubna and Maroua

❖ To my close friends Asma,Nada,Manal,Adra and Yasmine

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**Abstract**

The dissertation titled *The US Foreign Policy towards the South Caucasus: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict a Case Study* examines the role of the US as a mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan from 1992 to 2020. It highlights the political decisions that are taken by the US presidents from the Bill Clinton administration to Donald Trump in resolving the conflict and their effectiveness in achieving a peaceful agreement. The research methodology used in this study includes qualitative, historical, and interpretive approaches. The dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter conducts on the US Foreign Policy towards Central Asia. The second chapter is devoted to the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. The third chapter deals with the US Foreign Policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh Dispute. The findings of the study highlight the main decisions taken by the US presidents in addressing this dispute as well as the challenges that faced in balancing its interests and regional security.

Keywords: Nagorno Karabakh Conflict, South Caucasus, US foreign policy.

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### **Acronyms List**

- CFE: The Conventional Armed Forces Treaty in Europe
- CSCE: Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
- FSA: Freedom Support Act
- IMFWB: The International Monetary Fund and World Bank
- MTCR: The Missile Technology Control Regime
- MTCP: The Missi Trans-Caspian Pipeline
- NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- NKR: The Nagorno Karabakh Republic
- OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom
- OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- PFP: Partnership for Peace
- SEATO: The South East Asia Treaty Organization
- SRBM: Short-Range Ballistic Missiles
- UNSC: United Nations Security Council
- WMD: Weapons Mass Destruction



## **General Introduction**

After the cold war, the United States turned its attention to different geostrategic regions. The South Caucasus region was the one of these regions. The area is featured by a geo strategic importance due its location between Asia and Europe as well as its worth of natural resources such as oil and gas. However, the region had faced several conflicts, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is one of the famous disputes in the South Caucasus area. Armenia and Azerbaijan are the conflicting sides of the dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh mountainous territory.

This region territory was considered as Azerbaijani land but with majority of Armenian population. The conflict started after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when the majority of the Armenian of Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia demanded the integrity of the Nagorno Karabakh to Armenia. At the first time the proposal was accepted but it refused after a while. Armenia did not accept that and decided to get the territory by force.

The Nagorno Karabakh region had seen two major wars on its history, the first war in 1992 and the second war in 2020. There were other wars in 2010 and 2016 but the long of them has taken four days. During these two major wars of the Nagorno Karabakh, several powers had intervened to resolve the dispute such as Russia, Turkey and United States. This latter, has shaped a foreign policy depends on several factors in including stability in the region, energy security, and geo strategic interests.

The dissertation includes the research question of what role has the US played in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict? It also investigates the background of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as well as how have other international actors responded to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict?

The dissertation aims to comprehensively describe the role US foreign policy regarding the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and the South Caucasus region, as well as its goals and objectives behind this interference, also to understand the US relationship with regional powers such as Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey, in order to assess how their geopolitics shape US responses towards the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Finally, to highlight the effectiveness of US diplomacy at different stages of the Nagorno-Kharabakh conflict.

The study is conducted within a qualitative historical interpretive framework. It draws on existing publications and analyses of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as sources and emphasizes that understanding how the US approached the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is crucial to comprehending US foreign policy in the South Caucasus region as a whole.

In this dissertation, we hypothesize the following:

The US foreign policy towards the Nagorno-Kharabakh conflict is influenced by various factors such as geopolitical considerations, strategic interests in the region.

The US has sought to achieve a lasting peace settlement through diplomatic avenues and encouraged both sides to show goodwill and move forward with negotiations rather than an armed confrontation.

The dissertation intitled "US Foreign Policy towards the South Caucasus the Nagorno-Kharabakh a Case Study" is a work that highlights the main diplomatic strategies used by the US and other relevant international actors in the resolution of one of the most complex conflicts in Europe. Through this work, it is possible to gain better insight into how external factors have shaped regional dynamics and understand what measures should be taken to ensure sustainable peace. In addition, this dissertation provides a detailed intervention of the US towards the region and assesses its effectiveness.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a comprehensive overview of foreign policy, highlighting the definition, objectives, and instruments. It addresses the US foreign policy towards central Asia from Bill Clinton administration to Trump administration. The second chapter offers a detailed introduction to the South Caucasus region, emphasizing Azerbaijan and Armenia, and delves into the origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, including major global powers' involvement and two significant wars related to it. The third chapter devoted for the interpretation of the US foreign policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, examining the intervention of different administrations from Bill Clinton to Trump and identifying strengths and weaknesses in their approaches to engage and resolve this conflict.

## **Chapter One: the US Foreign Policy towards the Central Asia**

### **1Introduction**

In general, "foreign policy" is a term that refers to the activities of a country conducted with other international countries in an effort to secure political, economic and military interests abroad. This chapter is devoted to conceptual framework. It gives the definition of the concept of Foreign Policy from different analysts and experts as well as the statement of the US Department of the State which highlights the role of US Foreign Policy. It is also highlighted the US objectives and instruments in general. This chapter is shed the light on the US Foreign Policy towards Central Asia. It is offered past leadership examples from Bill Clinton to Donald Trump policies towards this region as well as the objectives and interests of United States towards the Central Asia.

#### **1.1 Foreign Policy as Concept**

George Modelski defines foreign policy as "the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment" (Tayfur117). On the other hand, Hermann defined foreign policy as "the discrete purposeful action that results from the political level decision of an individual or group of individuals. It is not the decision, but a product of the decision"(Bojang1). In 1973, McGowan gave this definition "foreign policy could be defined as the actions of national or central governments taken towards other actors external to the legal sovereignty of the initiating governments"(Tayfur117). Padelford and Lincoln stated it was "the totality of its dealings with the external environment. Foreign Policy is the overall result of the process by which a state translates

its broadly conceived goals and interests into specific courses of action in order to achieve its objectives and preserve its interests” (Bojang2).

Wilkenfield develops the following definition: "foreign policy is those official actions (and reactions) which sovereign states initiate (or receive and subsequently react to) for the purpose of altering or creating a condition (or problem) outside their territorial sovereign boundaries” (Tayfur117). However, Hugu Gibson emphasized its “well-rounded comprehensive plan based on knowledge and experience for conducting business with rest of world”(Bojang2) which promotes proliferation for interests and goals, while Deborah Gerner noted it was “intentions, statements, and actions directed towards the external world and response from others actors”(Bojang2).

## **1.2 US foreign Policy its Objectives and Interests**

The US Department of State Is the responsible of directing American foreign policy, its mission according to a statement is to " protect and promote US security, prosperity, and democratic values, and shape an international environment in which all Americans can thrive" (About - United States Department of State).

According to a National Security Strategy for a New Century, the White House, in December 1999 which listed the objectives of their foreign policy:

The United States has a myriad of options to shape and bolster international harmony while advancing its interests and safeguarding the world. Efforts to mold the international environment involve strengthening diplomatic alliances that ensure regional stability, checking proliferation threats such as weapons of mass destruction, preventing armed conflicts, as well as countering terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, and illegal immigration. Interagency collaboration also plays a central role in shaping the security environment. By cooperating with strategic partners worldwide,

the US can advance collective interests and counter emerging dangers, and innovatively enforce norms and values for promoting global peace and prosperity (5).

Arms management and the prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction are a fundamental part of their national security strategy and are critical to our ability to protect our nation using our military power. They seek to establish and enforce arms-control and nonproliferation pacts that reinforce their efforts to impede the dissemination and use of weapons of mass destruction, prevent the movement of materials and skills used in their development, and limit the deployment of conventional weapons that inflict needless harm. At the same time, these initiatives promote stability within regions, especially when reducing armaments (7).

According to Opened CUNY, the security of the United States and its citizens' lives is the main aim of US Foreign Policy and it designed for this purpose. The second main objective is assuring that the country continues to have access to vital resources and markets around the globe. The third goal of American Foreign Policy is the maintenance of the world's power balance. The fourth main goal is the defense of freedom and human rights.

According to Antony Blinken, the Secretary of State, in his first speech on March 3, 2021 in which delivers remarks on Foreign Policy. The foreign policy during Biden presidency aims to strength the global health security, to build global economic, to fight for American job as well as their protection right and interests, to use any instrument to stop stealing intellectual property, to renew democracy, to work for creating effective immigration system, to revitalize the ties with allies, to secure leadership technology, to manage the biggest task that faced the US in this century which is China as a technological power (Department of State).

### **1.3 The Instruments of Modern American Foreign Policy**

According to Essentials of American Politics, a government's peaceful representation to other foreign governments is known as diplomacy, it is principally carried out by the US State Department. Moreover, the United Nations was established in 1945 in order to counter risks to both international and national security and to engage the globe in advancing American foreign policy. Additionally, the global monetary system seeks to encourage economic growth through the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Following World War II, economic assistance namely the Marshall Plan aided in the reconstruction of their allies and cultivated a sense of diplomatic allegiance to the United Nations. Regional security agreements including The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization make an effort to allay concerns about the UN's incapability to resolve conflicts involving the spread of communism. Finally, Military deterrence, which led to proxy conflicts in Korea and Vietnam and prepared the United States for its involvement in the Gulf War, was seen as a way to stop Soviet expansion in Europe and Asia (Essentials of American Politics). According to a National Security Strategy for a New Century, the White House, in December 1999 listed the tools of their foreign policy:

#### **1.3.1 Diplomacy**

The use of diplomacy is crucial in combating dangers posed to their nation's security. Consistent and regular diplomatic interactions carried out by their envoys and representatives globally yield invaluable outcomes. These activities are fundamental to maintaining their partnerships, strongly voicing American concerns, mediating regional conflicts through peaceful means, preventing disasters and humanitarian crises, discouraging hostile actions against the United States and their

associates, advancing international economic coordination and stability, promoting trade and investment prospects, and projecting US authority on a global scale(5).

### **1.3.2 International Assistance**

The aid provided by the United States has facilitated the development of emerging democracies. It has also encouraged the protection of human rights and the adherence to legal systems while supporting free-market economies globally. The US-led efforts have contributed to curtailing international criminal activities, containing health hazards, safeguarding the environment and sustaining natural resources. In addition, such endeavors have slowed population growth and prevented humanitarian crises around the world (6).

### **1.3.3 Military Engagement**

The involvement of the US military holds great importance in establishing international security standards that secure and boost US interests. However, it should not be treated as an alternative to other forms of interactions such as diplomatic, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and educational measures. By making use of their presence outside the country and by actively engaging in vital operations like defense partnership, security assistance, and training procedures with allies and partners, the Armed Forces help to prevent hostile and forceful actions. These activities also encourage collaboration, support regional steadiness, and set as examples for armed forces in emerging democracies (11).



#### **1.4 Bill Clinton's Policy towards Central Asia**

The Clinton administration had three main goals in Central Asia which are securing the legacy of Soviet Weapons Mass Destruction WMDs, safeguarding and defending the newly won sovereignty and territorial integrity of independent states from Russian neo-imperialism, and ending Russia's monopoly over Central Asian transit and pipeline routes (Hassan8). Beginning in 1991, the United States has depicted itself as the foremost agent of peace, advancement, and respect for humanity in the region, with American governance being promoted as a "global force for good." Holy Quran quotes such as "Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see its results" are frequently utilized by White House officials (Bafeoev28).

In 1993 December, an agreement on cooperative threat reduction was signed between Vice-President Al Gore and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Under this agreement, they aimed to dismantle and eliminate the 104 SS-18 missiles and silos situated in Kazakhstan. In the subsequent year, a joint commission was established, leading to institutionalization of security cooperation between the US and Kazakhstan. In the middle of 1994, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan became part of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. From 1995, officers from these countries along with Tajikistan took part in PfP exercises. The inclusion of these Central Asian states in the PfP marked the formalization of their ties to NATO, created a platform for regional security collaboration, and laid the foundation for joint operations (Wishnick, Growing U.S. Security Interests in Central Asia 3).

During his testimony to the Congress on March 17, 1999, Stephen Sestanovich, the former Ambassador-at-Large and Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the New Independent States, summarized the Clinton administration's strategy towards Central Asia as aiming for four interconnected aims. First, formatting the democratic political institutions, second, reforming the economic market, third, looking for cooperation between US and the new states, finally being a responsible of security policies such as non-proliferation, terrorism and drug trafficking. He emphasized the role of US involvement in Central Asia in order to make sure of independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the New Independence States (Department of State).

### **1.5 Bush Administration's Policy towards Central Asia**

At Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, according Condoleezza Rice, former National Security Advisor, remarked on Terrorism and Foreign Policy on April 29, 2002 that due the terrorist attacks the foreign policy of US changed. The American Armed Forces will not be used just for humanitarian assistance and managing civil disputes.

The attacks of 11 September foregrounded the idea that foreign policy started from home. As a result, the main focus of the United States during that period is to protect them and to look for the best defense at home and think about airport security, protection of nuclear power plants, and visa requirements. Taliban and Afghanistan's government were the first accused of these terrorist attacks and they shared the responsibility to do it. Therefore, the war between the US and the Taliban started and it is considered a second war on terror. However, the foreign policy in Afghanistan will be as it was before the attacks by promoting democracy, and building up political institutions, and economic institutions.

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### **1.6 The US Foreign Policy in Central Asia during Barack Obama's Presidency**

According to Hillary Rodham Clinton, former Secretary of State, in speech at New York City on September 22, 2011 at the New Silk Road Ministerial Meeting highlighted the need for economic and security cooperation in order to help the Afghan people. She emphasized the continuity of developing efforts from stabilization projects to the focus on creating jobs, supporting the private sector, and unifying the economics of Afghanistan and Central Asia.

In doing so, the United States started a new partnership with Afghanistan in order to promote private investment and economic growth in the energy sector. The pipeline is an example of energy infrastructure; it runs from Turkmenistan, through Afghanistan, Pakistan, and into India. Through this road, economic and political progress will be gradually reinforced. Furthermore, the states will benefit from great trade as well as it will benefit from a good partnership with the United States of America.

The White House launches the New Silk Road and Northern Distribution Network initiatives during the Obama administration in order to strengthen its non-military presence in Afghanistan and to approach China and Russia as two strategic rivals and allies in Central Asia. In order to economically and politically contain Iran and Russia, the United States also aggressively pursues gas and oil pipeline projects outside of Iran's and Russia's main land namely the Trans-Afghanistan

Pipeline or Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline and the Trans-Caspian Pipeline (Koohkan and Sahabi).

### **1.7 The US Foreign Policy in Central Asia during Donald Trump's Presidency**

According to United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025, Advancing Sovereignty and Economic Prosperity list and highlight the US objectives in Central Asia:

First, assist in the preservation of Central Asian sovereignty and independence by fostering a strong partnership among individual states, as well as within the region as a whole. Through steadfast involvement in matters related to economics, energy, security, democracy, and governance, the Central Asian countries will collaborate as a unified group of allies, empowering their ability to protect their independent rights and make decisive actions towards achieving economic self-sufficiency for sustainable development.

Second, developing a comprehensive framework to counter and prevent terrorist threats in Central Asia that prioritizes community-led initiatives, strengthens regional cooperation, and promotes inclusive economic and social development to create resilience against extremist ideology and prevent the region from becoming a fertile ground for terrorist organizations. Third, the goal is to enhance and sustain stability in Afghanistan while strengthening the partnership between the United States and Central Asian nations.

By doing so, these nations will be able to offer reliable support towards global endeavors aimed at stabilizing Afghanistan, ensuring their security and active involvement. Fourth, promote the establishment of connections between Afghanistan and Central Asia. By strengthening bonds across various domains including energy, economy, culture, trade, and security, the Central Asian nations will be able to aid regional solidity. Finally, the stability of the Central Asian states can be enhanced by implementing significant citizen engagement, transparent policy-making, inclusive

political systems through fair elections, and promoting the reform of rule of law and human rights respect.

### **1.8 The US Interests and Objectives in Central Asia : Prior 11\9 Terrorist Attacks**

The United States' policy of safeguarding the independence, integrity, and security of these states, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan aims to advance its crucial geostrategic interest in preventing the emergence of a Eurasian empire on either continent (Blank75). Following the partial establishment of relations in the 1990s, the US quickly increased their military collaboration with Central Asian countries after 9/11. As a way to promote democratic values, responsible security strategies, and counterbalance the growing influence of Russia, China, and Iran, the US recognized the independence of Central Asian states in late 1991 and formed diplomatic ties with them(Nichol3).

The adoption of the Freedom Support Act on October 24, 1992, allowed the United States to provide diverse aid to the Central Asian nations, with the initial focus on promoting democracy and free market economies. As a result of the significant US security interest in eliminating nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan and preventing the proliferation of weapons in the area, security cooperation would become increasingly important in US relations with these countries (wishnick, Growing U.S. Security Interests in Central Asia 3).

According to the US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott in a 1997 said that “their support [for Central Asia] has four dimensions - the promotion of democracy, the creation of free market economies, the sponsorship of peace and cooperation within and among the countries of the region, and their integration with the larger international community” at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.”

The possibility of instability in the region was also a concern for the United States. During the 1990s, the focus of US policy was on preventing emerging threats while dealing with a seemingly calm foreign policy environment. To achieve this, the United States participated in global peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts, encouraged the development of democracy and economic reform in various parts of the world, and searched for ways to restrain the potential risks posed by WMD proliferation, international terrorism, and transnational crime (Oliker and Shlapak18).

### **1.9 The US Interests and Objectives in Central Asia: Post 11\9 Terrorist Attacks**

During the 1990s, the United States had the opportunity to address economic underdevelopment and support the spread of democracy, primarily driven by moral obligation and the favorable absence of significant threats (Oliker and Shlapak19). However, the terrorist attacks on 9/11 caused a significant impact on the Central Asian region, leading to increased attention and focus on the fight against terrorism. This event became a catalyst for Washington to re-evaluate its foreign policy priorities concerning Central Asia, which had become crucial to the success of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (Nikolaev54).

In 2001-02, US military involvement with these countries rapidly increased, and counter terrorism became a primary focus of American policy. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were designated as frontline states in OEF, and the United States was granted temporary basing

rights at Manas (Kyrgyzstan) and K2 (Uzbekistan) (Wishnick, Russia, China, and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for...5).

According to the assistant secretary of state for Central Asia A. Elizabeth Jones who listed three long-term US interests in the region in December 2001 which are” preventing the spread of terrorism, providing tools for political and economic reform and institution of the rule of law, and ensuring the security and transparent development of Caspian energy reserves.”

In 2003, as the US military turned its attention towards Iraq, State Department officials recognized a wider range of concerns in Central Asia. These included security issues such as combating terrorism, nonproliferation and narcotics trafficking, ensuring access to global markets for regional energy supplies and utilizing associated revenue for sustainable development, and promoting domestic reform by encouraging democratic political systems and market-oriented mechanisms (Wishnick, Russia, China, and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for...5).

According to Lorne Craner, the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in June 2004 emphasized that the main strategic objective for the United States in Central Asia is democratization, independence and the stability of the nations in the region. The other objective is the progression of Central Asia economic including free market and direct investment of the foreign countries (Blank2-3).

### **1.10 Conclusion**

To sum up, the United States Foreign Policy includes all matters pertaining to US foreign affairs and interactions with other countries. US foreign policy has principles such as democracy, free markets and free trade, human rights and the rule of law. These values are underpinned by a set of objectives and goals focused on defending American interests around the world while advancing prosperity and security at home. For this latter, US foreign policy uses different instruments

ranging from diplomacy and economic engagement to military involvement in order to attain their desired outcomes internationally. Since 1991, The United States has had a strong presence in Central Asia following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Due to strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Central Asia has become an important region for US foreign policy interests as it provides access to valuable resources such as gas, oil as well gas pipelines.



## **Chapter two: The Nagorno-Kharabakh Conflict**

### **2 Introduction**

Due to its location at the crossroad of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, the South Caucasus region, which contains Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, is considered as a region of significant geopolitical importance. This chapter addresses to the geopolitical importance of the South Caucasus region as well as its independent nations Azerbaijan and Armenia. This chapter sheds the light on the origin of the ongoing conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh among Azerbaijan and Armenia since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1988. It is also highlights the international actors, Russia, Turkey and Iran, involvement and their interests in the conflict as well as the involvement of the Minsk group as mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

#### **2.1 The South Caucasus: its Political and Geo-Economic Importance**

The South Caucasus region officially became independent nations with sovereignty of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia emerged as separate entities. This established a distinct sub-region in terms of geo-economics and geopolitics that was recognized by major global players (Bekiarova). It is a significant region, sitting at the crossroads between Asia and Europe, facilitating trade and transit as well as being important from a resource perspective- particularly oil and gas (Zeynalov17).

The South Caucasus area amounts to slightly over 186,000 sq. km with the separatist regions. In the beginning of 2019, a population of just over 18 million inhabits this area, which is gradually increasing. The Islam religion is followed by over half of its population (Bekiarova). Pre-Soviet era, the Caucasus served as a hub where the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian empires came together, vying for power and territorial supremacy. The three empires had previously governed the area, transforming it into a significant cross-cultural junction along a vital transit path (Stronski ).

### **2.1.1 Overview about Armenia**

According to "The Republic of Armenia – Macroeconomic Review," which provides an overview of the geography of the Republic of Armenia, the country is situated in the southwestern part of Asia and encompasses an area of 29,800 square kilometers. Its greatest extent from northwest to southeast spans 360 kilometers, while from west to east it covers 200 kilometers. Forests cover 12.7 percent of the territory, water bodies occupy 5.6 percent, agricultural lands account for 46.8 percent, and other types of lands make up 34.9 percent. Armenia is traversed by several significant rivers, including the Araks (1072 km), Vorotan (179 km), Debet (178 km), Razdan (146 km), Agstev (133 km), and Arpa (126 km). The largest lake in Armenia is the Sevan Lake, which spans an area of 1240 square kilometers.

According to the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the Constitution was adopted on 5 July 1995 by a plebiscite. Its amendments were made on 27 November 2005 and on 6 December 2015 by referendum. The Republic of Armenia is an independent and democratic nation, characterized by its commitment to the rule of law, where ultimate authority lies with its citizens. The people of Armenia express their authority through the means of free elections, referenda, and the functioning of constitutional state and local self-governing bodies and officials. The exercise of state power adheres to the principles of the Constitution and laws, ensuring a separation and equilibrium between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

Armenia is considered as the first country that has accepted Christianity as its official faith, having established its own church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, in 301. Along with the Armenian diaspora, the Armenian Church has had a significant impact on the growth of the state. Only one-third of the entire Armenian population resides within the borders of the country due to

Armenia's sizable diaspora, one of the largest in the world, which is estimated to number around seven million. Russia, the US, France, and Iran all have sizable Armenian minorities (German<sup>3</sup>).

### **2.1.2 Overview about Azerbaijan**

Based on a May 2008 report from the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs within the Department of State, Azerbaijan can be found in the South Caucasus region. It shares its borders with Russia to the north, the Caspian Sea to the east, Iran to the south, and Georgia and Armenia to the west. The total area of Azerbaijan, including Nakhchivan and Nagorno-Karabakh, is 33,774 square miles. Baku serves as the capital city of Azerbaijan. In terms of its geographical features, Azerbaijan's landscape encompasses the Caucasus Mountains in the north and lowlands in the central region, where the Kura River flows

According to Report on “International Religious Freedom: Azerbaijan” on June 2, 2022 which states the diversity of ethnicity in Azerbaijan: in the mid-year of 2021 the population is 10.3 million, 96% of Muslim population (65% Shia and 35% Sunni). The Azerbaijani ethnicities are Muslims, however; the non-Muslims are Armenians, Russians and Georgians (Department of State).

Nearly 90% of these people belong to Azerbaijani ethnicity while the rest come from diverse backgrounds which include 3% Dagestani, 2.5% Russian, or 2.3% Armenian ancestry. The country lies along the western coast of the Caspian Sea with an official designation as a Christian state. However, Islam is the most widely practiced religion with almost 95% being Muslims. The Muslim majority includes primarily Shia adherents with Sunni comprising between 15- 30% according to government-reported statistics (German<sup>3</sup>).

According to the Department of the States, on August 30, 1991, Azerbaijan got its independence from the Soviet Union and became a republic state. In November 1995, the

constitution of Azerbaijan has approved through referendum. The government of Azerbaijan consists of three branches: Executive made up president prime minister and Council of Ministers, Legislative consists of unicameral National Assembly and Judicial headed by Supreme Court.

## **2.2 The Nagorno-Kharabakh as a Concept**

In Russian the term "Nagorno" means mountainous while in Turkish, the term "Karabakh" means "black garden", referring to the land's fruitfulness (Balayev16). Armenians refer to the region as "Artsakh", while Azerbaijanis refer to it as "Yukhari Karabakh" or "Upper Karabakh". The surrounding lowlands are not part of Nagorno Karabakh and it can be called "Lower Karabakh".

Previously, "Karabakh" referred to a larger area that included both Upper and Lower Karabakh. Now, Armenians use the term to refer specifically to the mountainous region where they were the majority population, however; Azerbaijanis extend the definition to include Lower Karabakh. Thus, the percentage population of Armenians in Karabakh is higher than that of Azerbaijanis who controlled Karabakh. The term "Nagorno Karabakh" came into being during Soviet rule when the upland region was separated from the lowland areas, with autonomy established in 1923(17).

Nagorno-Karabakh is a mountainous region within the larger and historical Karabakh area, which means "black garden" when literally translated. The term "Qarabagh" in Azerbaijani is derived from two Turkish words, kara and bakh. Kara means both black and fertile or rich, while bakh refers to a vast area of natural beauty that can also mean garden. Hence, the Karabakh region was known for being a naturally wealthy and fertile area where its geography was emphasized due to the qualities of the land (Zeynalov19).

### **2.3 The Origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict**

In 1923, Armenians represented 95% of the population in Mountainous Karabagh, This area was placed under Azerbaijani rule due to the division and rule policy set by imperialism, while Nakhichevan, mainly populated by Azerbaijanis. Over the 70-year from Soviet rule, the Armenian population in Nakhichevan decreased from around 25% to none% (Chorbajian et al.12). The Armenian population in Mountainous Karabagh fell from 94 %to 76 % (Lorusso3).

The 'Treaty of Brotherhood and Friendship' between the Soviet Union and Republican Turkey had a view which granted control of Nakhichevan and Karabakh to the Azerbaijani SSR. Stalin may have made this concession to Turkey to gain their support, as Lenin had previously viewed Kemal Atatürk as an ally. Atatürk opposed any territorial arrangements favorable to Soviet Armenia as he feared they may have claims on Turkey. Stalin's policy of dividing the Caucasian peoples to prevent unified resistance was also a factor in the separation of Armenians into two entities - the Armenian republic and Nagorno Karabakh, and Azeris into the Azerbaijani republic and Nakhichevan (Cornell, Turkey and The Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh 53).

In November 1924, the official proclamation of the Nagorno Karabakh was made. In the same year, Nakhjivan was granted the Autonomous Republic status under the Azerbaijan, even though the region was not geographically connected to mainland Azerbaijan (Cornell, The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict9). Josef Stalin implemented his "nationalities policy" by making Nagorno Karabakh an Autonomous Oblast within Soviet Azerbaijan, reversing a previous decision. His strategy of "divide and rule" effectively created separation and conflict between the two ethnic groups. The Armenian community in Nagorno Karabakh resisted Azerbaijani government control and continually requested Moscow to reconsider their homeland's political status (Raptis5).

In February 1988, peaceful Armenian demands for Mountainous Karabagh to be reunited with Armenia were met with violence. Pogroms in Sumgait resulted in dozens of Armenian deaths, with further atrocities in Kirovabad and Baku over the next two years. As a result, around 400,000 Armenians who lived in Azerbaijan fled, while approximately 170,000 Azerbaijanis living in Armenia left for Azerbaijan, resulting in rising nationalist tensions. In August 1990, Soviet troops, who consistently supported Communist-led Azerbaijan, conducted military operations alongside armed Azerbaijanis, forcing 150,000 to 200,000 Armenian villagers in the north of Mountainous Karabagh to flee (Chorbajian et al.13).

#### **2.4 The First Nagorno Karabakh war 1988-1994**

The conflict's escalation occurred in February 1988 when the Armenian majority when in Stepanakert in the Nagorno-Karabakh Supreme Soviet demanded to join the region with Armenia (Azerbaijan Seven Years...1). Azerbaijan dismissed the request, resulting in violence erupting between both sides with each blaming the other for starting it. Numerous refugees were displaced from their homes as a result of the fighting or being forcibly expelled. The Supreme Soviet of Armenia issued a decree declaring Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia's unification in 1989, which remains unchanged (Carley1).

In the beginning of 1992, Azerbaijan initiated a military operation against the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, and by June of the same year, they controlled around 60% of NKR's territory. During this operation, local Armenian population was massacred, and settlements were destroyed. At the same time, the Azerbaijani army launched attacks on the Armenian-Azerbaijani borders and attempted to occupy Armenian territories. In 1992, the President of Azerbaijan declared their intention to take over Syunik, the southern region of Armenia, and further stated his desire to wash his feet in Lake Sevan (Kocharyan8, 9).

In the middle of 1992, Nagorno-Karabakh came largely under Armenian control, causing the Azeri population, which comprised 20-25% of the region's inhabitants, to flee. Additionally, a land bridge known as the Lachin corridor was established to connect the area with Armenia. In 1993, Armenian forces went beyond their previous occupation by capturing almost one-fifth of Azerbaijani territory located outside Nagorno-Karabakh. They have remained unwilling to withdraw from this area unless Nagorno-Karabakh is granted independence and its safety assured (Carley1).

## **2.5 Foreign Countries' Interests: Russia and Turkey**

Due to its Strategic location and geo politic importance, the South Caucasus attracts the attention of the major powers in the globe such as Russia and Turkey. For their interests these international actors involve and engage to reduce the attention among Azerbaijan and Armenia, to resolve the conflict of Nagorno Karabakh, and to find an agreement that satisfied the two parties of the dispute.

### **2.5.1Russia**

The ongoing conflict in Mountainous Karabagh favors Moscow since it gives them the rights to interfere, either by sending troops to separate the warring parties or through other means that will help maintain their influence over Azerbaijan, and ensure that they remain aligned with Russia. One significant factor that affects Moscow's interest in Azerbaijan is the pipeline that will transport Baku's oil. There are two options, one directly to Turkey via Armenia and the other that heads northwards towards the Black Sea; Moscow prefers the latter and will push for its adoption (Chorbajian et al.15).

Armenia's President, Levon Ter Petrosian has adopted a diplomatic policy that accepts both Russian and Confederation of Independent States' proposals for ending the conflict. In contrast,

President Aliev of Azerbaijan has initially rejected such offers. However, time may not be on his side, and Moscow's attitude towards him remains uncertain. Despite the ongoing military engagements, only Moscow appears to hold the upper hand in the long run, with their interests firmly rooted in Azerbaijan as long as the political situation there remains stable (16).

According to Cornell's analysis, Russia has specific interests in Azerbaijan, which include the following objectives: preventing Turkey or Iran from establishing a presence in the Caucasus region through Azerbaijan, stationing Russian troops in the country to protect the "common CIS border" shared with Iran and Turkey, similar to the presence in Armenia and Georgia (notably, Azerbaijan is the only Transcaucasian state without Russian troops on its territory), exerting influence over Azerbaijan's utilization of its Caspian oil resources, and ensuring that the oil is exported through Russia (58).

Russia quickly became concerned about its capability to exert control over the political and economic processes in its previous republics and guarantee there would be no intervention from external parties that held an interest in what Russia viewed as its 'backyard' throughout history. It identified a chance to achieve its political goals through exerting influence on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict (Daskalova 4).

It also employed a strategic approach to get its leadership role in conflict management by proposing a unilateral ceasefire to the conflicting parties. This proposal was created to compete with the international suggestion made by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This strategy was intentionally designed to enable the conflicting parties to select the best alternative by comparing the proposals. Russia played a significant role in restarting direct aggression and achieving a ceasefire agreement in 1994(4).



The engagement of Russia in the Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute has played an important role in shaping its progress. Due to their significant influence in the region, Russia has the power to either intensify or ease the conflict depending on their interests. Additionally, Armenia's security is heavily dependent on Russia. It is a fact that both countries rely on each other to protect their interests (Askerov70).

Russia's potential bias as a mediator is brought into question due to its military presence in Armenia and its strategic interests in the region. Moscow's support of Armenia while serving as a co-chair of the Minsk Group has led to significant distrust from Baku towards Russia's mediation efforts. This mistrust was further compounded in 1997 when it was discovered that the Russian Defense Ministry had transferred around two billion dollars' worth of military equipment to Armenia, in violation of the Conventional Armed Forces Treaty in Europe (CFE). The weapons include SCUD-B and Iskander-M (SS-26 Stone) short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM), which have been provided to Armenia by Russia, a signatory of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) (Askerov71).

### **2.5.2 Turkey**

Turkey sought to establish foreign relations after the Soviet Union's dissolution to strengthen its position as a regional power. Consequently, it formed connections with its Turkic brethren in Azerbaijan and Central Asia (Sienrukos58). According to an ALJAZEERA article titled "What's Turkey's Involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict?" Turkey and Azerbaijan share robust economic, military, cultural, and linguistic bonds. Erdogan has frequently referred to the two countries as "one nation, two states."

According to Ergun, the expression "one nation, two states" is set up in several factors that Azerbaijan and Turkey share. First, the cultural, linguistic, religious, and historical similarities

have contributed to greater national memories for both countries. Second, the Armenian issue has also served as a common threat and "other" for both countries and the conflict with Armenia has revived historical injustice. Third, both of them have shared geostrategic and economic objectives, particularly on energy and transportation, which have created an economic interdependence between them. These enterprises have resulted in bilateral relations being highly established in society, which strengthens government policies (124, 125).

In 1991, Turkey was the first country which to acknowledge Azerbaijan. From 1991 to 1999, both countries signed bilateral agreements more than 100 agreements, such as trade, finance, agricultural, transport and telecommunication, scientific, health and social welfare, sporting, and cultural agreements. Construction companies in Turkey signed contracts in Azerbaijan for 2.5 billion dollars. The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline project to transport Caspian oil and gas to Turkey and Europe would, if realized, profit the partners to the tune of several billions of dollars a year. And this was only one of its many attractions, which included, among other things, the happy prospect of putting an end to Russia's monopoly over Central Asia's energy resources. Azerbaijan is looked upon as Turkey's closest partner in the Caucasus – most Azerbaijanis believe that Ankara is the only regional power with the will and ability to contain Russia's assertiveness (Nachmani104, 105).

Regardless the economic gains, Turkey face serious risks in its involvement in the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project. Azerbaijan has utilized the transportation of its energy to global markets through the east-west route as leverage in its dealings with Turkey. As part of the agreement for Azerbaijan's backing for the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, Turkey was obligated to ensure the safety of Azerbaijan (Gültekin56).

According to Reuters, the President of Turkey Tayyip Erdogan said “Armenia must immediately withdraw from territory” he added “it was occupying in Azerbaijan, and it was time to end a crisis over the breakaway region after clashes between Azeri and Armenian forces” and insisted that is the right time for ending this conflict and the region will become stable after the withdrawal of the Armenian army from the Azeri areas “The region will once again see peace after Armenia immediately withdraws from the Azeri lands it is occupying,” also he spoke about the failure of the Minsk group in resolving the conflict from its beginning (Staff).

According Commonsense.eu, Hulusi Akar, the Turkish Defense Minister, in emphasizing the Turkish support with Azerbaijan in its dispute against Armenia, said that “ We stand by Azerbaijan against Armenia, which committed genocide in Khojaly in front of the whole world and occupied Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan is not alone.” He also tackled the issue of the importance of the military activities “Azerbaijan-Turkey joint military exercises have been successfully implemented. This and subsequent exercises demonstrate to the world the common attitude of the two brotherly countries against threats and dangers.”

## **2.6 The Minsk Group as a Mediator in the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict**

According to Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe “the activities of which have become known as the Minsk Process, spearheads the OSCE's efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It is co-chaired by France, the Russian Federation, and the United States.”

In 1992, during its meeting in Helsinki, the previous Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe Council urged the Chairman-in-Office to arrange a conference concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan as soon as possible. This meeting was scheduled to occur in Minsk and serve as a platform for negotiating a peaceful agreement.

Following this, the Minsk Group was instituted at the OSCE Budapest Summit in 1994, which works towards conditions under which the aforementioned conference can be held (OSCE).

The co-chairpersons of the Minsk Group comprise from Russia, France, and the United States of America namely Igor Khovaev, Brice Roquefeuil, and Andrew Schofer. The group's regular members consist of Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, and Turkey in addition to Armenia and Azerbaijan. The OSCE Troika is also a fixed member of the group, revolving periodically (OSCE).

### **2.7The 44 Day War: The Second War 2020**

Due to Armenia's military aggression in July 2020 and its escalating political provocations, there was a looming possibility of renewed warfare in the near future. The events surrounding the July 2020 conflict, such as Russia's extensive military support to Armenia and Turkey's backing of Azerbaijan, indicated that Azerbaijan would not tolerate Armenia's provocations lightly. Unlike previous skirmishes, this time the war had the potential to be more extensive and prolonged (Aslani14).

Despite calls from certain nations and international organizations for an immediate ceasefire after the war resumed on September 27, with its devastating consequences becoming evident, the warring parties persisted in their hostilities. Despite three separate ceasefire agreements being reached (on October 10, 17, and 26) through the mediation of Russia, France, and the USA, the fighting never ceased (14).

Armenia sought to occupy new territories and targeted civilian areas far from the conflict zone, while Azerbaijan insisted on implementing UN Security Council resolutions and reclaiming its occupied territories. This led to low chances of finding common ground and a higher possibility

of one party achieving victory. Azerbaijan ultimately emerged victorious with military and psychological superiority, strengthened by Turkey's stabilizing role (Aslani15).

The following is a statement by the President of the Russian Federation, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia:

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

1. A complete ceasefire and termination of all hostilities in the area of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is declared starting 12:00 am (midnight) Moscow time on November 10, 2020. The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, hereinafter referred to as the “Parties,” shall stop in their current positions.
2. The Agdam District shall be returned to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 20, 2020.
3. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation, namely, 1,960 troops armed with firearms, 90 armoured vehicles and 380 motor vehicles and units of special equipment, shall be deployed along the contact line in Nagorno -Karabakh and along the Lachin Corridor.
4. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation shall be deployed concurrently with the withdrawal of the Armenian troops. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation will be deployed for five years, a term to be automatically extended for subsequent five-year terms unless either Party notifies about its intention to terminate this clause six months before the expiration of the current term.
5. For more efficient monitoring of the Parties’ fulfillment of the agreements,

a peacemaking center shall be established to oversee the ceasefire.

6. The Republic of Armenia shall return the Kalbajar District to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 15, 2020, and the Lachin District by December 1, 2020. The Lachin Corridor (5 km wide), which will provide a connection between Nagorno - Karabakh and Armenia while not passing through the territory of Shusha, shall remain under the control of the Russian Federation peacemaking forces. As agreed by the Parties, within the next three years, a plan will be outlined for the construction of a new route via the Lachin Corridor, to provide a connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, and the Russian peacemaking forces shall be subsequently relocated to protect the route. The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee the security of persons, vehicles and cargo moving along the Lachin Corridor in both directions.

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

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

9. All economic and transport connections in the region shall be unblocked.

The Republic of Armenia shall guarantee the security of transport connections between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to arrange unobstructed movement of persons, vehicles and cargo in both directions. The Border Guard Service of the Russian Federal Security Service shall be responsible for overseeing the transport connections. As agreed by the Parties, new transport links shall be built to connect the

Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and the western regions of Azerbaijan.”(United Nation Security Council)

The 44-day war ended with a nine-point declaration, mediated by Russia, which required both sides to remain in place, established timelines for Armenia's withdrawal from certain districts, allowed for Russian peacekeeping forces to be stationed in the region, and resolved issues related to the Lachin corridor and Nakhchivan's connection to Azerbaijan. While the Nagorno Karabakh dispute is not fully resolved, this agreement paved the way for a comprehensive settlement.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The South Caucasus region has a geo strategic importance. Its strategic location offers several opportunities such as trade, transportation, and energy corridors. However, the region is continually affected by conflicts, and unsettled territorial disputes along with ongoing ethnic tensions that pose challenges to regional stability. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been a particularly contentious issue for decades and has occasionally resulted in outbreaks of violence. Major Powers such as Russia, Turkey, and Iran have long- standing interests in this pivotal region, making it an area where great power competition is intense, directly affecting regional security and holding significant implications.

## **Chapter three: The US Foreign Policy towards the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict**

### **3 Introduction**

From 1988, the hostility between Armenia and Azerbaijan started over the Nagorno Karabakh mountainous territory. However, the explosion of the first war between the two countries was in 1992. The war ended by the ceasefire agreement in May 1994, the pleasure of the ceasefire deal goes back to the intervention of Russia. In the autumn of 2020 the war between the conflicting parties intensified again. Russia also intervened in this second war and resolved the conflict in the second time in history of the Nagorno Karabakh. This chapter focuses on the US Foreign Policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. This chapter examines how the United States addressed this dispute and its attempts to found a peaceful resolution as well as balancing its interests in the area of SouthCaucasus.

#### **3.1 Bill Clinton's Foreign Policy towards the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict**

From the beginning, the US policy towards Nagorno Karabakh has displayed a dual nature in regards to Azerbaijan. In October 1992, "Section 907" of FSA "Congress denied all aid to the Azerbaijan government unless it respected international human rights standards, abandoned its blockade of Armenia, ceased its use of force against Karabakh and Armenia, and sought a peaceful solution to the conflict" (Azerbaijan Seven Years ...133).

In February 1993, the legislative bill introduced by Michigan Senator David, H.Res.86 and 103rd Congress that aimed to:

- (1) continue to send immediate fuel and humanitarian assistance to help Armenia and its economy and continue to withhold all U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan until Azerbaijan lifts its blockade and other uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh;
- (2) promote a lasting and equitable resolution to the conflict within the United Nations and the Conference



on Security and Cooperation in Europe; (3) promote the full participation of the representatives of Nagorno Karabagh in all negotiations concerning this conflict; (4) encourage Turkey to play a neutral role in helping to promote an equitable resolution to this crisis; and (5) condemn the continuing blockade of Armenia and Karabagh and demand the immediate lifting of the blockade and the opening of corridors to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian goods to Armenia.

Similarly, an early 1994 bill presented by Indiana Congress member Lee Hamilton to repeal the aid ban on Azerbaijan was challenged by New Hampshire Congress member Dick Swett. Swett claimed that unless Azerbaijan ceased the invasion of Nagorno Karabakh and changed its aggressive stance against Armenia, the ban should not be lifted. By then, Armenian troops had seized the entire territory of Nagorno Karabakh and 20% of Azerbaijani land (Yildirm4). These events demonstrate how Congress dealt with Nagorno Karabakh issue.

At the political level, the White House condemned Armenia's attack on the defenseless Azeri town of Agdam. However, Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Assistant Secretary Strobe Talbott neither condemned Armenia nor blamed paramilitary Armenian forces but rather cautiously blamed them. While officially condemning Armenia, the USA took no concrete measures but supported it with an aid program and imposed an embargo on Azerbaijan. As a matter of fact, the White House did take a step that favored Armenia (Yildirm4).

During 12-18 February 1992, the first Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) mission to Azerbaijan and Armenia was led by James Baker, the US Secretary of State. He was personally involved in negotiating an agreement between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan on how Nagorno-Karabakh would be represented in CSCE-sponsored negotiations (Pashayeva and Blank12, 13).

The parties established the "Baker Rules," named after him, which recognized Armenia and Azerbaijan as the two main parties in the conflict, with the representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities in the Nagorno-Karabakh region defined as "interested" parties (Hopmann15). As a result of this visit, an Interim Report of the Rapporteur Mission on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh was created and adopted at the 7th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials held in Prague on 27-28 February 1992.

The US, while working within the CSCE Minsk Group, also supported four resolutions by the UNSC regarding the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh. The resolution of 822 was adopted by the Security Council at its 3205th meeting, on 30 April 1993, the resolution of 853 was adopted by the Security Council at its 3259th meeting, on 29 July 1993, the resolution of 874 was adopted by the Security Council at its 3292nd meeting, on 14 October 1993, and the resolution of 884 was adopted by the Security Council at its 3313th meeting, on 12 November 1993 (Department of State). These resolutions expressed that the conflict put the sovereignty of Azerbaijan under threat and could create negative precedents in world affairs by promoting the use of force for territorial gains.

The successful achievement of the May 1994 ceasefire agreement through Russian mediation efforts was a significant and highly anticipated milestone in the initial negotiation process. While the USA initially opted to use the Minsk Group rather than its power to intervene, Russia was dissatisfied with the USA taking an active role even within the Minsk Group, particularly following the introduction of its "Near Abroad" policy. Nevertheless, US involvement increased in the summer of 1994 as the Clinton Administration aimed to revive the CSCE efforts (Pashayeva and Blank16).

In the second term of the Clinton Administration, there was a shift in the approach towards the South Caucasus and Central Asian nations. The reasoning behind this change was that unless these countries were stabilized and strengthened, the energy resources in Caspian could not be exploited efficiently (20). The US Department of State outlined several objectives in a number of speeches delivered by Strobe Talbott to the three countries, one of these speeches held at Washington, DC, on March 31, 1998 “Our assistance programs support democratic institution-building, economic reforms, and numerous programs aimed at strengthening the rule of law and civil society.”

As it is noticed, the intervention of the United States of America in Nagorno Karabakh was limited in the scope of the Minsk Group. It had no contribution to the cease-fire of 1994 as Russia stated, however; the United States tried to force Azerbaijan to cease-fire through “section 907”. On the other hand, Armenia was not a weak opponent, as it tried to control the region of Nagorno Karabakh and some of the lands of Azerbaijan. The US did not condemn Armenia as it did Azerbaijan. This is evidence that America was leaning in favor of Armenia.

### **3.2 George W. Bush’s Foreign Policy towards the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict**

From the beginning of his presidency, President George W. Bush takes a more hands-on approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan are brought together for high-level talks, under Secretary of State Colin Powell's initiative, on April 3, 2001 at Key West, Florida. He hosted President of Armenia Kocharian and President of Azerbaijan Aliyev and the co-chairs from the Russian Federation and from France. The meeting was held in order to hear the opinions of the two conflicting parties and to reach a solution that satisfied both parties and discussed a peaceful resolution to end the conflict that has existed since 1988.

In the conference, the President of Azerbaijan Aliyev stated that the reason behind the conflict is unjust Soviet leadership. He emphasized that Nagorno Karabakh had its autonomous government since 1921. The president of Azerbaijan stated that Armenia has taken the first step in the war and called the separatists in Nagorno Karabakh to rebel. He also praised the efforts and the hard work of the Minsk group the co-chairs by giving several proposals to resolve the dispute. The first and the second proposals were accepted, however; the third one was refused, the president explained why the “common state” was refused because it did not consist international law basis. While the Armenian president did not speak about the issue of Nagorno Karabakh at all, he only thanked the United States for hosting and concluded that he would not waste time recounting the history of the conflict because it has become known to everyone. As it is noticed no diplomatic agreement is reached despite the talks and personal meetings with both Presidents. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, US foreign policy towards the South Caucasus shifted as the region became involved in the GWoT. With national security and defense becoming top priorities, Azerbaijan's strong support of the GWoT led to closer cooperation between the two countries on security issues. The de facto repeal of Section 907, an amendment to the US Freedom Support Act, urged by the Bush Administration in 2002 allowed for Baku's role as a key ally in the GWoT ensured through annual Presidential waivers. As a result, the security cooperation between the USA and Azerbaijan has become broader, including military ties in areas such as Caspian energy, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline security, and participation of Azerbaijan in US-led military missions in various countries (Pashayeva and Blank24).

During Bush's presidency, the ban on Azerbaijan was lifted, which contributed to the development of the relationship US and Azerbaijan, especially the common view towards the war on terror and security cooperation. As it is noticed above, American interests have changed after

the terrorist attack, security become the head of the interests and the only thinking of the United States was American safety. While on the side of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, nothing has changed despite the diplomatic meeting in which the US hosted to tackle the issue.

### **3.3 Barack Obama's Foreign Policy towards the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict**

During the Obama administration, the South Caucasus region was initially neglected, however, US policy eventually adopted a more critical position towards Azerbaijan. President Obama made a notable impact on the long-standing Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh during his early presidency through various means. Among these, the most significant was the Turkey-Armenia peace agreement. The peace deal had been encouraged by the OSCE Minsk Group, which aimed to leverage any headway between Turkey and Armenia to stimulate progress in the stalled talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Pashayeva and Blank 27).

During his first foreign trip as President to Turkey in April 2009, President Obama made a historic announcement of his support for Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, showing his commitment to fostering international cooperation and diplomacy (Poirier). According to Schleifer, in his report intitled "Turkey: Obama Connects with Turks, Promotes Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement" the president Obama says "We've already seen historic and courageous steps taken by Turkish and Armenian leaders. These contacts hold out the promise of a new day. An open border would return the Turkish and Armenian people to a peaceful and prosperous coexistence that would serve both of your nations," Obama added "So I want you to know that the United States strongly supports the full normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia. It is a cause worth working towards".

As a result, the collaborative efforts of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, the Republic of Armenia, and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs culminated

in a Joint Statement on April 22, 2009, which aimed “to normalizing their bilateral relations and developing them in a spirit of good-neighborliness, and mutual respect, and thus to promoting peace, security and stability in the whole region” (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

This particular move caused discontent among Azerbaijanis as it conflicted with their strategic goals and objectives, as Baku has linked the improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Conversely, the United States pressed Ankara to ratify protocols related to the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations without referencing the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh problem. This initiative was deemed an error by Azerbaijani

President Ilham Aliyev, who on April 14, 2009, criticized US policy for compelling Turkey to open its border with Armenia despite the latter's seizure of seven Azerbaijani regions surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh (Baban and Shiriyev99).

In recent times, the Azerbaijan region has garnered considerable attention from high-ranking officials from United States including the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. According to Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, in report in titled of “Clinton Seeks to Restart Talks between Azerbaijan, Armeniastate”, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Azerbaijan in order to restart of peace talks over Nagorno-Karabakh, reform bilateral ties, and push the oil-rich Caucasus nation on human rights.

According to the Department of state, on July 4, 2010, Hillary Rodham Clinton Secretary of State met with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Mammadyarov at Baku to discuss the ongoing conflict of Nagorno Karabakh and to assist of finding peaceful resolution and assert of none-using force to resolve the dispute based on Helsinki principles. The stability in the region was of most important, as evidenced by Clinton's visit and her emphasis on peacefully resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which she addressed in both Yerevan and Baku.

In 2016, the United States government showed a growing interest in facilitating the peace process related to the long-standing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. US Secretary of State John Kerry acknowledged the recent success of maintaining a ceasefire along the disputed territories' Line of Contact and urged the two presidents to avoid increased tension to advance peace talks. He also reminded them of their commitments made in previous meetings. Furthermore, during a phone call, US President Barack Obama recognized Russia's efforts in mediating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Pashayeva and Blank 33).

During his presidency, the President Obama's approach to conflict resolution was in diplomatic way such as Turkey Armenian deal, as he also sought to bring the conflicting parties together and find a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

#### **3.4 Donald Trump's Foreign Policy towards the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict**

The Trump administration attempted to stop the fighting in the autumn of 2020 and restart negotiations. On September 27, 2020, the US Department of State expressed concern about the significant military activity along the Line of Contact (Azerbaijan and Armenia: The Nagorno...17). Furthermore, the Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun held talks with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan to urge an immediate cessation of hostilities (Staff).

The Department of State also observed that non-regional involvement would worsen regional tensions. In a press briefing on September 27, President Trump acknowledged the conflict and expressed hope of stopping it. Following a trilateral statement issued by Russia, France, and the United States on October 1, President Trump joined in condemning the recent escalation of fighting and called for an immediate resolution of hostilities between the relevant military forces (Dallison). The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan were also urged to commit without delay to

resume substantive negotiations, in good faith and without preconditions (Azerbaijan and Armenia: The Nagorno...17).

On October 23, separate meetings were held in Washington, DC, between US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Department of State highlighted that Secretary Pompeo emphasized the importance of ending violence and protecting civilians. Additionally, he stressed the significance of substantial dialogue between both parties.

Therefore, the United States, Armenia, and Azerbaijan issued a joint statement on October 5, 2020, acknowledging that the US had facilitated arduous negotiations, attempting to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute through peaceful means (Department of State). Even though two previous ceasefire agreements did not hold, President Trump congratulated the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders on a US-brokered ceasefire deal, anticipating that this would result in the preservation of several human lives (Osman).

On October 30, 2020, the Minsk Group co-chairs met with foreign ministers from Armenia and Azerbaijan in Geneva, Switzerland. During the meeting, both sides agreed to refrain from intentionally targeting civilian populations, exchange remains and prepare for a detainee exchange (the OSCE).

In response to a November 9, 2020 agreement, Secretary Pompeo issued a statement expressing gratitude towards the cessation of active hostilities and acknowledged that concluding recent fighting is only the first step in attaining a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The United States committed \$5 million in humanitarian assistance to those affected by recent fighting. The US Ambassador James Gilmore expressed anxiety about the deteriorating humanitarian situation on the ground and urged both parties to avoid any actions that could trigger



the resumption of hostility, instead encouraging to leverage of the ceasefire to lay the foundations for enduring peace (Azerbaijan and Armenia: The Nagorno...18).

As is noticed, the Trump administration sought to find a diplomatic solution to the cease-fire between the two parties, through secret meetings of both foreign ministers and humanitarian aid, whether by Pompeo or other state secretaries. It can say that this time the United States of America was, in some way, able to convince the two disputing parties to enter into a peaceful dialogue despite the failure of its ceasefire agreements.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The position of the United States towards the Nagorno Karabakh was peaceful. By the joining to the Minsk Group, the US works as a mediator in order to reduce the hostility between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh territory. Different approaches were used by US presidents from Bill Clinton to Donald Trump, on one hand, to attempt to resolve the territory dispute and make both parties satisfied, on the other hand, to preserve its interests and goals in the South Caucasus region. Diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, legislative bills and sanctions were adopted by US president to address the issue as well as holding meetings by Secretary of State from different administrations including Strobe Talbott, Colin Powell, Hillary Clinton and Michael Pompeo. Unfortunately, these efforts did not lead to any fixed agreement. Regardless the last ceasefire agreement in November 2020, the tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia are still high now.

## **General Conclusion**

The term foreign policy is refers to the efforts of a country in relation with other international countries in order to secure political, economic and military interests outside. In case of United States Foreign Policy, it includes all matters that linked to US foreign affairs with other countries. US foreign policy has values such as democracy, free markets and free trade, human rights and the rule of law. These principles are supported by a set of objectives focused on preserving American interests at international level and developing prosperity and security at local level. For this purpose, US foreign policy uses different tools including diplomacy and economic engagement to military involvement in order to achieve its desired outcomes internationally.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has had a strong presence in Central Asia since 1991. Due to strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Central Asia has become an important region for US foreign policy interests as it provides access to worth resources such as gas, oil as well gas pipelines. The South Caucasus is considered also a source to important oil and gas pipelines that transport resources from the Caspian Sea basin to global markets. Its geopolitical importance and its strategic location offer several opportunities such as trade, transportation, and energy corridors.

Historically, the area has been marked by conflicts such as territorial disputes and ethnic tensions, which continue to pose challenges to regional stability. The Nagorno Karabakh Conflict is one of these conflicts in the South Caucasus. This dispute is between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It started after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and it has been a particularly contentious issue for decades and has occasionally resulted in outbreaks of violence. This area attracts the attention of the major powers such as Russia and Turkey. They have long-standing interests in region, in

which making it an area where great powers are combated and this affected regional security and holding significant implications for global politics.

Russia and Turkey played a key role in resolving the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Russia plays an important role to finish the hostility between Armenia and Azerbaijan by joining in the Minsk group as co-chair. Russia's intervention led to the cease fire agreements of May 1994 and November 2020. However, Russia interference in the region was not without price, Russia aimed in the South Caucasus to gain a leadership and make Turkey and Iran away from the region. Russia play a paradoxical role in the region, on one hand it is a member of the Minsk group which means its stand is neutral. On the other hand, Russia provides Armenia with military equipment this action seems ambiguous and led into many questions.

Turkey stands at the conflict beside Azerbaijan. This stand goes back to historical, linguistics, cultural, religious common shares between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkey used different means to call for resolution through addressing Armenia to withdraw peacefully from Azerbaijani lands or using force and military engagement.

The United States also works as a mediator in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, by joining the Minsk Group, in order to reduce the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan. US perspective towards the dispute was peaceful and did not want to use military force as it did in other region. Diplomacy and humanitarian assistance were the main means used by US presidents, Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump, on one hand, to attempt to resolve territory conflict and make both parties satisfied, on the other hand, to achieve its interests and objectives in the South Caucasus region.

The interference of the United States in the dispute was limited to the Minsk group and every step was taking by US should be ratified by the group. However, the US tried to do its best to

resolve the conflict by holding meetings by different Secretary of States in different presidencies such as Strobe Talbott, Colin Powell, Hillary Clinton and Michael Pompeo as well as legislating different bills legislative such as the bill introduced by Michigan Senator David, H.Res.86 and 103rd Congress and sanctions such as Section 907 of Freedom Support Act.

Regardless the ceasefire agreement which held on November 2020, the tensions between the conflicting parties Azerbaijan and Armenia are still high and the relations are not stable yet. The ceasefire deal of 2020 should not be seen as hope of the ending of the conflict as it was the agreement of 1994 seen before. Possibly, in the near future the agreement will break again and the United States will have the chance to become more powerful and it will be able to resolve the conflict.

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## Résumé

La thèse de l'US Foreign Policy towards the South Caucasus: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict a Case Study examine le rôle des États-Unis en tant que médiateur dans le conflit du Haut-Karabakh entre l'Arménie et l'Azerbaïdjan de 1992 à 2020. Elle met en évidence les décisions politiques qui sont prises par les présidents américains de l'administration Bill Clinton à Donald Trump pour résoudre le conflit et leurs efficacités à parvenir à un accord pacifique. La méthodologie de recherche utilisée dans cette étude comprend des approches qualitatives, historiques et interprétatives. La thèse est divisée en trois chapitres. Le premier chapitre porte sur la politique étrangère des États-Unis envers l'Asie centrale. Le deuxième chapitre est consacré au conflit du Haut-Karabakh. Le troisième chapitre traite de la politique étrangère des États-Unis à l'égard du différend du Haut-Karabakh. Les conclusions de l'étude mettent en évidence les principales décisions prises par les présidents américains pour régler ce différend ainsi que les défis rencontrés pour équilibrer ses intérêts et la sécurité régionale.

Mots-clés : Caucase du Sud, Conflit du Haut-Karabakh, Politique étrangère américaine.